



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 October 2023

Report title: Extend the time period of the BFRS Response Strategy

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse

Report sponsor: Simon Tuffley – Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience

Author and contact: Group Commander Stuart Grosse sgrosse@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision.

Recommendations:

That the Authority approve the extension of the Response Strategy, so that the strategy aligns with, and is informed by, the new Community Risk Management Plan.

Executive summary:

The current BFRS Response Strategy has been live since 2018 and is due to end in 2023. By extending the life of the current Response Strategy and then taking the information used to build the new CRMP, BFRS can better understand the future response needs of the communities we serve and the strategic direction the Service will take. This will enable a well-informed Response Strategy to be delivered, that is appropriate and relevant to the risks and the communities that BFRS Serve. The extension also brings the live strategy in line with the current Public Safety Plan.

Risk management:

By not extending the Response Strategy, BFRS are at risk of having to produce a new Response Strategy that does not fully understand the future needs of the communities we serve. By extending the life of the current Response Strategy and then developing a Response Strategy alongside the CRMP, we can be better informed of the community risks and needs.

BFRS will continue to monitor known and emerging risks, through community engagement and through the BFRS Emerging Risks Group. Examples of this are our wildfire response to the 2022 summer pressures and our early engagement with developers in the growth of Battery Energy Storage Systems in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Though minor elements are now out of date, the current Response Strategy is suitable to be extended until April 2025.

Legal implications:

As part of the extension to the Response Strategy, legal implications were considered but no additional legal implications were identified.

Privacy and security implications:

There are no additional privacy or security implications to the extension of this strategy.

Duty to collaborate:

The Service continues to collaborate with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service partners, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service as part of the current Response Strategy.

Health and safety implications:

There are no additional Health and Safety implications.

Environmental implications:

There are no additional environmental impacts.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

An Integrated Impact Assessment forms part of the current Response Strategy (section 19). An Equalities Impact assessment (EIA) has been completed as part of this recommendation; this will be reviewed during the extension period of the Response Strategy. A new EIA will be completed with the 2024 Response Strategy.

Consultation and communication:

The extension of the Response Strategy has been consulted on with the Joint Consultation Forum, corporate planning and the Leadership Group.

The extension of the strategy will progress through Joint Consultation Forum, Business Transformation Board, Strategic Management Board, for approval at the full Fire Authority meeting in October 2023.

Every effort will be made to ensure individuals are fully involved in the review of the Response Strategy and their feedback captured and considered during the consultation process.

Changes to Version 1.1

A title box with the paragraph *'Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Response Strategy 2018-2023 will remain live until its replacement is published alongside the Community Risk Management Plan in April 2025'* has been added to the top of the response strategy.

The title of the Information Asset Owner has changed to Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience.

The title 'His Majesty's' has replaced 'Her Majesty's' when referring to the HMICFRS.

These have been updated in the Response Strategy Version 1.1.

Background papers:

Response Strategy 2018 – 2023 Version 1.1, with additional extension paragraph (in title box) added and updates to asset Owner and HMICFRS.

Appendix	Title
Appendix A	Response Strategy with extension
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment



Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Response Strategy 2018-2023 will remain live until its replacement is published alongside the Community Risk Management Plan in April 2025.

BFRS will continue to monitor known and emerging risks, through community engagement and through the BFRS Emerging Risks Group. Examples of this are our wildfire response to the 2022 summer pressures and our early engagement with developers in the growth of Battery Energy Storage Systems in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

1. Changes since the last version

Version:	1.1
Information Asset Owner:	Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience
Author:	Group Commander Service Delivery South
Approval:	Fire Authority
Date:	17 October 2023

Version 1.1 extends the duration of the Response Strategy (in the title box), until its replacement is published alongside the Community Risk Management Plan in April 2025. Changes to this version include the change of Information Asset Owner and the change of the title of the HMICFRS.

Please note that as Service Documents are frequently updated, if you print a document, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Always check the intranet for the latest version.



2. Index

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3. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a focus on the Service Delivery Directorate's priorities over the next five years, to ensure Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) can deliver the most effective response to the risks and challenges set out in the Authority's Public Safety Plan.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Fire Authority - Ensuring public safety, strengthening collaboration, driving transformation and enhancing effectiveness.

Chief Fire Officer- Responsible for leading the Service on its continued journey of improvement in the Service's governance, performance and financial management.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer- Responsible for Service Delivery, Corporate Development and Planning arrangements.



Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience - Responsible for effective Prevention, Protection and Response activities.

Managers- Responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of fire and rescue service activities.

All employees- collectively responsible for upholding the expected values, behaviours and objectives of the Authority.

5. Legislative Requirements

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) discharge all their functions under a backdrop of some key pieces of legislation. This legislation establishes our duties and obligations to provide an effective and efficient fire and rescue service.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

This is our core legislation, establishing our legal powers and responsibilities as a Fire Authority. The Secretary of State prepares the Fire and Rescue National Framework under Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to establish a set of key priorities, objectives and direction for fire authorities to follow.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

This legislation establishes Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) as a Category 1 responder agency, with specific responsibilities to plan for and respond to defined "emergencies" alongside other agencies. To effectively achieve this we are active members of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, who collectively plan for a multi-agency response to a full range of incidents across the area.

Policing and Crime Act 2017

The police, fire and rescue and emergency ambulance services now have a duty to collaborate. This Act provides us with a tangible legal framework to increase the scope of collaborative work and keep our communities safer.

6. Our Vision

Our Vision is to ensure Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes are the safest places in England in which to live, work and travel.

7. Our Aim

The aim of this strategy is to enable the Authority to deliver a timely and proportionate response to incidents within the parameters of our existing and



projected financial arrangements, by allocating BFRS assets and resources in relation to anticipated risk and demand.

8. The Challenge

The Authority's Public Safety Plan describes the internal and external factors that will influence our risk and demand challenges into the future.

The Corporate Plan shows how we will meet the challenges we face and our commitment to delivering consistent improvement and taking a fresh look at how we deliver our services in line with those identified risks and demand.

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Plan identify the financial resources required, projected into the future based on the delivery of specific aims and objectives as set out in the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan.

Together these plans establish a responsibility to deliver strategies, which meet these challenges and help us to achieve our aim and vision.

9. Our Values

We will work with all groups to target and reduce risk and will pro-actively seek opportunities to collaborate with our partners.

We will treat everyone fairly and with respect, challenging any prejudice or discrimination and respecting people's right to privacy and protecting any personal information we hold.

We place value on diversity within our Service and the communities we serve.

We will create opportunities to develop and learn, encourage innovation and creativity, work honestly to develop trust and will strive for excellence in all that we do.

We will accept responsibility and accountability for our performance and actions, being answerable to those we serve.

10. Our Principles

The Authority will aim to:

Ensure that all employees are aware of the vision, values and behaviours expected within the workplace

Improve the Authority's performance through building the skills of a diverse workforce that reflect the community



Ensure employees have an understanding of how the Service operates, in order to be as effective as possible within their role

11. Our Priorities

Our priorities are always to prevent incidents that cause harm from happening and to render humanitarian services. We will do all we can to protect homes, public buildings and businesses from the effects of fire.

Our duty is also to ensure that wherever required, we provide a timely and proportionate emergency response to incidents, ensuring we are there to save life, mitigate damage and help safeguard our environment.

To achieve these priorities, we will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable risks within our area, from across a spectrum of local and national influences, and give our employees the tools they need to succeed in ensuring these risks are assessed and managed in the most effective, efficient and safest way.

We will align and integrate our Prevention, Protection and Response strategies, ensuring they complement each other towards achieving our vision.

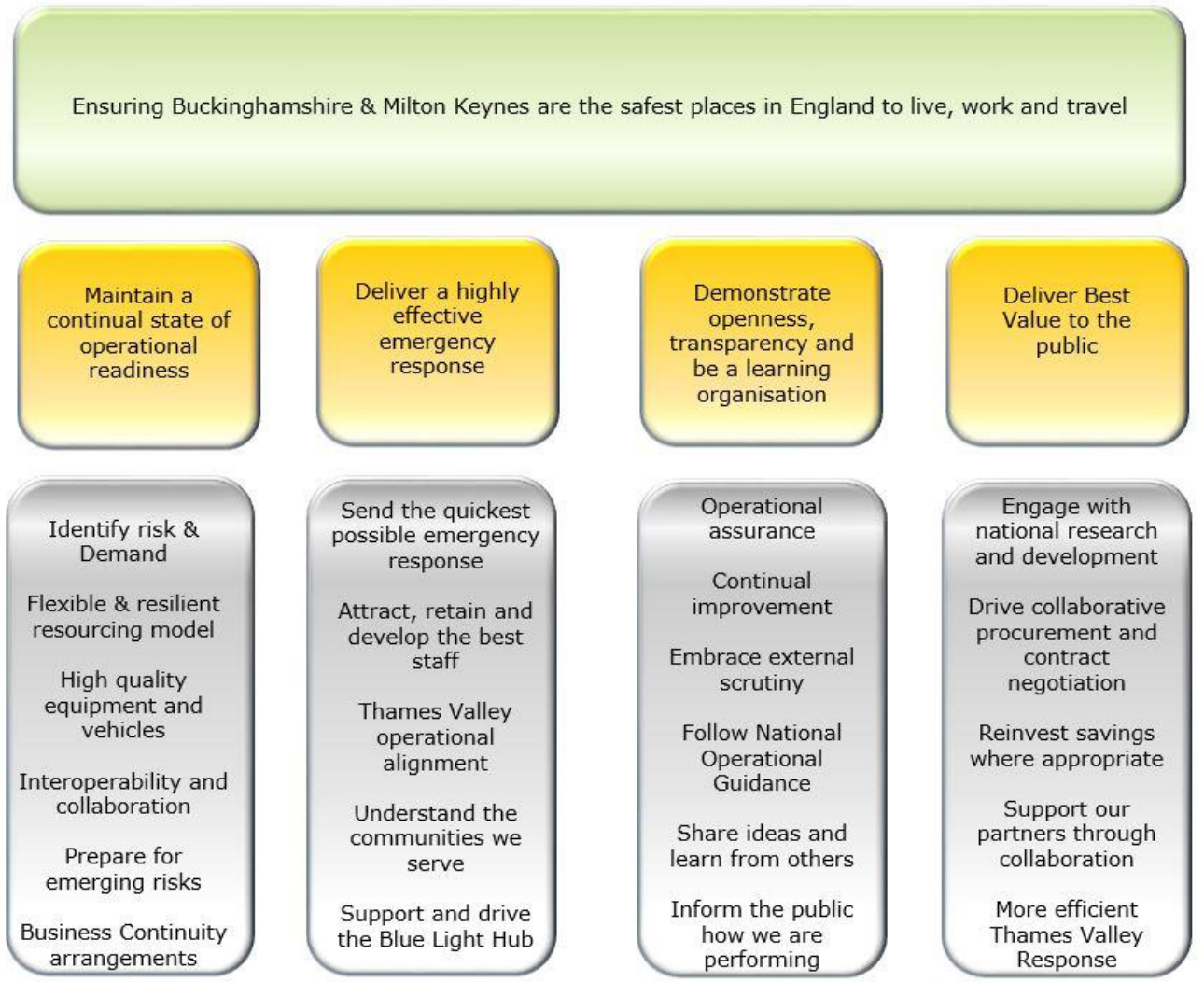
12. Measuring Success

The performance of our Response Strategy's aims will be continually measured on the following criteria:

- How effective we are at responding to fires and other emergencies
- How well we understand our current and future demand and risk
- How well we use our resources to manage risk
- How effective we are at responding to national risks
- How well we secure an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future

13. Response Strategy framework

Our commitment to responding to emergencies focuses on four key pillars:



14. We will maintain a continual state of operational readiness

The Challenge

Over the past decade there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of fire related incidents and consequent deaths and injuries across the Country. This reduction is reflected across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, but against a local backdrop of extensive housing and infrastructure growth, with particular focus on expansion across Aylesbury, Milton Keynes, Princes Risborough, Haddenham and Winslow. This is coupled with infrastructure projects like the HS2 and East/West Railway and road networks, all of which lead to an increase in population of those who live, work and travel within our area.

Other influences such as an increasing ageing population, a changing environment, and a number of houses in multiple occupation and pockets of social deprivation amongst an abundance of new housing stock will effectively redesign our risk and demand profile over time, creating a challenge to maintain



a timely and proportionate response within the parameters of our Medium Term Financial Plan.

Our Public Safety Plan describes a risk profile that indicates a potential for severe building fires, road traffic collisions on our rural roads and busy motorways and an increase in the number of low frequency, high impact events such as wide area flooding.

Therefore, we need to secure the right people with the right skills and resources to respond to our changing daily risk and demand profile, whilst ensuring we are resilient to the higher demand incidents which we occasionally face.

What we will do

Our aim is to make the best use of our resources. We will:

- Identify and assess the full range of fire and rescue related risks in our area taking a collaborative approach wherever appropriate
- Align the design and shape of the Service with current and future demand at a local, regional and national level
- Collaborate with other fire and rescue services and other partners to deliver intraoperability and interoperability in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles.
- In partnership with other agencies, ensure we are able to provide a multi-agency response to the threat of terrorism within our area.
- Provide and maintain excellent operational equipment and vehicles and deliver high quality training, validation and assessment to our employees.
- Enable our staff to maintain the required levels of fitness to carry out their role
- Establish and embed a resourcing model which delivers a flexible and resilient response to the wide range of incidents we attend
- Ensure we are resilient through sound business continuity and multi-agency planning
- Engage and prepare the Service for HS2 and other emerging risks

15. We will deliver a highly effective emergency response

The Challenge

It is imperative that when we are called upon in an emergency, we deliver an excellent service to the public. An effective emergency response is of the utmost importance to us all. The challenge is to deliver a timely and proportionate response to incidents amidst the landscape of reduced budgetary provision and our evolving risk and demand profiles.

Increasing demands on other public services, such as our partners in Policing and Health has led to collaboration opportunities in the field of medical response,



and searches for high-risk missing persons, where we can assist in saving lives in a different way. Where this is achieved, it must be done without any negative impacts on our core functions as a fire and rescue service.

Following our move to Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) in 2015, we now work closer than ever with our Thames Valley colleagues in Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire fire & rescue services. This move has opened up the challenge to better align our services across the Thames Valley, to share resources when planning and modelling for incidents, and when responding to and evaluating the incidents we attend.

What we will do

Our aim is to deliver a first class emergency response. We will:

- Ensure the public are receiving the quickest possible emergency response appropriate to the type of incident to aid recovery for individuals and communities affected by emergencies
- Work with our partners in TVFCS to secure the best possible call handling and pre-determined mobilising arrangements in place to effectively deal with incidents
- Ensure our crews understand the needs of their communities, including changing demographics and risks associated with the incidents they may attend
- Work with partners to keep communities informed of ongoing incidents and advise on action to be taken
- Achieve operational alignment with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Services and a single Thames Valley Mobilising Policy with TVFCS
- Mitigate road risks by returning unnecessary resources at the earliest opportunity once incidents are dealt with on scene
- Continue to support the medical response partnership with South Central Ambulance Service where appropriate
- Support and drive the Milton Keynes transformation project to provide a state of the art Blue Light Hub in West Milton Keynes, enhancing intraoperability with our blue light partners.

16. We will demonstrate openness, transparency and be a learning organisation

The Challenge

As a public service, it is important that we demonstrate an open and transparent approach to conducting our activities. With the recent reintroduction of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), there will clearly be a revitalised focus on how we demonstrate our effectiveness and efficiency to the public. A focus on continual improvement, with an honest



and open approach not only makes individual organisations more resilient, but by sharing learning services can also learn from each other. The challenge is to make this information accessible to all the public we serve in a way that is easily understood.

What we will do

Our aim is to be an “Outstanding” fire and rescue service. We will:

- Utilise an operational assurance model and improvement plan, providing a sound mechanism and focus for continual operational improvement.
- Attract and retain the best staff and provide opportunities for robust development and training
- Develop performance metrics to measure our effectiveness and use them to influence decisions and drive continual improvement
- Publish our performance outcomes with a commentary which is easy to understand, using a benchmark against other similar fire and rescue services.
- Keep up to date with national best practice through our policies, procedures, guidance and information
- Share our own learning at a local, regional and national level through collaborative working and National Operational Learning
- Continue to review this strategy to continually meet our anticipated risk and demand.

17. We will deliver Best Value to the public

The Challenge

Reduced budgetary provision amid a landscape of rising running costs continues to influence the way in which we provide our services to the public. The challenge is to continue to deliver a first class emergency service within the parameters of our Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Plan by prioritising our activities to drive down cost and gain the most benefit from our resources as risk and demand profiles change.

What we will do

Our aim is to deliver a highly efficient, effective and resilient fire and rescue service. We will:

- Drive collaborative procurement and contract negotiation to deliver best value and better use of operational resources
- Share our good practice and be open to learn from others
- Where appropriate, reinvest savings in new technologies which assist fire and rescue services and partners in improving key service delivery activities



- Engage with national research and development programmes, including those overseen by the National Fire Chiefs Council.
- Utilise a new national procurement framework to equip firefighters with the next generation of firefighting and rescue protective clothing, whilst delivering best value to the public through enhanced economies of scale and joint tendering processes.
- Develop our equipment, procedures, guidance and tactics in response to the changing operational environment
- Replace our old fire appliances with a new collaborative fire appliance with a specification and inventory for the Thames Valley Fire & Rescue Services' at a significantly reduced cost to the taxpayer than if purchasing alone.
- Create efficiencies at our County border deployments by aligning operations within the Thames Valley partners. This will lead to fewer appliance and officer mobilisations whilst maintaining the quickest possible appropriate response.
- Support our partners to deliver some of their key functions more efficiently, for example when assisting the Police in the search for high risk missing persons, or assisting South Central Ambulance Service when responding to medical emergencies.

18. Consultation/publication/communication

Development of this strategy is supported by engagement with:

Joint Consultation Forum

Leadership Group

All BFRS Employees

Our partners and key stakeholders through the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum.

Following approval at the Combined Fire Authority, the strategy is published on the BFRS Document Management System with an externally facing version published on the Bucks Fire website.

19. Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

A) The impact table

Are there any possible impacts which need further investigation? To complete the table tick ✓ the likely impact.



Impact Table						
Impact on people (protected groups and "others")	External Individuals			Authority Employees		
	Positive	Negative	None	Positive	Negative	None
People						
Gender	✓					✓
Race	✓					✓
Age	✓					✓
Religion/Belief	✓					✓
Sexual Orientation	✓					✓
Gender Reassignment			✓			✓
Pregnancy / Maternity			✓			✓
Marriage/Civil Partnership			✓			✓
Disability	✓					✓
Place						
Strengthen Community Cohesion	✓					✓
Tackling Poverty / Promoting Social Inclusion			✓			✓
Privacy	✓					✓
Health	✓			✓		
Environment	✓			✓		

If you have a tick in any negative box, you need to consider why and include this in your risk assessment.



B) Privacy impact assessment screening questions

These questions are intended to help Authority staff involved with new projects and / or processes (or significantly changed processes) decide whether an Impact Assessment is necessary. Answering 'yes' to any of these questions is an indication that an Impact Assessment would be a beneficial exercise.

Privacy Screening Questions		
Question	Yes/ No?	Comment
Will the project involve the collection of new information about individuals?	No	
Will the project compel individuals to provide information about themselves that they have not had to previously?	No	
Will information about individuals be disclosed to organisations or people who have not previously had routine access to the information?	No	
Are you using information about individuals for a purpose it is not currently used for, or in a way it is not currently used?	No	
Does the project involve you using new technology which might be perceived as being privacy intrusive? For example, the use of biometrics or facial recognition.	No	
Will the project result in you making decisions or taking action against individuals in ways which can have a significant impact on them?	No	
Is the information about individuals of a kind particularly likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations? For example, health records, criminal records or other information that people would consider to be particularly private.	No	
Will the project require you to contact individuals in ways which they may find intrusive?	No	



People Screening Questions		
Question:	Yes/No:	Comment
<p>Will the project you are undertaking affect any of the following factors explicitly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Race - Disability - Gender - Religion/Belief - Sexuality - Age - Gender Reassignment - Pregnancy / Maternity - Marriage / Civil Partnerships 	No	
<p>Could the progression of your project have a negative effect on a particular person/group of persons within the organisation or externally?</p>	No	
<p>Does the progression of your project affect the status of any person/s within the organisation or externally?</p>	No	
<p>Will any person/s within the organisation or externally be negatively impacted, with respect to their personal status, by the completion of your project?</p>	No	
<p>Is there any new technology within your project that will negatively impact the wellbeing of a person/s within the organisation or externally.</p>	No	
<p>Is there any aspect of a person/s status that will negatively impact your project?</p>	No	
<p>Is there any risk that your project could fail to comply with all relative people laws, e.g. the Equalities Act 2010?</p>	No	
<p>If your project requires you to employ new members of staff, is there likely to be any people based prejudice within the recruitment process?</p>	No	

Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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1: Overview information

Name of activity / change / policy / procedure/project:	Extension to BFRS Response Strategy 2018 - 2023
Directorate/department:	Response
Name(s) of person(s) completing the assessment	Stuart Grosse
Date of commencement of assessment:	24 March 2023

2: What is the aim and purpose of the activity / change / policy / procedure / project you are assessing?

To extend the duration of the BFRS Response Strategy 2018-2023 until April 2025. This will enable the new Response Strategy to align with the Community Risk Management Plan. The current plan is suitable to be extended until October 2024. The Response Strategy has an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) from when it was first published, this IIA is still valid. The EIA reviews the Response Strategy and covers the period of the extension.

3: Who will be affected by the activity / change / policy / procedure / project, and how? Consider members of the public, employees, partner organisations etc.

The Response Strategy is available to all BFRS employees.
By extending the Response Strategy, it will allow time to build a new well informed Response strategy to better represent the communities BFRS serve.

4: What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity / change / policy / procedure / project has/will have on people? (*please reference*) Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints etc. What does this information tell you?

The Response Strategy is a current 'live' document, it is available to be commented on by BFRS employees.

This information is held for organisational and legal reasons and will be retained for only as long as necessary

Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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5: Does the activity/change / policy/procedure/project have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? Complete the table below by ✓ the likely impact.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rational for decision (<i>use action plan in section 14 for negative impacts</i>)
Individuals of different ages			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Disabled individuals			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals transitioning from one gender to another			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Pregnancy, maternity and new parents			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals of different race			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals of different religions or beliefs			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individual's gender identity			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individual's sexual orientation			✓	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>			✓	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>			✓	No specific impacts identified.

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Different employee groups			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Other, please specify			✓	No specific impacts identified.

6: What further research or consultation is needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project on different groups? If needed, how will you gather additional information and from whom?

The extension of the Response strategy is to be circulated through the Leadership Group. Any amendments will be considered and the document will be sent to BTB for sign off.

7: Following your research, considering all the information that you now have, is there any evidence that the activity/change/policy/procedure/project is impacting/will impact differently or disproportionately on some group of people?

No evidence.

8: What amendments will you make/have been made to the activity/change/policy/procedure/project as a result of the information you have? If a negative effect has been identified, how could it/has it been lessened, does the original plan need changing?

No change.

9: After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any groups?

Yes – please explain below

No – go to section 11

No

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Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: *Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note*



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10: Can continuing or implementing the proposed activity/change/policy/procedure/project, without further amendment, be justified legally? If so, how?

11: How can you ensure that any positive or neutral impact is maintained?

Review this EIA as the new Response strategy is built.

12: How will you monitor and review the impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project once it has been implemented?

Review this EIA as the new Response strategy is built.

Ensure that the Response strategy 2024 is published with an updated EIA.

13: Sign off

Name of department head / project lead

AC Tuffley

Date of EIA sign off:

17/04/2023

Date(s) of review of assessment:

October 2024

This information is held for organisational and legal reasons and will be retained for only as long as necessary

Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



14. Action Plan - the table below should be completed to produce an action plan for the implementation of proposals to:

- Lower negative impacts
- Ensure the negative impacts are legal under anti-discriminatory law
- Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups i.e. increase
- the positive impact

Area of impact	Changes proposed	Timescales	Resource implications	Comments

This information is held for organisational and legal reasons and will be retained for only as long as necessary