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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UNIT

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT**

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### **SUMMARY**

This report explains the background to Equality Impact Assessments and describes the toolkit that has been produced by Argyll and Bute Council. It recommends the toolkit for use by Community Planning partners.

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - BACKGROUND**

Statutory Duties to promote Race Equality and Disability Equality require the Council, and other public authorities, to carry out impact assessments of policies and functions. This is not a new approach as many services already carry out risk assessments, and informally consider likely impacts.

The Council has developed an Equality Impact Assessment toolkit that includes all six equality strands as other equality duties are expected to follow the same pattern as race and disability, and also because we serve a diverse range of people in Argyll and Bute. The six equality strands, or target groups, are: race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, and belief (religious/ political).

The purpose of carrying out an impact assessment is to ensure that decisions and activities do not disadvantage people from equality target groups and to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity, eg promoting positive attitudes. People in the equality target groups are often at risk from discrimination and social exclusion more than people who are not in these target groups.

### **THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH**

In the Council, assessments will be carried out by officers who are:

- developing or reviewing policies or strategies
- developing or reviewing service delivery or other functions

Officers with knowledge about the policy or function need to be involved, as do service users. The assessments should not be carried out by one person acting alone but by representatives of all stakeholder groups.

A number of instruction sessions will be held in the coming months for officers who are using the Equality Impact Assessment toolkit. Research and information support is also available via the Council's intranet equality pages. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will be made available via the Council's website,

annual reports and committee reports. They will also be incorporated into the regular equalities reports to senior management.

The Equality and Diversity Scheme, due to be published in December 2006, will include in its action plan a 3-year programme of current policies and functions that require to be equality impact assessed.

### **BENEFITS OF THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT**

The Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit will help to assess the impact of functions and policies on the diverse groups of people within Argyll and Bute. The Toolkit will also enable the Council to maximise opportunities to promote equality and good relations between groups.

An Equality Impact Assessment involves anticipating the consequences of functions and policies on different sections of the community, making sure that, as far as possible, any negative impacts are minimised or eliminated and that opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

The assessment extends to monitoring the actual effects of the function or policy and requires the Council to take action if there are any concerns that the function or policy is having a detrimental impact on any of the Equality Target Groups.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Community Planning partners are invited to make use of the Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit when developing or reviewing policies and projects.

Sessions will be run for Council officers to familiarise them with the toolkit. Partners wishing to use the toolkit are welcome to nominate someone to attend who can then train others in their organisation.

Partners are asked to note that the Toolkit will be used for any projects where the Council is a partner.

For a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment toolkit, please contact Grace Leitch, [grace.leitch@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:grace.leitch@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Contact: Jennifer Swanson, Policy and Strategy, [jennifer.swanson@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.swanson@argyll-bute.gov.uk)