

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form



Name of proposal	Changes to the Discretionary Business Rate Relief (DRR) for Charities, Not-For-Profit & Voluntary Organisations
Directorate and Service Area	Revenues Service, Neighbourhoods
Name of Lead Officer	Jo Hunt, Louise Davidson

Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

1.1 What is the proposal?

BCC operates an existing policy currently awarding Discretionary Rate Relief to 100 Charities, Not-for-Profit and voluntary organisations, but due to financial pressures, is making changes with effect from April 2018 to reduce the total expenditure of the scheme. Two options were consulted on:

Option 1 – limited to organisations with a turnover below £100,000, but still giving them up to 100% relief, thereby continuing to support those with the lowest income

Option 2 – limited to organisations with a turnover below £150,000, but only giving them up to 70% relief, thereby supporting more organisations with every one paying something

This is against a backdrop of a general reduction in the financial support to such organisations, and we recognise that many organisations are already being asked to do more with reduced funds.

Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

We have conducted some light touch research into the organisations currently

receiving Discretionary Rate Relief

Option 1 will affect 19 organisations, of which 2 are involved with people of protected characteristics

Option 2 – will affect all 100 organisations, of which 38 are involved with people of protected characteristics

2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

We have looked at data held for current recipients of the relief. We have not done any equalities monitoring for the organisations involved or their service users. Light touch research has been carried out to identify each organisation's aims and objectives. However we don't know who uses the organisations, nor do we know which organisations might apply for relief in the future.

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

Public consultation was carried out between 2/10 and 24/12/2017, and all current recipients of relief who could be affected were invited to participate.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

We don't know who uses the services that may be affected so are not able to identify potential impacts. We accept that *any* loss of funding will impact the organisations affected but to varying degrees – each organisation will respond individually depending on their circumstance and financial position e.g. they may be able to secure alternate funding or absorb the financial impact. The public consultation asked the question

“Do you think either of the proposals adversely affects certain groups of people? - If yes, please tell us who it affects”

7 responses think it will affect young and old people, and 1 said it will affect all equalities groups. We acknowledge that the proposal will cause some organisations to increase their charges or even withdraw their service and that this could affect users of their services who happen to be in these equalities groups. However there is nothing to suggest that these proposals would have a wider effect on groups of people with protected characteristics.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

Appropriate activities will be considered once the results of the consultation are analysed and it is known who will be affected – this could include providing advice and guidance, changing business plans, signposting to business help e.g. banks, online, organise a ‘provider day’ for groups to meet and reorganise themselves/match up with other groups.

The consultation was carried out between October and December 2017, indicating a clear preference amongst respondents for Option 1. Discretionary rate relief will be considered for organisations whose turnover is under £100,000, award given will be in the form of up to 100% relief of the business rate liability.

We have identified 19 organisations that will be affected by the proposal. A strategy is being arranged to communicate the changes to the organisations.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

None directly, though there may be some indirect benefits for organisations resulting from activities to mitigate the impact.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

N/a

Step 4: So what?

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

We have been able to map out where the impacts will be. Our recommendation to adopt option 1 will ensure the majority of organisations will not be affected, thereby continuing to support a greater number of organisations whose users will include those with protected characteristics.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

More needs to be done to ensure we are aware of who the service users who have protected characteristics. We provide discretionary rate relief to organisations for a specific purpose and therefore, we need to know what groups will be affected by a change in service or policy. This will support us assess impact and mitigation measures to reduce impact where necessary.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving

forward?

Feedback for organisations and service users will be analysed, and contribute to future policies.

Service Director Sign-Off:

Chris Holme

Date: 21 February 2018

Equalities Officer Sign Off:

Cherene Whitfield

Date: 20 February 2018