

Equality Impact Assessment [version 2.9]



Title: Remote Hearings – Licensing Act 2003	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Function <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other [please state] <i>Change to rules of hearing</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Already exists / review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Changing
Directorate: Management of Place	Lead Officer name: Jonathan Martin
Service Area: Regulatory Services	Lead Officer role: Licensing and Trading Standards Manager

Step 1: What do we want to do?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to assist decision makers in understanding the impact of proposals as part of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Detailed guidance to support completion can be found here [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com).

This assessment should be started at the beginning of the process by someone with a good knowledge of the proposal and service area, and sufficient influence over the proposal. It is good practice to take a team approach to completing the equality impact assessment. Please contact the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) early for advice and feedback.

1.1 What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this proposal?

Briefly explain the purpose of the proposal and why it is needed. Describe who it is aimed at and the intended aims / outcomes. Where known also summarise the key actions you plan to undertake. Please use plain English, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Equality Impact Assessments are viewed by a wide range of people including decision-makers and the wider public.

<p>The proposal is to modify the rules governing hearings convened under the Licensing Act 2003 to permit remote hearings to take place. These rules are set by the licensing committee and set out how the hearing will be conducted. The Act does already allow remote hearings to take place, however the rules set out by Bristol City Council do not.</p> <p>Remote hearings took place throughout the Covid-19 pandemic under separate legislation to allow them. This legislation expired on 7 May 2021, and this proposal seeks to amend the rules to allow remote hearings under the Act once again.</p> <p>Remote hearings allow greater accessibility to meetings for a large number of people, including those who work and are not able to attend in person, those with children or caring responsibilities, and they save all parties travelling time. They also allow for hearings to continue to take place where there are outside factors such as adverse weather or sickness.</p>
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1.2 Who will the proposal have the potential to affect?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bristol City Council workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> The wider community
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioned services	<input type="checkbox"/> City partners / Stakeholder organisations	
Additional comments:		

1.3 Will the proposal have an equality impact?

Could the proposal affect access levels of representation or participation in a service, or does it have the potential to change e.g. quality of life: health, education, or standard of living etc.?

If 'No' explain why you are sure there will be no equality impact, then skip steps 2-4 and request review by Equality and Inclusion Team.

If 'Yes' complete the rest of this assessment, or if you plan to complete the assessment at a later stage please state this clearly here and request review by the Equality and Inclusion Team.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	[please select]
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We have not identified any significant negative impact from the proposal. The proposed rule change is broad and will allow for meetings to take place remotely, or face-to-face as appropriate.

On the whole the experience of officers during the Covid-19 pandemic has been that there was higher attendance from the public at meetings taking place remotely, and feedback has been given from applicants and members of the public that remote meetings were more accessible and time efficient than face to face ones.

Although some difficulties were experienced at the start of the pandemic around technology, most issues can be overcome with established good practice in providing clear instructions on how to access meetings and guidelines on which platform will be used.

We acknowledge that some disabled people may face additional barriers in accessing online meetings, and the Quality of Life survey shows some groups e.g. older people in Bristol are less likely to be comfortable using digital technology. The proposal will allow us flexibility to host digital or face-to-face meetings, depending on which is the most appropriate, accessible and inclusive approach in particular circumstances.

Step 5: Review

The Equality and Inclusion Team need at least five working days to comment and feedback on your EqIA. EqIAs should only be marked as reviewed when they provide sufficient information for decision-makers on the equalities impact of the proposal. Please seek feedback and review from the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) before requesting sign off from your Director¹.

Equality and Inclusion Team Review: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>	Director Sign-Off: 
Date: 19/7/2021	Date: 21/7/2021

¹ Review by the Equality and Inclusion Team confirms there is sufficient analysis for decision makers to consider the likely equality impacts at this stage. This is not an endorsement or approval of the proposal.