

Equality Impact Assessment [version 2.9]



Title: Licensing Service Fee Review 2023	
<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>Fee review</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Already exists / review <input type="checkbox"/> Changing
Directorate: Growth and Regeneration	Lead Officer name: Jonathan Martin
Service Area: Culture and Creative 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.

To review the fees charged for services and statutory functions delivered by the Licensing Service, within the council's administrative district. Some fees are set by statute and will not change. Some are within the council's power to set, and must cover the cost of the service.

The majority of the fee increases within the proposal are within the council's proposed overall increase of 5%, however the taxi and private hire fees are proposed to increase by more than that. This is due to the fact that taxi and private hire fees must cover the cost of delivering the obligations under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and Town Police Clauses Act 1847. The service does not have any recourse to central funds and must pay for costs through the charges for licences other charges associated with taxi charges.

The changes relate to non-executive functions and therefore do not fall under the cabinet process for changes. Instead, they are agreed by executive director, after discussion with the relevant cabinet members and Regulatory Committee Chair. Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Vehicle and Private Hire Operator fees are also subject to statutory public notification period once proposals have been agreed.

Taxi and private hire fees are proposed to increase due to a number of additional requirements implemented as a result of statutory changes over the last two years and a national standard for taxi and private hire drivers. Specifically, this has resulted in a review of the council's taxi and private hire policy, and an increased requirement to consider criminal convictions alongside a review of existing licensees. Since 2021 licensees have been required to sign up to the DBS update service and be checked through a quarterly DBS verification. This is not currently included in charges and is being included in this proposal. This process of review takes place over a three-year period as licensees come up for expiry.

The last review of taxi and private hire fees and the wider regulatory fee structure was in 2022.

The Hackney Carriage and private hire trade is recognised as a key component of the wider public transport system within Bristol and provides transport to a wide range of the public and increased use of the taxis and private hires has a positive contribution towards carbon neutrality and reducing the effects of poor air quality.

Taxis and private hires form an important part of the local public transport infrastructure. It is recognised that a fee increase at any time may prove challenging for the trade however this must be balanced with increased requirements on the council and associated costs. The increase is required to continue to deliver an effective service.

1.2 Who will the proposal have the potential to affect?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bristol City Council workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	[please select]
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Step 2: What information do we have?

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

Please use this section to demonstrate an understanding of who could be affected by the proposal. Include general population data where appropriate, and information about people who will be affected with particular reference to protected and other relevant characteristics: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/people-communities/measuring-equalities-success>.

Use one row for each evidence source and say which characteristic(s) it relates to. You can include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data e.g. from national or local research, available data or previous consultations and engagement activities.

Outline whether there is any over or under representation of equality groups within relevant services - don't forget to benchmark to the local population where appropriate. Links to available data and reports are here [Data, statistics and intelligence \(sharepoint.com\)](#). See also: [Bristol Open Data \(Quality of Life, Census etc.\)](#); [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#); [Ward Statistical Profiles](#).

For workforce / management of change proposals you will need to look at the diversity of the affected teams using available evidence such as [HR Analytics: Power BI Reports \(sharepoint.com\)](#) which shows the diversity profile of council teams and service areas. Identify any over or under-representation compared with Bristol economically active citizens for different characteristics. Additional sources of useful workforce evidence include the [Employee Staff Survey Report](#) and [Stress Risk Assessment Form](#)

Data / Evidence Source [Include a reference where known]	Summary of what this tells us
Based on the demographics of the City of Bristol the majority of citizens which are potential taxi customers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78% are White British compared to 80% the national average • 17% have a Limiting Long-term Illness or Disability which is slightly lower than the national average of 18% • 50% are women which is slightly lower than the national average of 51%
Licence holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Bristol there are currently 361 licensed hackney carriage vehicles, 757 private hire vehicles, 524 hackney carriage drivers and 882 private hire drivers. • Anecdotally the majority of Bristol taxi drivers are male, and a large proportion of taxi drivers are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and Muslim.
<u>Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk)</u> <u>Business demography, UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the diverse and high skilled economy of the city has provided protection for some of our key industries and employment from the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis, there has been significant impact on key sectors e.g. hospitality, retail and leisure. • Black and minoritised ethnic people more likely to be self-employed than the Bristol average and over-represented in low income self-employment including taxis, takeaway restaurants etc.

2.2 Do you currently monitor relevant activity by the following protected characteristics?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation

2.3 Are there any gaps in the evidence base?

Where there are gaps in the evidence, or you don't have enough information about some equality groups, include an equality action to find out in section 4.2 below. This doesn't mean that you can't complete the assessment without the information, but you need to follow up the action and if necessary, review the assessment later. If you are unable to fill in the gaps, then state this clearly with a justification.

For workforce related proposals all relevant characteristics may not be included in HR diversity reporting (e.g. pregnancy/maternity). For smaller teams diversity data may be redacted. A high proportion of not known/not disclosed may require an action to address under-reporting.

We have tried to carry out a diversity survey by circulating to the taxi trade. Currently we have received 38 responses. Therefore the statistics may not be representative of the taxi trade. However the responses show of the respondents:

Age

11% of respondents were under 24 years old

38% of respondents were between 25-49 years old

26% of respondents were between 50-64 years old

Disability

87% of respondents do not consider themselves to be a disabled person

11% of respondents consider themselves to be a disabled person

3% of respondents preferred not to say

Sex

97% of respondents are male

3% of respondents are female

Ethnic background

15% respondents identified themselves as English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/Irish/British

2% of respondents identified themselves as Gypsy or Roma

9% of respondents identified themselves as East European

2% of respondents identified themselves as any other White Background

2% of respondents identified themselves as Indian

19% of respondents identified themselves as Pakistani

6% of respondents identified themselves as Bangladeshi

8% of respondents identified themselves as any other Asian background

8% of respondents identified themselves as White and Black African

2% of respondents identified themselves as White and Asian

2% of respondents identified themselves as Any other mixed background

6% of respondents identified themselves as African

11% of respondents identified themselves as Somali

4% of respondents identified themselves as Arab

Sexual orientation

58% of respondents identified their sexuality as Heterosexual/straight

3% of respondents identified their sexuality as bisexual

8% of respondents identified their sexuality as Other

Religious beliefs

21% of respondents identified their religious belief as Christian

68% of respondents identified their religious belief as Muslim

Pregnancy and maternity

97% responded they were not pregnant or had given birth in the last 26 weeks

3% responded that they were pregnant or had given birth in the last 26 weeks

Refugee

95% responded that they did not consider themselves to be a refugee

5% responded that they consider themselves to be a refugee

English as first language

39% responded that English was their first language

61% responded that English is not their first language

2.4 How have you involved communities and groups that could be affected?

You will nearly always need to involve and consult with internal and external stakeholders during your assessment. The extent of the engagement will depend on the nature of the proposal or change. This should usually include individuals and groups representing different relevant protected characteristics. Please include details of any completed engagement and consultation and how representative this had been of Bristol's diverse communities. See <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/people-communities/equalities-groups>.

Include the main findings of any engagement and consultation in Section 2.1 above.

If you are managing a workforce change process or restructure please refer to [Managing change or restructure \(sharepoint.com\)](#) for advice on consulting with employees etc. Relevant stakeholders for engagement about workforce changes may include e.g. staff-led groups and trades unions as well as affected staff.

There is a statutory public notification requirement in relation to the Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Vehicle and Private Hire Operator fees. This will be undertaken once a fee proposal has been agreed.

2.5 How will engagement with stakeholders continue?

Explain how you will continue to engage with stakeholders throughout the course of planning and delivery. Please describe where more engagement and consultation is required and set out how you intend to undertake it. Include any targeted work to seek the views of under-represented groups. If you do not intend to undertake it, please set out your justification. You can ask the Equality and Inclusion Team for help in targeting particular groups.

Fee reviews are normally carried out on a relatively regular basis, and these will continue to be reviewed to ensure that they are at the correct level to deliver an effective service.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts of the proposal in this section, referring to evidence you have gathered above and the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Also include details of existing issues for particular groups that you are aware of and are seeking to address or mitigate through this proposal. See detailed guidance documents for advice on identifying potential impacts etc. [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people based on their protected or other relevant characteristics?

Consider sub-categories (different kinds of disability, ethnic background etc.) and how people with combined characteristics (e.g. young women) might have particular needs or experience particular kinds of disadvantage.

Where mitigations indicate a follow-on action, include this in the 'Action Plan' Section 4.2 below.

GENERAL COMMENTS (highlight any potential issues that might impact all or many groups)

Most sectors of the community utilise taxis as part of the public transport scheme, and an increase in costs to the licensee may impact on whether it is a cost effective profession for them to remain in.

Conversely the national standards implemented have resulted in an increase in requirements across local authorities, and it is likely that many authorities will increase fees as a result.

The increase is required in order to cover the costs of these additional requirements which were made statutory by the national standards in order to improve public safety. The potential impacts can be justified on the basis that this is the only viable option to fulfil the statutory duties.

We have a statutory requirement to undertake regular checks on the fitness of applicants to hold a licence, including an increased requirement to consider criminal convictions alongside a review of existing licensees. Since 2021 licensees have been required to sign up to the DBS update service and be checked through a quarterly DBS verification. This is not currently included in charges and is being included in this proposal. This process of review takes place over a three-year period as licensees come up for expiry.

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Age: Young People	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Potential impacts:	
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Mitigations:	
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Age: Older People	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Potential impacts:	
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Mitigations:	
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Disability	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Sex	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	The proposal will have a disproportionate impact on men due to their high representation as taxi drivers.
Mitigations:	See general comment above
Sexual orientation	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Pregnancy / Maternity	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Gender reassignment	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Race	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	The majority of taxi drivers are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The fee increase may increase the risk that the profession may become unaffordable for them, forcing them to leave the Hackney Carriage trade and reducing availability of taxis.
Mitigations:	<p>The increase is required in order to cover the costs of these additional requirements which were made statutory by the national standards in order to improve public safety. The potential impacts can be justified on the basis that this is the only viable option to fulfil the statutory duties.</p> <p>We have a statutory requirement to undertake regular checks on the fitness of applicants to hold a licence, including an increased requirement to consider criminal convictions alongside a review of existing licensees. Since 2021 licensees have been required to sign up to the DBS update service and be checked through a quarterly DBS verification. This is not currently included in charges and is being included in this proposal. This process of review takes place over a three-year period as licensees come up for expiry.</p>
Religion or Belief	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	The proposal will have a disproportionate impact on Muslims due to their high representation as taxi drivers.
Mitigations:	<p>The increase is required in order to cover the costs of these additional requirements which were made statutory by the national standards in order to improve public safety. The potential impacts can be justified on the basis that this is the only viable option to fulfil the statutory duties.</p> <p>We have a statutory requirement to undertake regular checks on the fitness of applicants to hold a licence, including an increased requirement to consider criminal convictions alongside a review of existing licensees. Since 2021 licensees have been required to sign up to the DBS update service and be checked through a quarterly DBS verification. This is not currently included in charges and is being included in this proposal. This process of review takes place over a three-year period as licensees come up for expiry.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
OTHER RELEVANT CHARACTERISTICS	

Socio-Economic (deprivation)	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	For some licensed taxi drivers this will be low income self-employment, and there is an overarching risk that the cumulative impact of multiple proposals which aim to generate funds through increased fees will have a disproportionately negative impact on low income households and people living in poverty unless this is adequately mitigated.
Mitigations:	Although outside the scope of this proposal as a local authority we have addressed this risk as far as possible by protecting frontline services and prioritising services for those most in need, and through specific proposals such as allocation of the discretionary Local Crisis Prevent Fund, maximising income from Council Tax Social Care Precept, and the continuation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme at a rate of up to 100% discount.
Carers	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Other groups [Please add additional rows below to detail the impact for other relevant groups as appropriate e.g. Asylums and Refugees; Looked after Children / Care Leavers; Homelessness]	
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	

3.2 Does the proposal create any benefits for people based on their protected or other relevant characteristics?

Outline any potential benefits of the proposal and how they can be maximised. Identify how the proposal will support our Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination for a protected group
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- ✓ Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

The proposed fee increase is required in order to implement the national standards, and therefore have a wider impact on the public by ensuring that they are safe when using taxis and private hires.

Step 4: Impact

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

What are the main conclusions of this assessment? Use this section to provide an overview of your findings. This summary can be included in decision pathway reports etc.

If you have identified any significant negative impacts which cannot be mitigated, provide a justification showing how the proposal is proportionate, necessary, and appropriate despite this.

Summary of significant negative impacts and how they can be mitigated or justified:

Although an increase in fees is may have a disproportionate impact on some groups because of their high representation as licensees, this can be justified on the basis that it is the only viable option to ensure that statutory duties can be fulfilled and that the service covers its increased costs as a result of the increased requirements.

Summary of positive impacts / opportunities to promote the Public Sector Equality Duty:

The proposed fee increase is required in order to implement the national standards, and therefore have a wider impact on the public by ensuring that they are safe when using taxis and private hires.

4.2 Action Plan

Use this section to set out any actions you have identified to improve data, mitigate issues, or maximise opportunities etc. If an action is to meet the needs of a particular protected group please specify this.

Improvement / action required	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Refer proposal to executive director for sign off	Jonathan Martin	TBD
Publish statutory public notification of fees in respect of PHV, HCV and PHO.	Jonathan Martin	TBD

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

How will you know if you have been successful? Once the activity has been implemented this equality impact assessment should be periodically reviewed to make sure your changes have been effective your approach is still appropriate.

The proposal will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that fee levels remain relevant and in line with service costs.

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:  Patsy Mellor, Director Management of Place
Date: 6/3/2023	Date: 13/03/2023

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.