

# Scottish Borders Council

## Stage 3 Equality Impact Assessment - Sign Off

(For use at the end of development project/proposal/policy development – prior to sign off)

3.1	<b>Title of Proposal:</b>	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Verification Policy
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*(Please enter the title or reference for your proposal)*

3.2	<b>Service Area:</b> <b>Department:</b>	Neighbourhood Services Customer Services
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*(Please enter the department/service area submitting the proposal)*

3.3	<b>Description:</b>	<p>An IT solution was purchased for Risk Based Verification as it was highlighted that a significantly high percentage of time was used verifying and requesting documentation to support applications for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.</p> <p>Risk Based verification assigns a risk rating to each Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction application which determines the level of verification required. It allows more intense verification activity to be focused on claims more prone to fraud and error. It is the intention that Risk Based Verification will be applied to all new claims.</p> <p>Scottish Borders Council will monitor the outcomes of Risk Based Verification Reporting. The aims of the introduction of Risk Based Verification includes :</p> <p>Improved new claims processing times Improved Customer Service Staffing cost savings</p>
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*(Please enter a full description of your proposal including its aims and objectives)*

3.4

### Impact Assessment

Use the information you have gathered during the development of your proposal to identify the anticipated impacts of your proposal against the three arms of the Equality Duty.

Equality Characteristic	Impact			Description	Mitigation & Recommendations
	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact		
				<i>Please enter your reasoning for your assessment based on the evidence you have gathered.</i>	<i>Please enter any mitigations if you have identified a negative impact &amp;/ or recommendation for implementation</i>
<b>Age</b> (Older or younger people or a specific age grouping)	✓			<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>	
<b>Disability</b> e.g. Effects on people with mental, physical, sensory impairment, learning disability, visible/invisible, progressive or recurring	✓			<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>	
<b>Gender</b> (Males, Females, Transgender or Transsexual people)	✓			<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>	
<b>Race Groups:</b> including colour, nationality, ethnic origins, including minorities (e.g. gypsy travellers, refugees,	✓			<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>	

migrants and asylum seekers)					
<b>People with Religious or other Beliefs:</b> different beliefs, customs (including atheists and those with no aligned belief)	✓				<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> (refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to <b>maternity</b> leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, <b>protection</b> against <b>maternity</b> discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth),	✓				<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> , e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual	✓				<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>
<b>Carers</b> (those who have caring responsibilities for someone with an equality Characteristic)	✓				<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>
<b>Poverty</b> (people who are	✓				<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>

	on a low income including benefits claimants, people experiencing fuel poverty, isolated rural communities etc)					
	<b>Employees</b> (those employed by the Council including full time, part time and temporary)	✓			<b>This is not a factor and therefore not taken in to consideration when verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications</b>	

3.5	<b>Relevance to the Equality Duty in Summary:</b>	
	<b>What impact will your proposal have on the following :</b> <i>(After considering all the available evidence what impact do you believe the implementation of this proposal will have in relation the Equality Duty?)</i>	
	<b>Equality Duty</b>	<b>Reasoning:</b>
	<b>Elimination of discrimination (both direct &amp; indirect), victimisation and harassment.</b> <i>(Will proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)</i>	All applicants are allocated a risk group based on various complex factors
	<b>Promotion of equality of opportunity?</b> <i>(Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)</i>	The policy will not help promote equal opportunity
<b>Foster good relations?</b> <i>(Will your proposal help or hinder the council s relationships with those who have equality characteristics?)</i>	The policy will improve the application process for customers who fall in a low risk category making the application process more streamline.,	

3.6	<b>Recommendations &amp; Mitigation</b>	
	Please summaries all recommendations and mitigations for approval by the decision makers who will approve your proposal	
	<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Mitigation/Recommendation</b>

<b>Signed Off (Sign off <u>must</u> be completed by Service Manager or Director)</b>			
Name:	Jenni Craig	Directorate:	Neighbourhood Services
Post:	Service Director Neighbourhood Services	Date:	30/03/17

<b>EIA Completed By</b>			
Name	Clare Easson	Service Area.	Customer Services
Post	Development Officer	Date	29/11/16

**Next Steps:**

	Date
Proposals Approved for Implementation:	21 March 2017
EIA Published:	30 March 2017
Date for Review of Findings:	

**If it is agreed that your proposal will progress, you must send an electronic copy to corporate communications to publish on the webpage within 3 weeks of the decision. For your records, please keep a copy of this Equality Impact Assessment form.**