

Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening – Relevance to Equality Duties

1. Name of the proposed new or changed legislation, policy, strategy, project or service being assessed

Definitive guideline on environmental offences

2. Individual officer(s) & Unit responsible for completing the Equality Impact Assessment:

Mary Jones, Office of the Sentencing Council

3. What is the main aim or purpose of the proposed new or changed legislation, policy, strategy, project or service and what are the intended outcomes?

<p>Aims/objectives</p> <p>The Sentencing Council aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote a clear, fair and consistent approach to sentencing; • produce analysis and research on sentencing; and • work to improve public confidence in sentencing. <p>The Council issued a draft guideline for consultation to support the achievement of these aims, specifically in relation to environmental offences. The consultation process informed the development of the definitive guideline for sentencing environmental offences.</p> <p>The definitive guideline will apply to offences sentenced in both the Crown Court and magistrates' courts and will replace the existing guidance in the Magistrates' Court Sentencing Guidelines.</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>In preparing this guideline, the Council has had regard to its statutory duties set out in section 120 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.</p> <p>The Council's intention is that the guideline will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant and up to date guidance on environmental offences • Consistency of approach to sentencing environmental offences • Increased public understanding of sentencing and in particular sentencing for environmental offences.
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4. What existing sources of information will you use to help you identify the likely equality on different groups of people?

(For example statistics, survey results, complaints analysis, consultation documents, customer feedback, existing briefings submissions or business reports, comparative policies from external sources and other Government Departments)

<p>A range of information and evidence about sentencing and diversity issues was taken into account during the development of the draft guideline issued for consultation and subsequently the definitive guideline.</p> <p>Sentencing statistics were analysed for the offences covered by the definitive guideline. Of all adults sentenced in 2012, 71 per cent were male. Just over a third of those sentenced were in the age bracket of 22 to 29 and an additional fifth were in each of the 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 age brackets. For the majority of adults sentenced, 87 per cent, their perceived ethnicity was either not recorded or not known. Of the remaining cases, 13 per cent were perceived to be of White origin by the police officer dealing with their case and less than 1 per cent were perceived to be of Black, Asian or other backgrounds.</p> <p>The definitive guideline on environmental offences has been informed by a 12 week public consultation on the draft guideline. Respondents did not identify any equality and diversity issues.</p> <p>Alongside the consultation, resource assessment and this equality impact assessment, the Council is publishing an analysis and research bulletin that sets out key data in relation to the sentencing of environmental offences. The bulletins can be found on the sentencing Council's website: www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk</p>

5. Are there gaps in information that make it difficult or impossible to form an opinion on how your proposals might affect different groups of people? If so, what are the gaps in the information and how and when do you plan to collect additional information?

Note this information will help you to identify potential equality stakeholders and specific issues that affect them - essential information if you are planning to consult as you can raise specific issues with particular groups as part of the consultation process. EIAs often pause at this stage while additional information is obtained.

6. Having analysed the initial and additional sources of information including feedback from consultation, is there any evidence that the proposed changes will have a **positive impact** on any of these different groups of people and/or promote equality of opportunity?

Please provide details of who benefits from the positive impacts and the evidence and analysis used to identify them.

The Council anticipates that the guideline will have a generally positive equalities impact. The guideline's principal objective is to promote greater consistency in sentencing by giving courts a structured decision making process to follow for environmental offences. The Council considers that the increased consistency and transparency in the sentencing process should ensure that there is less scope for any discrimination.

In particular the definitive guideline for sentencing individuals sets out that:

- offenders who have a mental disorder or learning disability where linked to the commission of the offence; offenders whose age and/or lack of maturity affects their responsibility; offenders who have serious medical conditions requiring urgent, intensive or long-term treatment; and offenders who are sole or primary carers for dependent relatives will have these factors considered when mitigation is assessed.

7. Is there any feedback or evidence that additional work could be done to promote equality of opportunity?

If the answer is yes, please provide details of whether or not you plan to undertake this work. If not, please say why.

The Sentencing Council received no feedback or evidence in the consultation to suggest that the draft guideline requires amendment on the basis of promoting equality.

8. Is there any evidence that proposed changes will have **an adverse equality impact** on any of these different groups of people?

Please provide details of who the proposals affect, what the adverse impacts are and the evidence and analysis used to identify them.

None identified

9. Is there any evidence that the proposed changes have **no equality impacts**?

Please provide details of the evidence and analysis used to reach the conclusion that the proposed changes have no impact on any of these different groups of people.

N/A

10. Is a full Equality Impact Assessment Required?
(If no, please explain why not)

No

Having conducted a 12 week public consultation on the draft guideline, there is no evidence that the definitive guideline will have any adverse impact on equalities to warrant a full Equality Impact Assessment. The Council's decision has been informed by responses to the consultation.

NOTE - You will need to complete a full EIA if:

- the proposals are likely to have equality impacts and you will need to provide details about how the impacts will be mitigated or justified
- there are likely to be equality impacts plus negative public opinion or media coverage about the proposed changes
- you have missed an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and need to provide further details of action that can be taken to remedy this

If your proposed new or changed legislation, policy, strategy, project or service involves an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system and you have identified equality impacts of that system, a focused full EIA for ICT specific impacts should be completed. The ICT Specific Impacts template is available from MoJ ICT or can be downloaded from the Intranet at: <http://intranet.justice.gsi.gov.uk/justice/eqdiv/equal-impact.htm> , and should be referenced here.

11. If a full EIA is not required, you are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts. Please provide details of how you will monitor evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place.

The Council has a statutory duty to monitor the impact of the new guidelines. This monitoring will be undertaken through the Crown Court Sentencing Survey which was launched in October 2010 and allows the Council to monitor the frequency of the presence in environmental offences of certain aggravating and mitigating factors which could have potential equalities impact. Sentencing in the magistrates' courts will be monitored using existing Ministry of Justice sentencing statistics data. In addition, during the first year that the guideline is in force, the Sentencing Council will work with Environment Agency prosecutors to collect additional data on the use of the guideline in both magistrates' and Crown Courts. This will produce data that will assist the Sentencing Council in monitoring the equalities impact of the guideline and an initial review will take place after the guideline has been in force one year.

12. Name of Senior Manager and date approved

(Note - sign off at this point should **only** be obtained if:

- there are no equality impacts
- the changes have promoted equality of opportunity

You should now complete a brief summary (if possible, in less than 50 words) **setting out which policy, legislation or service the EIA relates to, how you assessed it, a summary of the results of consultation a summary of the impacts (positive and negative) and, any decisions made, actions taken or improvements implemented as a result of the EIA**, including the review mechanism. The summary will be published on the external MoJ website.

The Council has had regard to a wide variety of information and evidence relating to sentencing and its equalities impact. It is expected and intended that the definitive guideline on environmental offences will help to promote equality of opportunity and will reduce the potential for discrimination as it is designed to promote greater consistency in sentencing. Following its implementation the Council will monitor the impact of the guideline.

Name (must be grade 5 or above): Michelle Crotty

Department: Office of the Sentencing Council

Date: 18 February 2014

Note: If a full EIA is required hold on to the initial screening and when the full EIA is completed send the initial and full screening together. **If a full EIA is not required send the initial screening by email to the Corporate Equality Division (CED), for publication. Where an EIA has also been completed in relation to ICT specific aspects, email this to CED and copy to MoJ ICT**