

# Common Equality Risks in Education:

A resource for assessing  
impact in schools and local  
authorities



WLGA • CLILC

## Introduction

Your local authority will usually have an equality impact assessment tool. These assessments are designed to ensure that the work that you do takes account of any related equality issues. Many different forms and templates are available which allow different authorities to write up their assessments and to provide evidence in a standard way. The WLGA believe that where these are designed to fit in with corporate styles and other elements of the planning process, they are the best means for relevant and distinctive local assessments.

This guide does not suggest a template for writing up assessments of impact. Instead it describes some common circumstances where there is a risk of negative impact occurring and also describes ways in which you can engage with different groups so that you can benefit from their knowledge of services and barriers they may face. If you want more information and guidance on the process of assessing impact see *Assessing impact: A guide for listed public authorities in Wales*.

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/Wales/PSED\\_Wales\\_docs/4\\_assessment\\_of\\_impact\\_bk.doc](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Wales/PSED_Wales_docs/4_assessment_of_impact_bk.doc)

## How to use this section of the guide

1. Read through the common risks identified and consider, are they relevant to the proposal that I am assessing?
2. Take inspiration from the common risks when considering what local information you would like to have to inform your decisions.
3. Consider who you can talk to who can help identify impacts which are more specific or even unique to the proposal you are assessing.

## Common risks

This guidance has been developed on the basis of common circumstances where there is a risk of negative impact for particular groups. A key role for Equality Impact Assessment is identifying these potential negative impacts and overcoming them. Potential negative impacts may be avoided at the proposal/design stage or recognised in current or ongoing service delivery. In the later case negative impact will need to be mitigated or managed.

We have identified three broad areas which we have divided potential impacts into:

- Impacts that restrict **ACCESS**
- Impacts that affect the **QUALITY** of the service experienced by the service user or the quality of the work environment or experience of work for employees.
- Impacts that can affect the **OUTCOME** experienced by service users or employees.

When we think about service users in the context of schools we should consider pupils, parents and wider community stakeholders. They are the key focus of this guidance. Issues relating to local authority employees, including school staff, are covered in separate guidance.

One of the biggest common risks is in not embedding equalities work within the regular business of education departments and schools. If equalities work is seen as an add-on, it will not get the attention it requires and may be disruptive of other planning processes. What should be achieved is a culture of equality, working harmoniously as part of planning processes. To assist schools with this we have listed related questions from the ESTYN Self-Evaluation Guidance, alongside each of the risks we describe.

**Please note our list of potential impacts is not an exhaustive list and should certainly not be used as a checklist.**

### **Identifying more specific impacts**

This guide gives you an idea about some common and recognised issues and risks. What it does not do, of course, is give you specific local information about your community and your schools. Gathering your own information is vital to making impact assessment real and relevant. This will include engaging with, staff, parents, pupils and community stakeholders, and also analysing your own datasets on attainment, attendance, exclusions and so on. See the appendices for more information on community engagement and consultation.

### **Turning Negative Impacts into positives**

Assessments of impact have a significant role to play in providing information about local priorities, what national issues are relevant locally and of particular specific local issues. This information is a key component of any Strategic Equality Plan and any review of Equality objectives should start with the questions:

- What have we learned from assessments of impact?
- Do our assessments point to any issues that should be worked up into equality objectives?

## Access Risks

Mitigating action for access and all other risks needs to be practical and proportionate, but fundamentally service managers, head teachers and Governors need to be confident that all pupils can reasonably access services and are not unjustifiably disadvantaged by having any of the protected characteristics. Schools already have Disability Access Plans in place. These plans may address some of the potential issues raised here but as policies and procedures change and school life continues to evolve new risks can occur from time to time. Schools and local authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments to ensure access and, through the public sector equality duties need, to cater for the needs of all protected groups so the scope is wider than Disability Access Plans.

### **Access to the whole curriculum and other activities**

Unsurprisingly this issue receives a great deal of attention in ESTYN's self-assessment guidance. There are two types of barriers which prevent pupils from having equal access to the full range of activities which schools offer. Physical barriers, that can prevent pupils with a range of needs from participating, and social barriers, which can also affect a range of pupils.

Physical barriers are discussed in more detail as part of other risks below. The key question is:

- Are adaptations in place to allow disabled pupils to participate in the full range of the curriculum, off-site visits, the full range of 14-19 Learning Pathways, and the school's sporting, cultural and social activities?

Social barriers to learning can be complex. Overcoming engrained stereotypes, about subject choices and other activities, can be complex and may need involvement and discussion with parents, individual pupils and classes. Gender segregation is one of the most common examples with girls and boys choosing courses and other activities which are distinct from each other. These choices can have an impact on the pupils for the rest of their lives restricting future choices and contributing to the gender pay gap. This occurs without there being any overt sexist policy in place in the school. It is the result of societal pressures and expected norms. In this context simply allowing 'free choice' is not enough and intervention (such as additional targeted information) is required to act as a counter balance to negative peer pressure.

There is significant scope for positive action to challenge stereotypes and promote freer choices. Particular courses and career paths where some groups are under represented can be specifically promoted to these underrepresented groups. Positive role models can play a role and promotional and informational materials can be adjusted to show a variety of people participating in certain activities which they would not normally be associated with such groups. Remember, it is not only gender where there is

an issue. Stereotypes exist based about what different races, sexual orientations and disabled people supposedly can and can't do or are supposedly well suited to. The key question here is:

- Are attempts made to challenge traditions stereotypes in course and career choices?

### **Related ESTYN Self-Evaluation Questions:**

#### **CIF 2.4.1 How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our school?**

- Do we offer equal access to the curriculum and challenge stereotypes in pupils' attitudes, choices, expectations and achievements?
- Do we analyse and where appropriate address gender gaps in subjects?

#### **CIF 2.1.1 How well do we meet the needs of learners, employers and the community?**

- What is the effect of our systems for grouping pupils, taking account of gender balance and class sizes?
- Are courses equally accessible to all, and are any constraints on pupils' choices in their best interests? (Secondary schools)
- Do pupils have access to appropriate qualifications that meet their interests, abilities and learning styles? (Secondary schools)
- Do we provide opportunities and pathways that enable pupils to access a range of formal, non-formal and informal elements? (Secondary schools)
- Does the key stage 4 and sixth form curriculum link with the local curriculum in relation to the 14-19 Learning Pathways and the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (2009)? (Secondary schools)
- Are we successful in overcoming barriers to pupils' learning? (Secondary schools)

#### **CIF 2.3.2 How well are pupils supported with specialist services, information and guidance?**

- Does the quality of guidance and advice help pupils, students and parents/ carers make choices about courses in key stage 4 and the sixth form and, where there are choices available, in key stage 3? (Secondary schools)
- Does the quality of information provided to pupils, students and parents/carers in course handbooks and other materials provide appropriate guidance? (Secondary schools)

#### **CIF 3.3.2 How well do we collaborate with partners to deliver coherent programmes and choices?**

- How well do we work with our partners to ensure our pupils have access to a range of suitable vocational and general education courses? (Secondary schools)

**CIF 2.3.1 How well do we meet the provision for health and wellbeing, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?**

- Do we encourage pupils to engage with the arts, sports and other cultural activities through their studies and extra-curricular activities?

**Travel and access to the building or setting**

People with different characteristics have different access needs. Where services are provided from a particular building or setting the first consideration is whether potential service users can reach the building or setting itself. An assessment of how easy it is to get to a venue may influence decisions about:

- Where to locate services.
- Whether alternative or multiple venues could be used.
- Provision of transport information.
- Transport provision and physical adjustments.

**In the case of schools**

The presence of this risk is really an argument for impact assessing local authority school transport provision to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. The school may have a role in advising the local authority on particular pupils needs. Schools are often in a good position to raise issues about physical features around the school. For example, might a drop curb improve access to the school for disabled parents pupils or staff?

Another circumstance where this concern may be relevant to schools is in relation to 'school trips' and other off site visits. This is simply a matter of ensuring that all pupils' transport needs are considered, particularly those of pupils with mobility problems, when planning such activities.

Remember that as the 14-19 curriculum offer has developed over recent years there are many more incidences where pupils may receive education 'off site' with another provider. You will need to consider whether any pupils could be prevented from taking up these opportunities due to difficulties in accessing learning settings outside of school in other settings. Can any alternative arrangements be made? Can the partner provider do anything to improve access?

## Related ESTYN Self Evaluation Questions:

### CIF 3.3.2 How well do we collaborate with partners to deliver coherent programmes and choices?

- Do we ensure that our pupils access the courses in an efficient and safe way?

### **Opening Times, Delivery Schedules and Appointments**

Opening times, delivery schedules and appointments can have a significant impact on whether or not people are able to access services. Different protected groups have different needs which have to be understood when opening times, schedules and appointments procedures are designed. For example, a practicing Christian may be inconvenienced by appointments being scheduled for Sundays while a practicing Muslim may be similarly inconvenienced by appointments scheduled for a Friday. Appointments or opening times which clash with the school run may disproportionately inconvenience women who currently take on the majority of child caring responsibilities.

#### **In the case of schools**

Much of the school timetable is fixed but there are exceptions such as parent's evenings, open-days, cultural and sporting events etc. For these you may need to consider whether they are scheduled in a way which does not present a barrier. When specific appointments with parents are necessary flexibility and communication will be the key.

### **Settings, Buildings and facilities**

An authority or school may be at risk of illegally discriminating against particular groups if its building or other learning settings do not have suitable facilities. Those who are already familiar with the 'social model of disability', where the emphasis is on attitudinal and environmental barriers, will understand many of the issues concerned with this risk. However, it is not only disabled people who may require specific facilities. Provision for those caring for babies or those with religious requirements such as washing facilities are other examples. What facilities are relevant, and what may be reasonably expected to be available, will vary depending on the particular use of the building.

#### **In the case of schools**

School buildings have to be suitable for staff, pupils and parents any number of whom may be disabled, have specific religious needs or caring commitments which could require adaptations or facilities. Engagement, asking people about their requirements, is the best way of determining what these needs may be but some national and local organisations can also offer practical advice and guidance. These include; local access groups or disabled peoples forums, organisations representing specific groups of disabled people and local religious organisations and community groups.

## Related ESTYN Self Evaluation Questions:

### CIF 2.4.2 How well do we ensure that the physical environment is appropriate for pupils' needs?

- Are resources well matched to pupils' needs?
- Does the accommodation provide a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment to support teaching and learning?
- Is the accommodation sufficient for the number of pupils and the activities offered?
- Are the toilet and changing facilities appropriate for pupils' needs?
- Are the buildings and grounds maintained appropriately?

### Face to face communication and telephone

Are service users able to communicate with employees in Welsh and English? Are employees able to communicate with the organisation in Welsh and English? Are there Welsh and English Speaking employees? Are there translation and interpretation services (including, British Sign Language) available if and when they are needed? Are induction loops available?

These are just some of the questions to consider when services involve face to face communication they address some of the fundamentals of communication; can I understand and can I be understood?

Equally important is the customer experience. While different individuals will have different communication styles and different levels of skill as communicators it is important that all employees have an understanding of equality and human rights issues and of their own local communities. For this reason the most important question, on this topic, may be; have staff been adequately trained to understand and to meet the needs of the individual customers they may come into contact with?

### In the case of schools

A range of guidance and support is available to schools receiving pupils who have difficulties communicating in English or Welsh, for a list see Appendix 3.

Schools will need to give consideration to the communication needs of parents as well as pupils and a first step towards this is simply to be aware of what these needs are. Identifying needs early on can help more acute situations run smoothly. For example, identifying in advance that a particular parent may need a British Sign Language, or foreign language interpreter, and identifying how this can be provided would speed things up if a meeting with the parent becomes necessary later in the year. In the case of set meetings such as parents evenings things can be arranged well in advance.



## **Publications written communication and the internet**

All council service departments need to consider questions such as: are publications available in a variety of formats (internet, hard copy, Braille, large print, audio, different languages)? Is the right information given in a timely fashion and in a clear manner? Have websites been designed to build on best practice for people with visual impairments? Who is the target audience and is it suitable for them? These are just some of the questions which need to be asked when preparing written and other visual communications.

### **In the case of schools**

Schools produce a lot of written and visual communication material; formal letters, newsletters, posters, flyers, forms and questionnaires, websites, reports, plans and strategies and of course teaching materials. There is no magic formula which will maximise the effectiveness of these in all circumstances. The key is to consider the intended audience. The more that is understood, about the range of communication needs, the easier it is to plan and ensure that information is available in the required formats from the off. This can often be less costly and less time consuming than an ad hoc approach which is reactive and reliant on responding to people complaints.

### **Related ESTYN Self Evaluation Questions:**

#### **CIF 2.2.2 How well do we raise pupils' achievement through assessment of and for learning?**

- Do we produce reports on pupils that are clear, consistent and informative, and set out areas for improvement?
- Do parents/carers understand assessment procedures and have access to records and reports relating to their children?

#### **CIF 2.3.2 How well are pupils supported with specialist services, information and guidance?**

- Does the quality of information provided to pupils, students and parents/carers in course handbooks and other materials provide appropriate guidance? (Secondary schools)

## Quality Risks

Mitigating action for quality and all other risks needs to be practical and proportionate, but fundamentally service managers, head teachers and Governors need to be confident that all pupils will experience high quality service relevant to their specific needs and are not unjustifiably disadvantaged by having any of the protected characteristics.

## Failure to maintain dignity, respect and a safe environment

This is simply about ensuring that people are treated well or failing to do so. It is a vast area ranging from direct discrimination and harassment to oversights within well intentioned behaviours and procedures that do not fully understand or take into account people's needs. In fact, although abuse and bigotry does exist, problems are also likely to arise where well intentioned people proceed on the basis of faulty assumptions.

Some key questions are:

- Are Governors and senior staff (who will make decisions about policies and plans) trained in equality and human rights awareness?
- Are employees (who will deliver the service/ implement the policy) trained in equality and human rights awareness?
- Is the training relevant and specific enough to benefit them in their work?

### In the case of schools

Within the school environment there is a considerable risk that pupils, and in some cases teachers, with particular protected characteristics, will experience bullying and harassment. National research indicates that racist, homophobic, disability related and transphobic bullying are all significant problems. There is also evidence to suggest that boys and girls experience bullying in different ways. Schools should consider, then, whether anti-bullying strategies recognise, analyse, intervene and prevent the identity based bullying that some groups face as well as general activity to reduce bullying overall. More information and Welsh Government Guidance on bullying can be found at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/wellbeing/antibullying/?lang=en>

There is also a risk that without positive interventions a culture of inequality can develop in which pupils use offensive sexist, racist or homophobic language or display attitudes and behaviours which re-enforce gender disabled or religious stereotypes. Bullying and harassment policies for staff will also need to recognise any identity based harassment and to pick up on any negative trends which can indicate a culture of inequality in the workplace.

The other aspect of this risk relates to whether specific cultural, physical or other needs are understood and taken into account when policies are developed and activities planned and implemented. Again this is both simple and vast. Simple, because what is required is simply the consideration of needs; vast, because this needs to apply across the whole range of school activity.

Some example considerations include:

- Are curriculum resources relevant to a range of cultural and religious perspectives?
- Do materials promote positive role models?
- Are contacts maintained with a diverse range of community groups?
- Do canteen staff understand cultural and religious dietary requirements and offer an appropriate menu?
- Do pupils have opportunities to learn about a range of cultures, faiths and lifestyles?
- Are pupils given the opportunity and encouraged to share information about their own identities and backgrounds?
- Do pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) receive the support they require?

### **Relevant ESTYN Self-Evaluation Questions:**

#### **CIF 2.4.1 How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our school?**

- Do we develop tolerant attitudes and ensure that all pupils and staff are free from harassment?
- How well do we promote the prevention and elimination of oppressive behaviour including bullying, sexism, racism, homophobia and violent extremism?
- Are our policies and procedures effective in dealing with specific instances of discrimination or oppressive behaviour?
- Do we take reasonable steps to ensure that current and prospective pupils with disabilities do not suffer less favourable treatment in school or in respect of admissions and exclusions?
- Do we provide appropriate equality training for staff?

#### **CIF 1.2.1 Keeping Healthy and safe**

- To what extent do pupils feel free from physical and verbal abuse in school?
- Are there incidents of bullying or harassment? Is the number increasing or decreasing over time?

### **CIF 2.3.4 How well do we meet the needs of learners with ALN?**

- Do we have effective arrangements for the identification and monitoring of ALN?
- Do our pupils with ALN receive the short-term or long-term support that they need?
- Do we offer pupils with ALN access to all areas of the curriculum, including the subjects of the National Curriculum unless disapplication is specified in individual statements?
- Do grouping and support systems meet the range of pupils' needs without adversely affecting the breadth, balance and continuity of the pupils' curriculum?
- Do we integrate, support and provide for pupils with ALN within mainstream classes and in special groups, so that they can achieve appropriate standards?
- Does the quality of support for pupils help them achieve the objectives set in individual education plans?
- Do we conduct regular reviews of progress, including annual reviews?
- Do our assessment, recording and reporting procedures satisfy statutory requirements?
- Do we consult parents/carers regularly?
- Do we evaluate the adequacy and usefulness of contributions from learning support assistants, support teachers, educational psychologists, medical, paramedical and nursing specialists and other external agencies?

### **Inadequate engagement and feedback systems**

A variety of negative impacts can ensue because relevant people were not consulted or engaged within the development of policies and plans or because 'customers' were unable to provide feedback. Feedback from service users can identify negative impacts, suggest improvements to service design and inform you of the needs of individuals and groups within the community.

Ensuring that stakeholders are involved in developing plans and policies and are able to provide feedback once implemented is a powerful means for avoiding or overcoming negative impacts.

### **In the case of schools**

It is pupils, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff and wider community stakeholder outside of schools who can contribute to the development of sound policies, plans and day to day activities which avoid negative impacts.

In pursuing its day to day activities schools should consider:

- Are pupils and parents given choices or opportunities to discuss the content and other details of their studies?
- Are pupils and parents provided with feedback about assessments and achievement?
- Are pupils and parents able to raise questions or concerns about assessments and achievement?
- Are pupils and parents able to raise questions or concerns about facilities, members of staff or other pupils?

In the development of policies and plans schools should consider:

- Are the necessary mechanisms/processes in place to enable external equality stakeholders to raise issues of localised inequality (e.g. accessible online feedback forms)
- Are these (and national issues) considered when developing policies and plans?
- Is the school, possibly through the local authority, able to contact community groups and individuals across all of the protected characteristics?
- Are any specific issues of disadvantage, raised during consultation and involvement, responded to directly by appropriate senior personnel?
- Are proposals modified as a result of engagement and involvement?

Once a policy or plan is implemented schools should consider:

- Are clear accessible means in place to allow pupils, parents, staff and wider community stakeholders to provide feedback, including complaints?
- Do feedback/complaints monitoring procedures allow for an analysis by protected characteristic?
- Is it possible to submit and receive feedback via a variety of means?
- Do published reports include information about progress made towards equality goals and are these widely circulated?

### Relevant ESTYN Self-Evaluation Questions:

#### **CIF 1.2.2 How much do pupils participate in and enjoy their learning**

- To what extent do pupils make choices about how and what they learn?
- Are pupils' views about what and how they learn taken seriously?
- Do pupils discuss the topics to be taught and help to plan schemes of work and activities?

#### **CIF 1.2.3 What is the extent of pupils' community involvement and decision-making?**

- To what extent are pupils involved in discussions about learning and

teaching and what impact does this have?

- Are all pupils, including those from different groups, involved in making decisions about their life in school, for example through promoting environmental issues and healthier lifestyles?
- Are pupils involved in influencing policy development, such as contributing to aspects of the school improvement plan, where applicable?
- Are there structures to ensure good liaison between pupil representatives and the governing body?
- Are pupils involved in school self-evaluation?
- Does the school council have an impact? Does it have a track record of success as a result of its work?
- Has the school council been given the opportunity to nominate two representatives to be associate pupil governors on the governing body, where applicable? (Secondary schools)

**CIF 2.4.1 How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our school?**

- Do we monitor and effectively address any related issues or complaints that arise?

**CIF 2.2.2 How well do we raise pupils' achievement through assessment of and for learning?**

- Do we use different forms of feedback effectively to inform pupils about their learning?
- Are we consistent in the quality and amount of feedback given to pupils?
- Do we encourage pupils to take note of feedback?
- Do we encourage parents/carers to respond to reports on progress?

## Outcome Risks

Mitigating action for outcome and all other risks needs to be practical and proportionate, but fundamentally service managers, head teachers and Governors need to be confident that all pupils have an equal chance of enjoying positive outcomes in life and are not unjustifiably disadvantaged by having any of the protected characteristics.

### **Negative impacts because of a failure to understand and respond flexibly to needs 1: Learning Outcomes**

Where services do not understand the needs of service users there is an increased likelihood of failing to secure positive outcomes. Time, energy and resources may be misdirected into unsuitable provision instead of support which is necessary and helpful. Services should consider whether they have satisfaction/customer feedback and other information systems which can be analysed to assess the needs of different individuals, groups and communities?

#### **In the case of learning outcomes in schools**

It is important that schools collect and analyse information on achievement and attainment for each protected group so that any trends and gaps in performance can be identified. National research suggests a range of performance gaps with underachievement by boys, pupils from Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds and pupils with disabilities. Learning outcomes are also influenced by issues such as attendance and exclusions. National research also shows significant variation, by protected group, for these issues. For example; Boys, pupils with SEN and pupils from non-white backgrounds are more likely to be excluded. Also children from Gypsy or Irish Traveller backgrounds are more likely to be excluded and more likely to have poor attendance records than other pupils.

Headteachers, Governors and the local authority need to be confident that they have identified any gaps in learning outcomes (including attainment and other achievement measures) between pupils who share one of the protected characteristic and those who do not, and have taken steps to identify the causes of these gaps.

#### **Related ESTYN Self-Evaluation Questions:**

##### **CIF 2.4.1 How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our school?**

- Do we take into account and value the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and act appropriately on this information?

##### **CIF 1.1.2 How good are the standards of groups of learners?**

- Is the gap between boys' and girls' achievement bigger or smaller than national trends?
- Do pupils with SEN achieve agreed learning goals?

- How well do other particular groups of pupils achieve? Do they make as much progress between key stages as other pupils? Do any groups perform better than the cohort as a whole? How well does their performance compare with the same groups locally or nationally?

## **Negative impacts because of a failure to understand and respond flexibly to needs 2: Wellbeing**

### **In the case of wellbeing outcomes in schools**

The school ethos should be one where pupils can develop safely. Providing for pupils mental and spiritual needs is part of this approach. ESTYN's Self-Evaluation guidance details elements which schools should consider in taking this forward. Aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural teachings and practice will have different relevance for specific individuals and communities so engagement is the key to achieving successful outcomes. Feedback from individuals and community groups is essential in informing relevant approaches and future practice.

### **Related ESTYN Self-Evaluation Questions:**

#### **CIF 2.4.1 How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our school?**

- Do we take into account and value the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and act appropriately on this information?

#### **CIF 2.3.1 How well do we meet the provision for health and wellbeing, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?**

- Do our pupils enjoy life in school?
- Do we encourage our pupils to develop a sense of curiosity through reflection on their own and other people's lives and beliefs, their environment and the human condition?
- Do we consider life's fundamental questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions as well as from pupils' own experience and viewpoint?
- Do our acts of collective worship contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
- Do our acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements?

### **Failure to take positive steps**

When inequalities have been identified through research, information systems or engagement it is necessary to respond to this. Key questions are:



- Is any information available which suggests that one protected group may experience different outcomes than others? Have any steps been taken to tackle this?
- Have any suggestions for changes to the way in which a service is delivered come to light from the information collected about the needs of particular protected groups?
- Have any suggested or identified changes been included in proposals? If they have not it may be necessary to explain or justify why they have not.

### **In the case of schools**

Not all inequalities can be resolved instantly, but as issues are identified they ought to immediately become considerations in the policy, planning and day to day practice of the service or individual school. What this means in practice is, that as issues arise, throughout the year, decisions need to be taken as to the most appropriate means of addressing them:

- Can they be addressed in the classroom immediately or over a few weeks?
- Do senior staff need to discuss the issue with an outside body? (e.g. a partner provider for 14-19 Learning Pathway)
- Can a new initiative be developed within the year to promote a positive outcome?
- Is this a long-term issue which will require sustained work to promote a positive outcome?
- Do policies or procedures need to change?

Of course these 'options' are not mutually exclusive. An incident of homophobic bullying may require an immediate response in relation to the pupils who were involved, **and** sustained work to tackle homophobic language in the school, **and perhaps**, a change in the anti-bullying policy, if new ideas about dealing with homophobic bullying have come to light.

Many issues, such as, gaps in attendance or attainment outcomes between different groups, will be identified as part of a regular monitoring and review process. As such these issues should be dealt with as part and parcel of the school improvement and inclusion work including through school development or improvement plans.

### **Related ESTYN Self-Evaluation Questions:**

#### **CIF 2.4.1 How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our school?**

- Have we established a school ethos that is inclusive and contributes towards community cohesion?
- Do we have a well-understood equality scheme that promotes equal opportunities and human rights? Does our policy meet statutory requirements? Do we have an action plan that ensures delivery of the policy?
- Do we provide appropriate equality training for staff?

#### **Disproportionate Negative Impact from the withdrawal of a Service**

In the current economic climate local authorities and school may find themselves considering proposals to withdraw a particular service completely. More detail on what should be considered here will be produced in separate guidance in the near future.

Fundamental questions are:

- Does the authority or school have information which allows it to analyse the impact of withdrawal of a service on protected groups?
- Do particular groups use the service more than others?
- Is the service more important to particular groups?
- If removed would particular groups find it more difficult than others to access alternative provision?
- Can such impacts be justified?

### **Relevant ESTYN Self Evaluation Questions:**

#### **CIF 3.4.1 How well do we manage our staff and resources?**

- Do pupils have enough appropriate learning resources?

## **Appendix 1: Extract from the Community Engagement Pillar of the Equality Improvement Framework**

### **Consulting and involving the right people on the right things**

**The authority consults and involves relevant communities of interest and individuals on equality objectives, equality impact assessments, significant policy and service delivery plans.**

#### **Suggested actions/goals:**

- The necessary mechanisms/processes have been established to enable external equality stakeholders to communicate issues of localised inequality (e.g. accessible online feedback forms)
- Community groups/individuals across all of the protected characteristics are involved in the setting of corporate and service level equality objectives and undertaking Equality Impact Assessments
- The authority has made contact with community groups and individuals across all of the protected characteristics and obtained agreement on the most appropriate consultation process (when, on what, and in the way people want to be involved or consulted)
- Reasonable attempts have been made to contact groups and individuals who have not engaged with the organisation in the past
- An agreed methodology for meaningful consultation on significant policy or service plans is in place (i.e. this avoids the sending of long policy documents or poorly administered public meetings)
- Involvement of community groups/individuals across all of the protected characteristics happens as part of the business planning process – identifying improvement required at the corporate and service levels
- Progress on service and corporate commitments is opened up to regular direct external challenge and scrutiny from the community
- Specific issues of disadvantage raised during consultation and involvement are responded to directly by the appropriate senior management personnel

## **Appendix 2: List of national representative bodies by protected characteristic.**

### **Age**

Children's Commissioner Wales  
<http://www.childcom.org.uk/>

Barnardos Cymru  
[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/who\\_we\\_are/in\\_your\\_region/wales.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/who_we_are/in_your_region/wales.htm)

NSPCC Cymru  
[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/policyandpublicaffairs/wales/wales\\_wda48589.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/policyandpublicaffairs/wales/wales_wda48589.html)

Older Peoples Commissioner  
<http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/splash.aspx>

Age Cymru  
<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/>

### **Disability**

Disability Wales  
<http://www.disabilitywales.org/>

The Access Association  
<http://www.accessassociation.co.uk/>

### **Sexual orientation and Gender reassignment**

LGBT Excellence Centre  
<http://lgbtec.org.uk/>

Stonewall Cymru  
<http://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/cymru/>

### **Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality**

North Wales Race Equality Network  
<http://nwren.org/>

South east Wales race Equality Council  
<http://www.sewrec.org.uk/partners.html>

Valleys Regional Equalities Council  
<http://www.valrec.org/>

### **Religion or belief**

Interfaith Wales

<http://www.interfaithwales.org/>

**Sex**

Coalition on men and Boys

[www.comab.org.uk](http://www.comab.org.uk)

Welsh Women's Aid

<http://www.welshwomensaid.org/index.html>

Chwarae teg

<http://www.chwaraeteg.com/>

### **Appendix 3: Resources for Children who have difficulties in Communicating in either English or Welsh**

English as and Additional Language Association of Wales

<http://www.ealaw.org.uk/>

Welsh Medium Education Strategy and further Guidance

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmediumstrat/?lang=en>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshstrategicplan/?lang=en>