

# Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Form

## Section One – Screening

Name of strategy, policy or project:
Communication of the provision for the nomination of co-habiting partner for survivors pensions
Directorate and service area:
Finance IT and Trading - Strategy and Compliance / Devon Pension Services
Name and contact details of officer completing assessment:
Rod Turner – Principle Pensions Manager – X1910
<p>1. What is the main purpose of the strategy/policy/project (or the changes you want to make to it)?</p> <p>Effectively communicate the changes in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations which provide eligible co habiting partners the opportunity to access survivors' pension benefits.</p>
<p>2. What are the main activities of the strategy/policy/project?</p> <p>Develop a communication bulletin and delivery strategy involving a wide range of mediums. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations to Pension Scheme AGM, sponsoring employers and unions.</li> <li>• Email bulletins to employers</li> <li>• Article in the 'Insider'</li> <li>• Devon Pension Services Website updated</li> <li>• Bulletin notice to all members together with a nomination form</li> <li>• Employees scheme booklet (available in large print, Braille and a range of languages)</li> <li>• Respond to personal enquires via all mediums by staff competent in dealing with all enquires in a facilitative and non discriminatory way (email, telephone, written correspondence and face to face meetings)</li> </ul> <p>Communication strategy was designed to make all members aware of this important change in scheme benefits. Due to members' personal partnership status/arrangements not being held on our records, a blanket communication was considered to be the most effective way of reaching the eligible class of beneficiary. The bulletin issued to all members was drafted with guidance from the Corporate communications team on areas of plain English and consistency.</p>
<p>3. Who is intended to benefit from the strategy/policy/project, and how?</p> <p>Co habiting unmarried/non registered civil partners who satisfy the qualifying conditions of the</p>

LGPS regulations.

4. Is the strategy/policy/project consistent with the Council's equality policies?

Yes

5. Is responsibility for the strategy/policy/project shared with another department, authority or organisation? If so, what responsibility and which bodies?

Yes

DCLG – the stewards of the LGPS

All other administering authorities of the LGPS

What impact is the strategy/policy/project likely to have on different sections of the community? You may wish to use the table below as a prompt.

	<b>Positive impact – it could benefit</b> ✓ (check box)	<b>Negative impact – it could disadvantage</b> ✓ (check box)	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Are there additional factors that could contribute to the experience of isolation<sup>1</sup>? If so, what are they?</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Gender					
Men Women Lesbians, gay men and bisexual people Trans people People of different faith groups or beliefs including non-believers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive: Communication is given in a range of formats, including email, staff bulletins, presentations, booklets, websites, telephone and face to face enquiries.</p> <p>Negative: Telephone / face to face advice is only available during office hours</p>		<p>Presentations given to sponsoring employers, unions and members. Written communication provided to all members Bulletins issued and articles placed in DCC publications Telephone and face to face enquires available to all members. Consultation with DCC communications team undertaken</p>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to section 3 of the EINA guidance.

	<b>Positive impact – it could benefit</b> ✓ (check box)	<b>Negative impact – it could disadvantage</b> ✓ (check box)	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Are there additional factors that could contribute to the experience of isolation<sup>1</sup>? If so, what are they?</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
People of other ethnic backgrounds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive: Communication material is available in alternative languages on request. If a face to face meeting was required in an alternative language, an interpreter could be available</p> <p>Negative: Telephone contact may be difficult due to language barriers</p>		<p>LGE provide LGPS scheme information material in alternative languages</p> <p>DPS would employ the services of an interpreter if required</p>
People with physical, sensory or learning disabilities People with mental health issues Deaf people who use British sign language	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive: Communication material is available in a range of formats and delivery mechanisms. Large print and Braille versions of printed material, and corporate desktop adjustments for in-house electronic</p>		<p>Estuary House offices are on a ground floor with easy disabled access.</p> <p>LGE provide scheme information in large print / Braille</p> <p>DPS would employ the services of an</p>

	<b>Positive impact – it could benefit</b> ✓ (check box)	<b>Negative impact – it could disadvantage</b> ✓ (check box)	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Are there additional factors that could contribute to the experience of isolation<sup>1</sup>? If so, what are they?</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
			<p>publications. Face to face meetings available in a wheelchair friendly and easily (automatic doors) accessible office.</p> <p>Negative: Written material may not be best suited for the needs of those with learning disabilities. 'Official' correspondence may cause anxiety for those with learning disabilities.</p>		<p>interpreter if required For mental health issues, DPS would communicate through members advocates in order to protect the interests of the member at all times</p>

**Notes:**

- Faith groups cover a wide range of groupings, the most common of which are Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus. Consider faith categories individually and collectively when assessing positive and negative impacts.
- The categories relating to ethnicity include those used in the 2001 census. Consideration should be given to the needs of specific communities within the broad categories such as Bangladeshi people and to the needs of other communities such as Turkish/Turkish Cypriot, Greek/Greek Cypriot and Polish that do not appear as separate categories in the census.
- An adverse impact does not necessarily require action to be taken. Actions must remain in proportion with the benefits that could be achieved and resources available to complete them. If adverse impacts are identified and actions for improvement are not proportionate, the reasons for not taking action should be detailed and open to challenge.

7. If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:		
Legal?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>(i.e. it is not discriminatory under anti-discriminatory legislation – refer to the Council’s website or your Directorate Equality Representative if guidance is needed)</i>		
Intended?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Level of impact	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/>	LOW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If the negative impact is possibly discriminatory and not intended and/or of high impact you must complete section two of this form. If not, complete the rest of section one below and consider if completing section two would be helpful in making a thorough assessment.		
8. a) Could you minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance? Explain how: <b>We have ensured that:</b> Communications given in a range of formats, including email, staff bulletins, presentations, booklets, websites, telephone and face to face meetings. Alternative language formats provided by LGE. Language Interpreting service available if required. Meeting room is on ground floor with easy wheelchair access BSL interpreting services are available in required Advocates used (where known/ in place) to assist people with mental health difficulties		
b) Could you improve the strategy, project or policy’s positive impact? Explain how: Make sure that all our customer surveys are designed to ensure the response will identify all possible communication issues Consider the installation of a loop system in the meeting room Ensure front line staff are trained in mental health awareness <i>You may wish to use the action sheet at the end of Section Two.</i>		
9. If there is no evidence that the strategy, policy or project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improved relations – could it be adapted so that it does? How?		

**Please sign and date this form. Keep one copy, send a copy to your Directorate Equality Representative and publish the results on the Council's website.**

Signed:  R M TURNER PRINCIPAL PENSION MANAGER

Date: 8th May 2008

## Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Action Plan

Please list below any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this impact assessment.

Issue	Action required	Lead officer	Timescale	Resource implications	Comments
Installation of loop system in meeting room.  Mental Health awareness training	Review meeting every 6 months to assess need	Rod Turner	ongoing		Regular review meeting planned to assess the level of all needs recently experienced. Action plan to be devised at meeting if required.
Communication	Six monthly review of results of all customer surveys undertaken to identify any issues	Rod Turner	ongoing		Particularly where English is not a first language. Action plan to be devised at meeting if required.

### NOTES:

The actions taken here to communication the co habiting partner benefits have been taken as part of the wider development of the new look LGPS which was implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

As part of this development programme, discussion took place with the Department of Communities and Local Government, Local Government Employers (LGE) sponsoring employers and our own peer group of other administering authorities in the South West of which I am chair.

The LGE provide on request tailored information to meet the requirements of visual and sensory impairments and other languages.

Devon Pension Services is Chartermark accredited which is a standard that has a strong focus on the customer experience. We are continually striving to improve our service at all times.