

Equality Impact Assessment

Please see the sheet *How to Make an Equality Impact Assessment* for assistance to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708, or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru, for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely Equality Impact Assessment should be completed before a decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

I Details

I.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Petitions Scheme.

Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 notes the need for Local Authorities to adopt a Petitions Scheme.

I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

A statutory requirement is placed on the Council to adopt a Petitions Scheme which notes how the Council will deal with petitions.

The Scheme must note:

1. How to submit a petition
2. How and by when the receipt of the petition will be acknowledged
3. The steps that could be taken in response
4. Circumstances when the Council can choose not to take any further steps in response
5. How and by when the Council will ensure that a response to the petition is available.

Petitions are one way for individuals, community groups and organisations to participate in the democratic process, by raising matters that are of concern to the public with the Council, and allowing Elected Members to consider the need for change.

This Scheme sets out the steps the Council will take when it receives a petition from

individuals, community groups and organisations. It puts a process in place which addresses the requirement in the act, highlights how to proceed to submit the petition and what can be expected in response.

The requirements in terms of submitting a valid petition is outlined and it is highlighted who may sign the petition and how the Council will confirm a valid petition. Valid petitions received will be published on the Council's website, including the subsequent actions.

It is highlighted that legal and statutory requirements regarding holding a consultation cycle or statutory response periods are operational in a few specific fields, such as Schools' Restructuring and the Planning fields and it is emphasised that no petition will be accepted outside those statutory arrangements.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Annes Sion, Democracy Team Leader - on behalf of the Executive Board, Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

This is the first assessment following the first draft of the Petitions Scheme.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the partners it will be necessary to work with to undertake this assessment?

Councillors and Staff

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics?

No specific steps have been taken to engage with people with protected characteristics, as the Petitions Scheme is open to anyone over 16 and living, working, owning a business, landowners / ratepayers or studying in Gwynedd.

2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

None to note.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

We will operate in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be gathered?

Since what is in question highlights the Council's arrangements in terms of the process and arrangements following the submission of a petition, there are currently no gaps.

The availability of the petition will be a matter for the Principal Petitioner.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due attention to the impact any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to add other characteristics if you wish.

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	None	No impact identified.
The Welsh language	Positive	We enable and encourage individuals who wish to submit a petition to do so in Welsh or English.
Disability	Positive / negative /	Positive - it gives an opportunity for Gwynedd residents (as noted above) to submit a petition for the Council's attention, within the limitations to submit a petition. Negative - can cause frustration to some residents should the petition not be accepted.

Gender	None	No impact identified.
Age	None	No impact identified.
Sexual orientation	None	No impact identified.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	No impact identified.
Gender reassignment	None	No impact identified.
Pregnancy and maternity	None	No impact identified.
Marriage and civil partnership	None	No impact identified.

3.2 The Council, under the Equality Act 2010, has a duty to contribute positively to a fairer society through promoting equality and good relationships in its activities in the areas of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Promote equal opportunities	Yes	Opportunity for any individual to raise matters of importance with the Council.
Foster good relations	Yes	Yes, as above

4) **Analysing the results**

4.1 **Is the policy therefore likely to have a significantly positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?**

See the positive impact outlined above by giving an equal opportunity for everyone to submit a petition (within the scheme's restrictions).

4.2 **Is the policy therefore likely to have a significantly negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?**

In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, due attention must be given to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics. As a Petitions Scheme falls within the decisions that could be considered strategic, there is a duty to give due attention to act in a way that has been designed to reduce the inequalities that derive from "socio-economic" disadvantage. The assessment confirms that there are no specific impacts that would support any diversion from the recommendation.

4.3 **What should be done?**

Select one of the following:

Continue with the policy/service as it is robust	√
Revise the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and abolish the policy as the harmful impacts are too great	
Continue with the policy as any harmful impact can be justified	

4.4 **If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

We will review the work 12 months following the adoption of the Petitions Scheme.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to remove or reduce the negative impacts, please explain why here.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

We will review the work 12 months following the adoption of the Petitions Scheme.