Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Template – Part 1

Policy title and purpose (brief outline):	**'Our Valleys, Our Future'** **A high level plan to underpin the work of the Ministerial Taskforce for the Valleys and support regeneration of the valleys in respect of employment, skills, education, health, infrastructure, environment, culture and wellbeing.**
Name of official:	**Laura Evans** **Nathan Cook**
Department:	**Equality and Prosperity Division** **Talk Valleys Team**
Date:	**16 June 2017** **Reviewed 25 September 2017**
Signature:	**L Evans** **N Cook**

1. **Please provide a brief description of the policy/decision.**

   For example what is the overall objective of the policy/decision, what are the stated aims (including who the intended beneficiaries are), a broad description of how this will be achieved, what the measure of success will be, and the time frame for achieving this?

The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys was set up by the Welsh Government in July 2016 in response to a Manifesto Commitment following the National Assembly election and the EU referendum. It is chaired by Alun Davies, the Welsh Government's Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language. Ken Skates, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure and Julie James, the Minister for Skills and Science also sit on the taskforce. The taskforce is also comprised of a range of experts from the public, private and third sector who have been chosen not only for their expertise in various fields but also because they either live or work in the valleys.

'Our Valleys, Our Future' presents the high-level priorities of the taskforce which we believe are relevant to all areas across the Valleys. This includes across Good Quality Jobs and the Skills to do them, Better Public Services and Personal and Community Wellbeing – My Local Community. These priorities have been developed:

• in response to what we have been told during engagement sessions. An independent report of the engagement activity to date has been produced.

• based on relevant evidence such as the Well-being Plans for the local authorities based in the Valleys – an evidence report has been produced.

• in the context of a number of other related government strategies, such as the Employability Strategy and Taking Wales Forward.

A more detailed delivery plan has been produced and published in November 2017. This includes detail on how we will deliver the actions in Our Valleys, Our Future and when and identifying which partners will also be involved in delivery. We have been testing the high level priorities through a second phase of engagement during summer and the early autumn 2017. Further engagement will take place following the publication of the Delivery Plan.

The appropriate national indicators will be used to consider how the Valleys perform in relation to the rest of Wales, during the lifespan of the taskforce. A detailed analysis will be published on an annual basis to consider progress at population level. However, it must be noted that due to data lags, this will not create a dynamic picture of progress but instead aim to measure medium to long-term change. In the lifespan of the taskforce (until 2021) annual updates and monitoring will be published against key deliverables, including the 7000 economically inactive and unemployed people into work target.

2. **We have a legal duty to engage with people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (please refer to Annex A of the EIA guidance) identified as being relevant to the policy.   What steps have you taken to engage with stakeholders, both internally and externally?**

From the outset the taskforce were clear that engagement with valley communities should be the driving force behind any subsequent priorities or plans. The taskforce gave clear direction that this work would be a collaborative approach between Welsh Government, the public, private and third sector, but more importantly, with the community that this initiative was designed to serve.

With that in mind we embarked upon an intense engagement programme with communities across the valleys and wider stakeholders.

A series of thematic sessions were arranged with the purpose of finding out what the main issues, challenges and barriers were for different groups. These included sessions with young people, teachers, parents, parents accessing Flying Start settings and housing association tenants with a strong focus on older people and those with access issues. We also held sessions with businesses and employers, higher education providers and disability groups.

All attendees were assured that any access or language requirements would be met. All venues were physically accessible and some meetings were delivered through the medium of Welsh.

A series of open public engagement sessions were held across the valleys, in the evenings, to allow people with caring responsibilities, work or education commitments to be able to attend. The invitations/

adverts to these meeting were published in a variety of formats to be inclusive. This involved emails, facebook and twitter but also physical communication with the communities and 'old fashioned' posters being put up in the respective communities.

We used existing community networks to publicise the events to a full range of community members including young people, older people, disabled groups, parents, carers and BME groups. However, as far as the information we have can indicate, the public meetings were poorly attended by members of the BME and LGBT communities. It is difficult to confirm and quantify this assumption as we did not ask people to identify these characteristics at registration. It is also difficult to know how many people with different disabilities attended, although no one identified as requiring additional support needs such as BSL or Braille.

In order to ensure that some of the demographic gaps identified above were filled, we employed an independent research company to conduct a series of targeted focus groups. Participants for the 12 focus groups were selected specifically to ensure a cross section were involved including men, women, young people, older people, BAME groups, full and part-time employed, unemployed, graduates and non graduates, single parents and those with disabilities. As with the public meetings it was more difficult to secure involvement of BAME groups (including refugees and Gypsies and Travellers) and those of different faiths, so we have identified this as a particular area of focus for the next stage of engagement and we have discussed an approach with Equalities colleagues. While every effort was made to engage with people with a range of disabilities, this is also an area that we will need to revisit in the next phase on engagement.

An online survey was published with the purpose of conducting 'more traditional engagement' but also to allow people who were unable to participate in public meetings a safe environment in which to feed back their views to us. The wording of the survey was sense checked to ensure a 'plain English approach' for accessibility and was also published bilingually. We received approximately 700 completed responses from respondents across a range of socio-economic backgrounds across the valleys region.

In order to translate the findings of the engagement programme into priorities, we arranged a series of workshops with stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors to discuss the findings and to work with Welsh Government to turn these into actions. Stakeholders including representatives from private industry, public sector

employers, education providers, health care practitioners, housing providers, WLGA, WCVA and various Welsh Government. We have also engaged directly with partners such as the Princess Trust, Children in Wales, Disability Wales and schools and colleges across the valleys. This process is ongoing and we have identified a range of stakeholders which we will need to work with over the next few months as we implement the plan.

At the highest level, the Chair of the taskforce, Alun Davies Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, has engaged with all other Ministers and Cabinet Secretaries, including the First Minister, about the work of the taskforce to ensure 'all Government buy in'.

The high level plan and the delivery plan were published in a traditional format, in hard copy and online however we will also produce a video summary version of the high level plan, which has been prepared in 'plain English' with visual aids and is accessible. This is bilingual.

We also produced a bilingual young people friendly/ easy read version of the document and a bilingual summary leaflet which was distributed across the valleys to ensure that people who are digitally excluded can access and understand the work of the valleys taskforce.

3. Your decisions must be based on robust evidence. What evidence base have you used? Please list the source of this evidence e.g. National Survey for Wales. Do you consider the evidence to be strong, satisfactory or weak and are there any gaps in evidence?

All the evidence collected from the events outlined above has been collated into a full report by the independent research company. It is the conclusions from this report that have formed the basis of the high level plan. In the plan itself we have drawn clear lines between 'what you have told us' and 'what we are going to do, emphasising that this work is community driven and community focussed. This engagement report was published alongside the plan.

We also produced an evidence paper which draws on upon a range of contemporary evidence from different sources including: Cardiff and Swansea Bay City Deals; Bevan Foundation, Neath Economic Forum;

OECD; Regional Skills Partnerships; Education Consortia; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Oxfam Cymru; the What Works Centre for Wellbeing and Cardiff University.

The purpose of this evidence gathering exercise was to look what has been done before in the valleys, what approaches have worked in the valleys and in Wales (and what hasn't) and what approaches have been taken in other areas. For example some of the team went on a fact finding mission to Glasgow to look at initiatives that have been developed there and we have looked closely at the work of the 'Northern Power House' who have dealt with a similar de-industrialisation issues to those of the valleys.

We also looked at work Welsh Government has done previously when consulting with communities, to ascertain what has been said in respect of specific subject areas, for example we looked at the results of the 'talk childcare', 'talk communities' surveys, and consultations with or about vulnerable groups such as those undertaken in relation to child poverty, supported housing and mental health services.

We have also had discussions with the Future Generations and Well Being Commissioners office about the local authority Well Being Plans and have undertaken our own analysis of these. The plans and other publications, such as the consultation summaries, suggest that our evidence is robust, accurate and supported by a range of other evidence.

The taskforce has heard from the range of experts detailed above and consulted a range of new and existing evidence to set the priorities identified in the plan. While we have identified some areas/ protected characteristics that will require further engagement in the next phase, overall the evidence used is considered to be robust and strong.

It is important to note any opportunities you have identified that could advance or promote equality.

Impact

Please complete the next section to show how this policy / decision / practice could have an impact (positive or negative) on the

protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 (refer to the EIA guidance document for more information).

Lack of evidence is not a reason for *not* progressing to carrying out an EIA. Please highlight any gaps in evidence that you have identified and explain how/if you intend to fill these gaps.

4.1 Do you think this policy / decision / practice will have a positive or negative impact on people because of their age?

Age	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Younger people (*Children and young* *people, up to 18*)	X			Children and Young People have been engaged through schools, Flying Start settings and the plan will have a positive impact to improve future prosperity in the region. The plan supports young people across a range of measures such as apprenticeships, educational attainment and access to services, including green spaces and public health initiatives.
People 18-50	X			The plan identifies the need to embed approaches around prosperity for all. This includes assessing barriers for families and to support greater empowerment. The plan aims to create greater employment

				opportunities, improved transport and access to public services generally.
Older people (50+)	X			The plan recognises the particular barriers for older people around accessibility and accessing services in particular. Engagement has drawn upon older people's views about their communities, access to health care and transport. The plan aims to improve access to joined up services.

4.2 Because they are disabled?

Impairment	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Visual impairment	X			The plan has engaged with a forum set up by Disability Wales and with other disabled people in the Focus Groups. This included exploring specific access and barriers for disabled people in the valleys. We also know that welfare reform will hit valleys communities and disabled people particularly hard. The

				plan will work with disabled people to encourage greater empowerment and consider enhanced support through Working Wales to access job opportunities and improve access and independent living through a more integrated transport system and community based health care initiatives. However, we have identified need for greater engagement with people with visual, hearing and learning disabilities about their experiences, barriers and needs.
Hearing impairment	X			As Above
Physically disabled	X			As Above
Learning disability	X			As Above
Mental health problem	X			As Above. During the engagement exercise the taskforce were told that people do not feel supported by mental health services. The taskforce has therefore committed to a number of

				actions to address this, including prioritising the Valleys for the roll-out of the wellbeing bond – a new initiative designed to help increase physical activity and mental wellbeing.
Other impairments issues	X			As Above

4.3 Because of their gender (man or woman)?

Gender	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Male	X			The engagement has worked across genders, which has considered bespoke issues such as employment and increasing access and empowerment of men through community empowerment. We also heard about particular issues facing young single men and the plan will address some of these issues through housing, apprenticeships and employment initiatives.
Female	X			The engagement has worked with across

				genders, which has considered bespoke issues for women such as social care, childcare and employment opportunities

4.4 Because they are transgender?

Transgender	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
	X			The plan will aim to work with transgender organisations in the valleys and focussed engagement will be undertaken to hear about any specific barriers for transgender people in the valleys.

4.5 Because of their marriage or civil partnership?

Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Marriage	X			The plan will work with people of all different backgrounds. Although being

				married will not feature as a specific group to work with, their will be multiple benefits for people who are married.
Civil Partnership	**X**			The plan will work with people of all different backgrounds. Although being in a civil partnership will not feature as a specific group to work with, their will be multiple benefits for people who are in a civil partnership.

4.6   Because of their pregnancy or maternity?

Pregnancy and Maternity	**Positive**	**Negative**	**None / Negligible**	**Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?**
Pregnancy	**X**			During the engagement sessions, the issues of pregnancy and maternity were not raised as particular issues for valleys communities other than to note the lack of affordable childcare available. However the plan will aim to increase employment opportunities and

				increase good quality jobs, with appropriate terms and conditions and pregnancy and maternity policies, which will open access opportunities for families in the future. We are also piloting the childcare offer for 3 year olds in areas across the valleys. During the next stage of engagement we will look at issues around pregnancy and maternity, particularly in relation to employment and health care services.
Maternity (the period after birth)	**X**			As above

4.7 Because of their race?

Race	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Ethnic minority people e.g. Asian, Black,	X			There is evidence to support that people in ethnic communities are more likely to be in poverty. Through the next phase of engagement we will be working with people from ethnic

				minorities to consider any specific barriers in the valleys. Increasing employment, access to services and wellbeing will be tailored to consider certain groups.
National Origin (e.g. Welsh, English)	X			The plan will consider specific responses to consider supporting the Welsh language through provision. There will be a positive impact for any nationalities to increase access to decent job opportunities and to tackle poor working conditions.
Asylum Seeker and Refugees	X			The plan will consider specific barriers for ethnic minority groups – as above.
Gypsies and Travellers	X			The plan will consider specific barriers for ethnic minority groups – as above.
Migrants	X			The plan will consider specific barriers for ethnic minority groups – as above.
Others				

4.8 Because of their religion and belief or non-belief?

Religion and belief or non – belief	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Different religious groups including Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, Others (please specify)	X			The plan will undertake further engagement with different religious groups and faiths, in the next phase. This will consider any specific barriers to accessing increased job opportunities and to consider any concerns about wellbeing and access to services.
Belief e.g. Humanists	X			As above – the plan will include consideration of people's beliefs.
Non-belief	X			As above – the plan will include consideration of people's non-beliefs.

4.9 Because of their sexual orientation?

Sexual Orientation	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Gay men	**X**			The plan aims to engage further with

				LGBT communities in the valleys during the next phase of engagement. This will consider specific barriers and ensuring that approaches and deliverables in the more detailed plan are inclusive.
Lesbians	**X**			As above
Bi-sexual	**X**			As above

4.10 Do you think that this policy will have a positive or negative impact on people's human rights? *Please refer to point 1.4 of the EIA Annex A - Guidance for further information about Human Rights.*

Human Rights	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Human Rights including Human Rights Act and UN Conventions	X			The plan will consider impacts of Human Rights and will aim to protect rights of people in the valleys, including improving fairness and equality.

If you have identified any impacts (other than negligible ones), positive or negative, on any group with protected characteristics, please complete Part 2.

Only if there are no or negligible positive or negative impacts should you go straight to part 2 and sign off the EIA.

Equality Impact Assessment – Part 2

1. Building on the evidence you gathered and considered in Part 1, please consider the following:

1.1 How could, or does, the policy help advance / promote equality of opportunity?

For example, positive measures designed to address disadvantage and reach different communities or protected groups?

The work of the taskforce and the high level plan is intended to address inequality and inequity in communities across the South Wales Valleys by promoting equality of opportunity and helping to regenerate and rebuild some of the disadvantaged communities in south Wales.

In particular the plan aims to redress some of the issues around unemployment, low educational attainment and poor health outcomes – issues that are inextricably linked to those with protected characteristics.

The plan will help support greater access to employment and training opportunities, good quality education and skills, health care and wellbeing services, better transport and infrastructure and will supporting communities across the valleys, including those with protected characteristics.

1.2 How could / does the policy / decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation?

Issues such as discrimination, particularly around stigma, have been considered as part of the taskforce's approach to the valleys. Part of the work of the taskforce is to address some of the assumptions made about valleys communities and to build on the positive aspects of valleys communities.

Consideration has also been given to specific issues such as part time work and zero hours contracts which we are aware can lead to unfair working practices or discrimination.

1.3 How could/does the policy impact on advancing / promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

The programme of engagement demonstrated that there are strong community bonds within valley communities and the work of the taskforce aims to build on these by creating stronger more prosperous communities and building good relationships between different groups of society and different sectors within communities, such as between businesses and colleges, between schools and employers and between older and younger generations.

2. Strengthening the policy

2.1 If the policy is likely to have a negative effect ('adverse impact') on any of the protected groups or good relations, what are the reasons for this?

What practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts identified in Part 1?

None of the evidence suggests that the plan will have a negative impact on any of the protected groups.

2.2 If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative /

adverse impact, please justify why.

(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination (immediate or potential) as a result of the policy, the policy must be changed or revised.)

Not applicable.

3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy?

List details of any follow-up work that will be undertaken in relation to the policy (e.g. consultations, specific monitoring etc).

On publication of the delivery plan the next phase of engagement will begin to 'test' our priorities, to judge how these will work in practice in different communities. The taskforce will aim to empower communities to develop and take ownership of the actions in their communities.

The plan is underpinned by a series of work stream groups and a programme management board which will be responsible for implementing the actions in the plan, monitoring these actions/ priorities and reporting on them.

The results of all impact assessments where the impact is significant will be published on the Welsh Government's website.

4. Declaration

The policy does not have a significant impact upon equality issues

Official completing the EIA
Name:
Laura Evans
Department:

Equality and Prosperity Division, Taskforce Team
Date:
16 June
Signature:
Laura Evans
Head of Division (Sign-off)
Name:
Maureen Howell
Job title and department:
Deputy Director, Equality and Prosperity Division
Date:
Signature:
Review Date: Reviewed September 2017 – in line with the publication of the delivery plan.   Next review – July 2018