

# Equality Objectives Action Plan – 2023 – 2027



## Part 3 – Equality Objectives Action Plan – 2023 – 2027

Public Sector Equality Duties: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation (EUDHV); equality of opportunity (EO); fostering good relations (FGR)

PSED	Protected Characteristic/ Equality Group	Aim	Objective	Target Group(s): e.g. whole school, girls, boys, SEN, staff	Action	Who is responsible?	Dates from and to:	Indicator of Achievement
ALL EUDHV EO FGR	All	Increase pupil, staff & governor awareness of legal & human rights and the responsibilities that underpin society	Pupils to understand they have rights, how they can exercise them, and how their rights link to their responsibilities	All pupils and staff	Increase awareness of the School Single Equality Scheme across all groups within school and how it affects everyone	Classroom staff & Governors	Oct 20223 – ongoing	Pupils, staff & Governors are aware of school's objectives and action plan (as is age or stage appropriate)
ALL EUDHV EO FGR	All	Improve displays, collective worship resources and other images in the school to reflect and promote diversity in terms of the equality groups	For pupils to have positive visual images throughout their education which show and promote diversity	All staff, pupils and visitors	Ensure displays in classrooms/corridors and collective worship promote diversity in terms of race, sex and ethnicity  Ensure the curriculum promotes role models & heroes young people can identify with, which reflect diversity of equality groups.	All staff	Oct 2023 – ongoing	More diversity reflected in displays across all year groups.  Increase in pupils' participation, confidence and achievement levels
ALL EUDHV EO FGR	All protected characteristics and groups	Prevent and respond to all hate incidents and prejudiced based bullying	Make pupils feel safer by being assured that incidents will be dealt with promptly and fairly  Increase staff confidence  Report rates accurately	Whole school and specifically vulnerable pupils and equality groups	Review and update existing policies & procedures on bullying using an EqIA.  Promote hate incident recording to pupils.	Classroom staff	October 2023 – ongoing	Recording is accurate and useful.  Pupil feedback about feeling safe is positive
ALL EUDHV EO FGR	Disability/All	Increase social and emotional skills for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH)	Improved ability by pupils to handle difficult situations and a reduction in classroom disruption	Pupils with SEMH issues	Train staff to deliver sessional work supporting specific pupils in developing social and emotional skills  Access external support for the most vulnerable	SEMH co-ordinator/ classroom staff	September 2023 – ongoing	Improved mental health.
ALL EUDHV EO FGR	All	Promote good relations between people from different backgrounds	Improve understanding of Cumbria and the diversity within it.  Increased positive attitudes towards disabled people	All staff and pupils	Invite in representatives from disability equality groups to meet with children	SLT/PSHE co-ordinator	June 2023 – ongoing	Improved understanding of Cumbria and the diversity within it.  Increased positive attitudes towards disabled people
<b>Date Action Agreed:</b>		Oct 2023			<b>Date Agreed for Review:</b>		Oct 2023 annually to 2027	



# Key Legislation Summary

## EQUALITY ACT 2010

On 1 October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act to consolidate it.

The Act protects staff, pupils and others from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics':

- Disability
- Sex
- Race or ethnicity
- Age (staff only)
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (staff only)
- Pregnancy and maternity

This relates to:

- Prospective pupils and staff
- Pupils and staff at the school
- In some limited circumstances, former pupils and former staff

### **Public Sector Equality Duties**

Public sector equality duties are legal requirements on public bodies to have 'due regard' when they are exercising their public functions for to the need to:

- Eliminate conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 made this a *single* equality duty on public bodies effective from April 2011. The purpose is not to be process driven and bureaucratic but rather an outcome-based method of ensuring that schools are best meeting the needs of all their pupils.

### **New Protection in Schools**

The Act extended protection against discrimination to pupils who are pregnant or have recently given birth, or who are undergoing gender reassignment.

### **Health Related Questions for Job Applicants**

It is now unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before a job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to fair access to the recruitment process or an intrinsic function of the work (or for very limited other reasons like equality monitoring). This means schools can no longer require job applicants to routinely complete a generic health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. Current DfE [Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools](#) (p 21 s5.11-5.12) clearly states that a school must establish the fitness and ability to teach or carry out "relevant activities" of "teachers and other school staff" as required by the Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003) but makes no reference to Equality Act compliance. Schools may decide to ask necessary health questions after a job offer and should ensure they are targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for. Schools should review existing practices to ensure they are complying with both the Health Standards Regulations 2003 and Section 60 of the Equality Act 2010.

**Positive Action**

New Positive Action provisions will allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the needs of, pupils with protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim. Previously a school providing – for example – special catch-up classes for Roma children or a project to engage specifically with alienated Asian boys might have been discriminating unlawfully by excluding children who didn't belong to those groups.

**Victimisation**

It is now unlawful to victimise a child for anything done in relation to the Act by their parent or sibling.

**Auxiliary Aids**

The Act extends the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to pupils with disabilities.

**Publication of the Scheme**

Details of a school's Single Equality Scheme and the first objectives must be published by 6 April 2012 and annually.

**ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING**

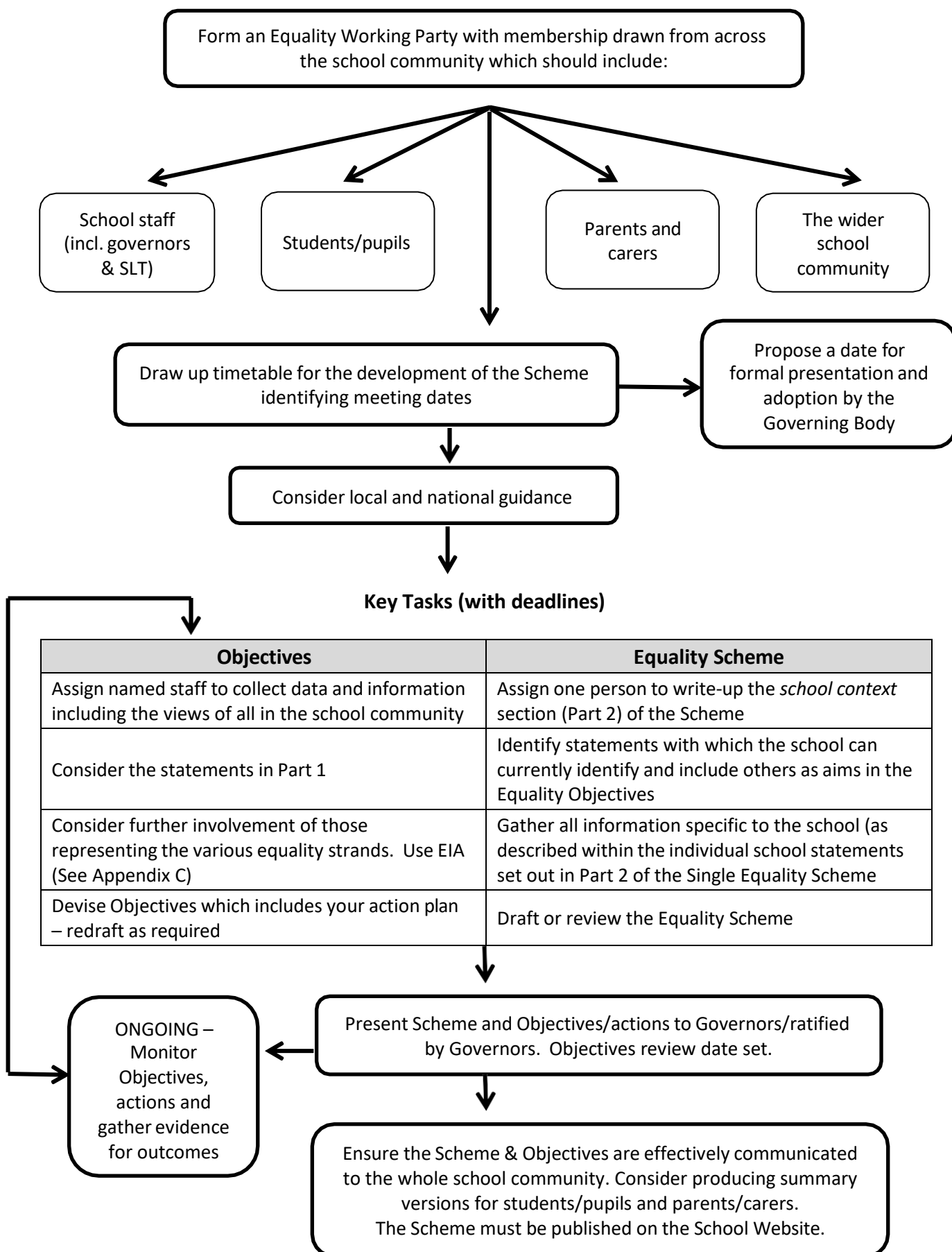
Accessibility planning is a statutory duty and can be incorporated into the Single Equality Scheme. Your Accessibility Plan can, if you wish, be provided as an Appendix to the Single Equality Scheme.

Schools must plan for:

- Increasing access for children and young people with disabilities to the school curriculum
- Improving access to their physical environment; and
- Improving the delivery of written information to children and young people with disabilities and their families as well as staff and volunteers.

The first plans were required to be in place by April 2003 so as schools come to review their accessibility plans, they should consider building the actions into their Equality Scheme.

## Process Chart: The Development and Review of a Single Equality Scheme, Objectives and resulting actions





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# Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) - Guidance

## *Some Frequently Asked Questions*

### **What is an equality impact assessment (EqIAs)?**

To enable children or people within your school community to be treated fairly and equitably sometimes you must treat them differently. To identify how best to do this you have to think ahead and predict how to best serve the needs of the different groups within your school community. This is what equality impact assessment is all about.

Undertaking EqIAs is like undertaking health and safety risk assessments. It involves predicting and assessing what the implications of a policy or practice will be on a wide range of children or people with different and varied needs within your school community and trying to ensure they are not disadvantaged by it.

Your school community covers any person who is likely to use your school. This means pupils, parents, carers, staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to your school. It also covers anticipating the needs of possible future members of your school community.

### **What is meant by 'impact'?**

Two possible impacts are considered as part of the process:

#### **A negative or adverse impact**

This is an impact which could disadvantage one or more groups within your school community. The disadvantage which is highlighted may be greater on one group than it is on another group.

For example:

- An open evening for pupils and parents and carers which is held in rooms that are only accessible by stairs will prohibit anyone with a mobility issue from attending the meeting.

In some cases, the disadvantage may be unavoidable – such as the reorganisation of a service to save money. EqIAs provide the opportunity to explore the disadvantage on different groups, question if the disadvantage is fair considering the circumstances and either find solutions or alternatives, or justify the decision in an open, transparent and informative way.

#### **A positive impact**

This is an impact that could be advantageous for one or more groups. This positive impact may be greater for one group than it is on another group.

For example:

- A targeted training programme aimed at developing women to be able to apply for leadership positions in secondary schools would have a positive impact on women but would not, however, necessarily disadvantage men.
- An intervention programme aimed at raising the attainment level of underachieving boys in English would have a positive impact on boys, but it would not necessarily disadvantage girls.

Identifying positive impact is a good way of promoting equality and to share good practice for example, between departments or year groups and schools.

### **Why should we undertake equality impact assessments?**

Undertaking EqIAs is a legal requirement for schools under current race, disability, and sex and gender legislation. The purpose of the legislation is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector bodies, including schools, by anticipating the needs of service users and removing potentially anti-discriminatory practices. In the case of schools, service users would include pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors, volunteers and visitors – anybody within your school community.

This means taking account of the needs of your school community in the development and review of any school policies and practices which are likely to affect them.

Undertaking EqIAs should not be a tick-box exercise. They should be considered a useful tool for mainstreaming equality into all our work. Services will improve through making improvements in the way policies are formulated and services delivered. This will enable barriers to be tackled and the needs of a diverse school population to be met. Your school community will also be aware that you are considering their needs at the planning stages.

### **What should be equality impact assessed?**

You need to assess school policies or practices which are likely to affect children or people within your school community.

Written policies may be easy to identify but EqIAs also apply to practices and customary ways of doing things, even if they are not written down (e.g. arrangements for parent consultation events, arrangements for pupil extra-curricular activities).

In accordance with legislative requirements, an EqIA must be carried out on all policies and practices whether they are existing, being changed or are being proposed.

It is also important to remember that this includes proposals to changes in organisation structures, budget proposals and capital projects.

For example:

- **Impact on workforce of organisational change**

All staff should be treated fairly and equitably through any proposed change to the workforce. You may need to consider whether any groups of staff will be adversely affected by the proposed change. It is also important to be aware of the outcome of any change on the workforce profile. You may need to address any identified under-representation in the workforce profile as part of any future recruitment activity.

Ensure the EqIA process includes the recruitment, selection and appointment procedures for staff.

- **Impact on service provision**

If there is likely to be an impact on the way a service is provided because of any organisational change, you then need to ensure your EqIA considers the proposed changes in relation to how your school community will be affected and whether any negative impact can be justified.

### **What equality strands/groups should be covered by EqIAs?**

Some groups may experience disadvantage, whether intentional or not because of characteristics specific to that group. These characteristics are known as equality strands. It is common practice to identify the characteristics into nine groups:

- Disability
- Sex
- Race
- Religion and/or belief
- Age (in relation to staff recruitment /selection)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

### **Who is responsible for carrying out equality impact assessments?**

The person(s) who holds responsibility for the policy is ultimately responsible for ensuring an EqIA is undertaken. The EqIA may be done in conjunction with or by a person who knows that area of work.

It may be helpful to have a team of people who can help with the process. Try to get a mix of staff at different levels to get different perspectives. Ensure that they have enough knowledge of the area being assessed to make valid judgements.

To ensure ownership at the most senior level all EqlAs should be signed off by a member of the senior management team and a member of the governing body.

### **When should Policies/Procedures be equality impact assessed?**

All existing policies and practices should be reviewed on a three-year rolling programme. It can be done in conjunction with the three-year cycle of your own equality scheme.

By undertaking a policy mapping exercise, you can prioritise which policies and practices have a higher priority for EqlAs based on their likely proportionate impact.

To make sure that decision makers are provided full and clear information about policy or service implications, all new or proposed policies or practices should have an EqlA before they are implemented.

### **What happens as a result of an EqlA?**

If any potential adverse impact is identified, then policies and practices may have to be made amended as a result. If any adverse impact could amount to unlawful discrimination the policy or practice must be changed unless there is an objective, lawful reason to justify this.

The results of EqlAs can be used to set equality objectives leading to improvement in services and practices. These should be placed within your equality action plan(s), for example ensuring relevant school policies can be made available in alternative formats, as required.

### **Do I have to do a separate EqlA for every similar policy?**

No – in fact it makes sense to review all similar policies together as part of an overall review. What you are looking for is how those different policies, as well as the way the policy is delivered in practice, are affecting different groups within your school community. If you think it would be more manageable to review a large policy or policy framework on its own, then you can complete a separate EqlA – whatever makes the process manageable and meaningful for your school.

### **Do I need to do an EqlA on an adopted policy?**

No - you don't need to repeat an EqlA on an adopted policy which has already been assessed if any amendments you have made would not result in a different impact. If there are any doubts as to whether the policy has been assessed, then the best route is to do your own EqlA.

### **Where can I obtain further information?**

Further guidance about undertaking equality impact assessments can be found at the Commission for Equality and Human rights website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com) or the DfE via <sup>4</sup>GOV.UK: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)

## Equality Impact Assessment: **Name of Policy/Procedure**

1. Identify the aims of the policy/procedure/service/function and how it is implemented.			
	<i>Key Questions</i>	<i>Answer/Notes</i>	<i>Actions required</i>
1.1	Is this an existing or new Policy/Procedure?		
1.2	Who defines or defined the Policy/Procedure?		
1.3	What is the objective or purpose of the Policy/Procedure?		
1.4	<p>In relation to the Protected Characteristics (Equalities Groups) is there anything in the Policy/Procedure or how the Service is delivered that could discriminate or disadvantage any of these groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Sex</li> <li>• Race or ethnicity</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> <li>• Gender reassignment</li> <li>• Pregnancy and maternity</li> <li>• Religion, belief, or lack of belief</li> <li>• Age (staff only)</li> <li>• Marriage and Civil Partnership (staff only)</li> </ul>		
1.5	In relation to other groups who do not share a protected characteristic but that we have identified as potentially vulnerable to discrimination e.g. low income families, young carers, Children Looked After etc., is there anything in the Policy/Procedure or how the Service is delivered that could lead to discrimination or disadvantage them?		
2. Assessment of Impact			
2.1	Have you identified any differential impact and does this adversely affect any of the Protected Characteristics (Equalities Groups)?		
2.2	Regarding any group of people who do not share a protected characteristic but were identified as potentially vulnerable to discrimination in Section 1.5 above, have you identified any differential impact that adversely affects them?		
<b>NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS:</b>			



# Single Equality Scheme – Objectives/actions/outcomes

## Planning Principles

- Identification of objectives and subsequent action planning is undertaken in accordance with the School's values, priorities and aims as identified in Part 1 of our Single Equality Scheme.
- Accurate knowledge of the school enables us to plan in a way that is **relevant and proportionate**.
- **Participation** of an appropriately selected working group is reflected in wider representation built into objective actions.
- Through the Equality Impact Assessment process, consideration is given to the **anticipation** of equality issues not presently evidenced but for which there is a potential.
- The objectives are the starting point for action but not followed slavishly where monitoring and further Impact Assessments reveal alternative opportunities or needs.
- Managing the process in a planned yet responsive way.
- Outcomes are checked against the objectives and the Impact Assessment that informed their selection.
- SMARTER target thinking means plans are **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed, Evaluated and Reviewed**.
- The golden rule for future planning is to **be SMARTER and get started**.

## The Process:

- Our objectives are set in response to identified priorities arising from the analysis of all the information, including the Overview of Outcomes and the Equality Impact Assessments we have undertaken.
- We plan our objectives over 4 years so that it is possible to implement change and development in a responsive yet systematic way.
- Objectives are reviewed regularly and in the third year we undertake a review of the impact of our action outcomes prior to setting new objectives at the end of year 3.
- Initially, many of our objectives have been in relation to ensuring that we establish our Single Equality Scheme effectively and embed the process of Equality Impact Assessments more widely throughout our thinking and initial planning.