

## Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment for removing Risk Based Verification of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support new claims

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The separate EIA guidance notes outline what should be included for each section. Please read them before you begin. If you have any queries, contact your Corporate Equality Group rep, or the Engagement Team on 643 2828.

#### 1. Author, service area, date

*Tracy Hunter, Finance*

#### 2. Who else has been involved in writing this EIA?

*Andrew Scott, Client Manager Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service*

#### 3. What proposal is this EIA assessing?

*To remove the current Risk Based Verification (RBV) process and replace it with a manual process.*

#### 4. What is the purpose of your proposal and what is it expected to achieve?

Allow the Authority to implement a manual process of verifying incomes in relation to new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. Since the implementation of RBV in April 2015 which provided an automated system to identify the level of evidence required for new claims, new developments have meant that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) systems now provide significant access to data to verify state benefits, earnings and pensions. This access means that claimants will now very rarely have to provide evidence themselves as we will utilise DWP and HMRC data to verify incomes.

#### 5. Is there any relevance to the aims of the public sector equality duty? *Write your answers in the table*

Aim	Yes, No, or N/A	Details if 'yes'
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment	N/A	
Advance equality of	Yes	By considering the different characteristics and needs of claimants to ensure that we

opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not		treat all claimants fairly.
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	N/A	

**6. Analysis by characteristic** *Write your answers in the table*

<b>Protected characteristic</b>	<b>Potential positive or negative impact?</b>	<b>Explanation and evidence</b>
All protected characteristics	No	All claimants regardless of any characteristic will be asked to provide evidence where it is appropriate. The level of evidence required is based on the type of income the claimant has. The LA will only request evidence where it is not obtainable through DWP and HMRC systems.
Age	No	
Disability	No	
Gender	No	
Gender reassignment	No	
Marriage and civil partnership status	No	
Pregnancy and maternity	No	
Race	No	
Religion or belief	No	
Sexual orientation	No	

**7. Have you carried out any engagement in relation to this proposal? If so, what?**

- We have discussed the process with the Head of Finance and the impact on administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims.
- The Lead member for Finance and Resources has also been consulted.

**8. Is there any information you don't have that you need to find?**

No

**9. What actions are already in place, or will be taken, to remove or reduce potential negative impacts? (add more lines to the table if you need to) *Write your answers in the table***

Action	Responsibility	Timescale

**10. Are there any potential negative impacts that cannot be removed or reduced? If so, why is this?**

No negative impacts have been identified. We will carry out regular reviews of this process to ensure that no negative impacts emerge.

**11. Based on your conclusions from this assessment, what are your next steps?**

Cabinet will consider the report on the change in process on 9 September 2019.

**12. How will the impact of this proposal be monitored after it is introduced?**

We will have regular review meetings with the operational manager to discuss outcomes of this new process and any emerging issues.

**13. When will this EIA be reviewed?**

The EIA will be reviewed annually.