

**COVID-19 Equality Impact Assessments**

The current situation with COVID-19 and the restrictions that have been in place over the past few months has made life quite challenging for everyone. Both staff and students have had to embrace a new way of working and learning whereby lectures and meetings are conducted virtually via zoom, Microsoft teams and a sort new ‘normal’ is established which may have an impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of staff and students.

Emerging evidence seems to suggest that certain protected characteristics are more adversely affected. Consequently, there is need for LJMU to evaluate the nature and extent of any negative impact on equality with a view to ensuring we maintain a university community where people feel treated with dignity and respect, and have a sense of belonging. We must therefore continue to monitor any changes to policies, practices and procedures for differential adverse impact on equality.

There are a number of pertinent issues to consider in the light of the foregoing, especially as we look forward to staff and students returning to University buildings and the start of a new academic year. Some key areas to consider as part of the EIA are:

* How do we support vulnerable staff and students (due to disability, age, ethnicity or an underlying health condition) when we return to the University campus?
* What support should be put in place for those staff and students whose psychological and physical wellbeing may have been affected by isolation or domestic violence or other issues?
* With social distancing still in place when we return, the work and study environment will be different, how do we mitigate the impact of this and support staff and students?
* As part of the blended learning approach, online platforms will continue to be used even after individuals return to the University campus, how do we improve the accessibility of online meetings and learning for people with disabilities?
* How do we reassure and support staff/students who are concerned about physically returning to campus because of underlying health conditions (or because they are caring/living with someone with an underlying health condition)?
* How do we ensure equity of experience and outcome for all students?
* How do we adapt space for social distancing whilst ensuring socially distanced access for those with mobility aids is still possible?
* How do we create a feeling of safety for students on campus who are at higher-risk of becoming seriously unwell from the COVID-19 virus, or who do not feel safe?
* How do we cater for student parents and carers who may not be able to physically return to campus due to caring commitments?

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| ***COVID-19 Equality Impact Assessment******EIA Checklist*** |

The following checklist will provide a framework for Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) with regard to LJMU COVID-19 risk assessments, measures and protocols and should be considered in the development of, or when reviewing guidance documents, policies or protocols. The checklist will help in identifying any impact in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusivity (ED&I).

The value to the University of considering equality when formulating our COVID-19 response is significant as it demonstrates how we integrate equality considerations with decisions and supports us in ensuring that we have considered the impact for all groups Completing this checklist does not need to be a time-consuming or difficult process but should raise some important questions.

**Once completed, the checklist should be kept safe and confidential. You may be required to produce evidence of your Equality Impact Assessment Exercise.**

**If you would require any help with completing the checklist or would require someone from the EDI Team to review the checklist for you, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing** **equality@ljmu.ac.uk**

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| **Section One** |
| **Name of the area/protocol/policies that this COVID-19 EIA relates to** |  |  |
| **Faculty/Division:** |            |  |
| **School/Service area/Department:** |  |  |
| **Checklist completed by:**  |  |  |
| **Date completed** |  |  |
| **Who is responsible for the Equality Impact Assessment** |  |  |
| **Section Two –Background**  |
| **Is this a new or existing risk assessment/ policy / guidance document**  | New | [ ]  | Existing | [ ]  |
| **1** | **What is the name of the risk assessment/ policy / guidance document assessed?** |       |  |
| **2** | **Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of this risk assessment/ policy / guidance document** |  |  |
| **Section Three – Stakeholder Engagement and Involvement** |
| **3** | **What consultation exercise have you undertaken as part of this EIA? For example, consultation with Staff Networks, JMSU, Trades Unions, staff and student group?** |       |  |
| **4** | **Are there any concerns that this could have a differential impact on any equality group(s) or (protected characteristics as identified by the Equality Act 2010)?** |  |  |
| **5** | **If the answer to 4 is yes, would the impact be positive or negative?** |  |  |

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| **6** | **Please indicate against each of the following protected characteristics, what the impact of the policy would be:-** |
| **Protected Characteristics** | **Impact** | **Action(s) you will take to mitigate or remove the negative or adverse impact if identified?** | **By whom** | **Time scale**  |
| **Age***Consider impact on young people, older people etc.* |  |  |  |  |
| **Disability***Consider the vulnerable due to health conditions* |  |  |  |  |
| **Gender Reassignment** *Consider people undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment* |  |  |  |  |
| **Pregnancy and Maternity***Consider these are included in the ‘high risk’ group* |  |  |  |  |
| **Race / Ethnicity***Consider potential impact on people from different ethnic groups, nationalities; e.g. the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on people from the BAME communities*  |       |  |  |  |
| **Religion or Belief***Consider people with different religious, faith and non-belief*  |  |  |  |  |
| **Gender***Consider women and men with different working arrangements, e.g. shift working, part-time working, etc.* |  |  |  |  |
| **Sexual Orientation** *Consider Lesbian, gay, bisexual people.*  |  |  |  |  |
| **Marriage and Civil Partnership***Consider marriage and civil partnership in respect of the due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment.* |  |  |  |  |
| **Section Four – Monitoring and Review**  |
| **7** | **How will you monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this measures to determine whether it has been effectively and fairly applied.** |       |
| **Section Five – EIA Sign off and Authorisation**  |
| **This checklist most be signed-off by the Director/Dean or Head of department and kept in a safe place should you need to produce an evidence that you have carried out an EIA** |
| **Name & job title of authorised person** |  |
| **Date of next review, and by whom?** |  |

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| ***Equality Impact Assessment Guidance Note*** |

**What is Impact Assessment (EIA)?**

Impact Assessment is a thorough and systematic analysis of Policies, Projects, Strategies, Programmes, Practices, etc, to find out their impact (either positive or negative) on particular groups of people.

EIA is a way of knowing if a process, practice, procedure, will directly or indirectly have adverse or differential impact on any of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.)

We are expected to conduct a systematic analysis of the impact of all our current, intended or draft policies, processes, procedures and practices on the above different groups to ensure that they do not have any negative, adverse or detrimental effect on any of them.

**When do we need to conduct an EIA?**

* When we are introducing a new policy, strategy or project, programme, etc
* When we intend to revise an existing policy, strategy or project, programme, etc

**General Duty of the Equality Act 2010**

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
* Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
* Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

**The Protected Characteristics and potential COVID-19 considerations**

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|  | **Protected Characteristics** | **Managers Consideration / Possible actions that could be taken** |
| **Age** | Older staff may be more at risk as evidence suggests that COVID-19 has greater impact on older age groups | In conducting individual risk and EIA assessments managers will need to take into consideration governments’ advice in this regard. As the university is planning for staff to return to work during this COVID-19 situation all new and existing staff should be encouraged to disclose health conditions in a safe and confidential manner so that no one is put at risk. |
| **Disability** | In keeping with agreed policies and legal protections, disabled staff working across the University are likely to manage their disability through the application of reasonable adjustments. Some of these adjustments will be formally agreed and some informally adopted by staff depending on individual circumstances. | Any further challenges that could arise from the current COVID-19 situation in terms of these reasonable adjustments should be evaluated as part of the risk assessment process. This may require consultation and advice from Occupational HealthHere also, government advice on vulnerable workers and shielding should be followed and every effort made to encourage all staff to disclose any medical condition that might compromise their health.  |
| **Gender**  | The lockdown has witnessed significant increase in domestic violence with a disproportionate impact on women. There is emerging evidence that COVID-19 may impact men more than women; men are more likely to experience severe COVID-19 symptoms. Women are more likely to be informal carers for older or disabled people, who are more likely to be shielding as a result of COVID-19 | The University will need to review the risk assessment approach in the light of this evidence. Undertaking a risk assessment for these staff will enable appropriate steps to be taken and the right support structure to be put in place.   |
| **Race / Ethnicity** | BAME staff are considered to be at a greater risk from COVID-19Emerging evidence indicates that people of BAME communities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 such that coming from a BAME background is to be taken as a risk in itself. Although a government inquiry into the reasons for this has been launched, more immediate action is needed in the interim to mitigate risks.  | For this group, adjustments may include working remotely or moving to a lower risk area, which should also include discussion on the most suitable PPE. Where staff, have to be redeployed or work from home, consideration should be given to what duties they can continue to carry out and what support is needed to do so.The government has recommended that employers should risk-assess staff at a potentially greater risk, as a precautionary measure, and make appropriate arrangements accordingly.  |
| **Gender Reassignment**  | The possible scenario where trans people need to “socially distance” with families who may be unsupportive of their trans identity could have an impact on their mental health and put them at risk of transphobic abuse and violence.  | Undertaking a risk assessment / EIA for these staff will enable appropriate support and steps to be taken. |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity**  | Whatever the stage of pregnancy, pregnant women are classed as at-risk and social distancing may have an impact on their mental health. | For these staff, undertaking a risk assessment / EIA will enable appropriate support and steps to be takenStaff who are returning from maternity leave should be assessed in line with government advice.  |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | The lockdown and social distancing have put a strain on some marriages which in some cases has led to some form of mental health issues. | For these staff, undertaking a risk assessment / EIA will enable appropriate support and steps to be taken. |
| **Religion & Belief**  | The COVID-19 situation has affected and may yet affect some specific religious events – Easter, Ramadan etc. This may have an impact on the ability of individual members of staff to perform well at work.There are other issues which may impact on religious practice; e.g. eventual use of vaccines for COVID-19 might not comply with requirements of some religions. Moreover, the ban on hospital visits might have different impact on different faith groups; there might also be health concerns for loved ones, particularly older relatives in hospital especially if English is an additional language for those relatives. | Undertaking a risk assessment / EIA will enable appropriate support and steps to be taken. |
| **Sexual Orientation** | Social distancing may cause some LGB people, especially young people, to be confined in family situations where they are at risk of homophobia and violence, which could have an impact on their mental health.  | Undertaking a risk assessment / EIA will enable appropriate support and steps to be taken |

**Other areas for considerations**

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| **Underlying health conditions** | It is important to consult government guidance for staff that are clinically categorised as extremely vulnerable. | For these staff, undertaking a risk assessment / EIA will enable appropriate support and steps to be taken |