

Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening - Relevance to Equality Duties

The EIA should be used to identify likely impacts on:

- disability
- race
- sex
- gender reassignment
- age
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy and maternity
- caring responsibilities (usually only for HR polices and change management processes such as back offices)

1. Name of the proposed new or changed legislation, policy, strategy, project or service being assessed.

Public Bodies Bill: Schedule 1 power to abolish by order the Magistrates' Courts Rule Committee

2. Individual Officer(s) & unit responsible for completing the Equality Impact Assessment.

Clive Buckley - Family Policy, Justice Policy Group

3. What is the main aim or purpose of the proposed new or changed legislation, policy, strategy, project or service and what are the intended outcomes?

Aims/objectives	Outcomes
<p>Following the Government's review of public bodies, the aim is to increase accountability and reduce the number and the costs of public bodies. The Bill, if enacted, would enable the Magistrates' Courts Rule Committee to be abolished by order. The Committee is consulted by the Lord Chief Justice before making rules under section 144 Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, but much of the Committee's remit has been removed following the creation of the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee and the Family Procedure Rule Committee.</p>	<p>Elimination of an unnecessary body. On the rare occasions when the Lord Chief Justice makes rules under section 144 Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, he would be able to consult the main Rule Committees before making rules.</p>

4. What existing sources of information will you use to help you identify the likely equality impacts on different groups of people?

Rules upon which the Magistrates' Courts Rule Committee is currently consulted will continue to be made in consultation with other rules committees and there will be no impact on the rules themselves or

on those whom the rules affect.

The committee does not employ any staff. The work involved for departmental staff in servicing the committee will continue to be done by servicing the other existing rule committees to whom consultations on future rule changes will be directed. There are three publicly appointed members of the committee: one barrister, one solicitor and one justices' clerk. They are busy professionals on fixed term appointments who are aware of the impending abolition of the committee and given its much reduced remit following the establishment of the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee and Family Procedure Rule Committee any impact on members would be minimal.

5. Are there gaps in information that make it difficult or impossible to form an opinion on how your proposals might affect different groups of people. If so what are the gaps in the information and how and when do you plan to collect additional information?

It is not thought that there are any gaps in information, but before abolition any comments arising out of consultation will be considered. Rules upon which the committee is consulted will continue to be made in consultation with other committees so there will be no impact on users of the rules. Rules will continue to be gender neutral in their application.