

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.

Abolish the Victims' Advisory Panel (VAP)

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

Charlotte Jackson, Victim and Witness Unit

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>The Government's reforms of public bodies will increase accountability, remove duplication and streamline the public bodies landscape.</p> <p>To ensure that victim and witness policy is not duplicated by streamlining the public bodies that work in this area.</p>	<p>Increased and more targeted engagement with a broad and diverse range of victims and their representative groups</p> <p>Increased ministerial accountability relating to functions carried out on behalf of the state; elimination of duplication and reduced waste; fewer public bodies and reduced costs.</p> <p>Elimination of duplication and fewer public bodies.</p>

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

- Victims' Advisory Panel's End of Tenure Report for July 2006-July 2009
- Crime in England and Wales: Findings from the British Crime Survey (BCS) 1998, 2008/09 and

2009/10 data

- Witness and Victim Experience Survey (WAVES), MoJ, 2009/10

- How Fair is Britain? The first Triennial Review – Equality and Human Rights Commission – Oct 2010

The above illustrate which groups with protected characteristics are likely to be affected by crime, either disproportionately or not. For example, data shows that men are disproportionately affected as victims of crime. It also shows that the rate of homicides per million population is highest amongst black people and lowest amongst white people.

The VAP, due to the statutory framework, was the focal point for consultation. This resulted in a limited range of victims being consulted. Abolishing the VAP puts the focus back on victims of crime as a whole, in all their diversity. As such, the Department expects that the abolition of the VAP will have a positive impact on groups of victims with protected characteristics. The Commissioner has broader statutory functions than the VAP and may, in relation to her functions, consult any person she considers appropriate. This is likely to result in more dialogue, targeted engagement, and open discussion with victims and groups representing those with protected characteristics.

The VAP currently has no associated staff. The panel itself consisted of volunteers who were not MoJ employees. The last panel reached the end of its tenure in 2009 and a new panel was not recruited pending the Government's review of Arm's Length Bodies. The department considers that there will be minimal impact on the ten former members of the VAP. They are aware of the VAP's impending abolition and hold fixed term non permanent posts. Due to the small number of members no breakdown is provided in terms of protected characteristics.

Departmental staff who previously managed the VAP are now working on other areas of policy within the Victim and Witness Unit.

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?

The Department does not believe there are any gaps in information. Future policy initiatives regarding victims and witnesses will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that any impact on people with protected characteristics will be fully considered.