



Equality Impact Assessment: Gender Neutral Toilets in the School of Chemistry

Before carrying out EqIA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EqIA Policy Statement and Guidance and Checklist Notes, and undertake our online training on Equality and Diversity and EqIA. These, along with further information and resources, are available at www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment

EqIA covers policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description):

Conversion of some toilet facilities in the School of Chemistry to Gender Neutral facilities, namely the conversion of female toilets in the Christina Miller building to GN toilets and conversion of accessible toilets to gender neutral/accessible toilets in the Joseph Black building.

B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark yes against the applicable reason):

- Proposed new policy/practice YES
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
- Other (please state):

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: *Jean O'Donoghue*

Job title: *CDT Project Manager / E&D Coordinator*

School/service/unit: *School of Chemistry*

D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:

- affects primary or high level functions of the University
- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance) YES
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA YES

E. Equality Groups

To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

- Age
- Disability YES
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief YES
- sex YES
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment YES
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership¹

Notes against applicable equality groups:

Gender Reassignment:

There is evidence (see notes below) that the lack of explicit gender neutral facilities in higher education institutions causes indirect discrimination, and increases the risk of harassment for individuals who have undergone gender reassignment in addition to non-binary staff and students.

Conversion of accessible toilets (Disability):

By their nature, accessible toilets are gender neutral and so by being explicit regarding the fact that they are gender neutral will not restrict their use by those who require accessible facilities

However accessible facilities are important for those with a disability and so to mitigate any issues with sufficient access and provision, we will not convert all accessible toilets to explicitly signed gender neutral toilets.

Conversion of female toilets (Sex, Religion or Belief)

There is plenty of provision for gendered toilets in the Christina Miller building.

We wanted to ensure that all women would be comfortable using gender neutral toilets and so we chose to convert those toilets with stalls only (not those with urinals).

Women uncomfortable with using the gender neutral toilets, and/or women who would not use gender neutral toilets for religious reasons can access single gender facilities easily (one floor above/below)

As set out above we did not want to only convert accessible toilets and so we chose to convert these toilets. A mixed conversion, and one conversion in each building in the School should mitigate the risk of unintended consequences for the following protected characteristics: disability, religion or belief, sex.

¹ Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applies to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- **On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:**

The primary source of information used in adopting this practice was the following piece of research conducted in Scottish Universities:

<https://www.trans.ac.uk/Portals/88/TransEdu-Scotland-Report-2017.pdf?ver=2017-10-31-142716-560>

- **Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:**
- **If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:**

The application of this practice lowers the number of women-specific facilities in the School, but does not lower the number of facilities accessible by women. However we currently have no gender neutral facilities at all for trans and non-binary staff/students and so given the mitigations as outlined above we believe that this practice advances equality.

- **If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity²**

This policy advances equality of opportunity for non-binary and/or trans staff and students as set out in the research presented above.

- **If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:**

Applying this practice and ensuring its good communication will foster good relations with LGBTQIA+ members of staff and students.

- **If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?**
- **How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?**

This will be emailed to all members of the School

- **How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?**

The Equality and Diversity Committee will monitor implementation of this practice and address any issues arising.

The following were all involved in the development of this policy:

- *Equality and Diversity Committee*
- *Head of School*
- *Director of Professional Services*

² This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

- *Buildings Manager*
- **Any potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations:**

This practice will serve to reduce the possibility of indirect discrimination and risk of harassment for staff and students with reassigned gender and non-binary staff and students.

F. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.

Option 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.

Option 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified YES

Option 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.

G. Action and Monitoring

- 1. Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqIA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).**

This new practice will be introduced and monitored one year following its introduction to monitor any adverse impact on groups with protected characteristics in the School.

- 2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?**

This policy will be reviewed at the May 2020 E&D Committee meeting.

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? No

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:

It may be published following its first review at the May 2020 E&D Committee.

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): Jean O'Donoghue (CDT Project Manager / E&D Coordinator)

Accepted by (name): Jean O'Donoghue

Date: 25th November 2019

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk