



Equality Impact Assessment Template

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

EqlA 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):

EventsAir Large Scale Events Platform

The reason for purchasing the EventsAir large scale events platform at the University of Edinburgh is to provide users with a platform for end-to-end management of their large-scale online events. The platform will manage communications, registration and data collection for the large-scale events. This goes above what current platforms available at the University can do (such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom) by allowing for online conferences with exhibitor stands, multiple sessions for the same event and University of Edinburgh branding for the event.

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

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

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: Alex Carter

Job title: Head of Service Management

School/service/unit: Service Management, Information Services

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 **YES**
- 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 EqlA? **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**
- **race (including ethnicity and nationality)**
- **religion or belief**
- **sex**
- **sexual orientation**
- **gender reassignment**
- **pregnancy and maternity**
- **marriage or civil partnership**

As the EventsAir service relates to an online platform, it has the potential to affect all 9 of the protected characteristics.

The implementation of EventsAir may particularly affect the protected characteristic of disability. EventsAir is an online service and will need to be accessible in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA Standard, including being able to work with assistive technology. This accessibility technology includes voice recognition software, screen readers and/or screen magnification software. Reasonable adjustments will need to be in place should a disabled user prove unable to use the system and we were unable to rectify it. The implementation of EventsAir may particularly affect those who need to make use of subtitles / captioning, such as those with hearing impairments, as the EventsAir platform does not offer in platform live subtitling for events. This is something we have raised with the supplier and until this feature is available, reasonable adjustments will be made for all users requiring captions in the meantime.

We will also provide accessibility guidance for users who intend on hosting large scale events, so that they customise their event in line with those accessibility guidelines. We can make changes to features like fonts, colours and all images on the page and we will provide accessibility guidance for users on these, we can also have an admin user customise the app and then lock certain features for other users so that the platform is accessible as possible for each event.

The implementation of EventsAir may also particularly affect BSL users. It will be possible for BSL users to view a presenter and a BSL interpreter at the same time as the Zoom webinar integration in the EventsAir platform allows multiple presenters to share their video feeds at the same time. However, if a presenter wanted to present slides or share content, then it would be very difficult for the BSL user to see their BSL interpreter as there is no option in EventsAir for the BSL user to pin the interpreter's video, as the EventsAir platform does not offer this feature. We will raise this issue with the supplier and until this feature is available, reasonable adjustments will be made for all BSL users in the meantime.

The implementation of EventsAir may also affect the protected characteristic of race, specifically those whose first language is not English because the default language for EventsAir is English. The main teaching language at the University of Edinburgh is English, therefore we do not envisage any disadvantage. There is always a possibility that users from countries where certain websites are blocked may be affected by the implementation of EventsAir. However, the EventsAir platform does not appear to be blocked in mainland China or Russia,

for example. However, we would make alternative provision for users if such a situation arose in a country where the system was blocked.

The implementation of EventsAir may also affect various protected characteristics, such as people of certain religion beliefs and those undergoing gender transformation, people with disabilities like social anxiety and others, in that hosts of large-scale events can request (this is a custom request rather than default) that attendees are required to add their picture on registration. To mitigate issues with this we will provide guidance for hosts that they should not make this a requirement for registration unless there is a specific need to have it, and to explain this to potential attendees.

Any content added to EventsAir by hosts and users (in the form of messages, files, meeting slides, videos, webinars, et cetera) should not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics. Any content found to discriminate would result in disciplinary action. Within EventsAir, users and hosts will be identifiable to others, and therefore caution will be needed to ensure people are not making judgments based on an individual's name, particularly with regard to gender or race.

The EventsAir service may positively impact several of the protected characteristics. Enabling users to manage and access large scale events (like conferences) online instead of in person will allow such events to be accessible for more users. This could positively impact users with parental and caring responsibilities (and others who need a more flexible way of working), some disabled users, those living in different countries and those who observe and adhere to specific times of religious observance.

The University vision involves a continuing commitment to equality and diversity for both students and staff. The University has a single Equality Strategy to ensure that equality and diversity are guiding principles in our pursuit of academic excellence.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

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

In terms of the protected characteristic of disability the EventsAir service must be as accessible for disabled users as possible, in adherence with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA standard. The Disability Information Officer for Information Services has tested the application for accessibility and issues (such as with the lack of in platform subtitling and the lack of a feature to allow BSL users to pin interpreter's video feeds) have been fed back to EventsAir. We need to ensure that the platform is customised for use at the University of Edinburgh to remove some of the accessibility issues that have been picked up.

The protected characteristic of race, and specifically users who live in other countries, may have specific needs in terms of whether the service is blocked in their country. EventsAir can be accessed without web restrictions, including in countries where web restrictions exist. However, if a user were to report issues with this we would make alternative provision.

We have consulted with the Information Disability Information Office, the Staff Disability Network, the Student Disability Service, International Office and Students' Association. Any feedback will be monitored for any impacts

positive or negative on the nine protected characteristics and acted on accordingly.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:

At this time, we feel we have sufficient evidence to proceed. Further evidence/information will also be gathered from user feedback when more users begin using the EventsAir service. This feedback, positive and negative, will be monitored for any issues related to the nine protected characteristics and these will be addressed accordingly. This could include providing new information/guidance on the issue, changing the policy, or if we cannot immediately deal with the issue ourselves, contacting EventsAir.

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:

We do not believe that the implementation of EventsAir will lead to any form of prohibited conduct for the reasons detailed above and below. Where a disabled user was unable to use EventsAir for any reason, we would put in place reasonable adjustments where possible to ensure no user was disadvantaged. Should any adjustments to the technology be out with our control, we will work with the supplier to ensure that such adjustments are put in place.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity¹

EventsAir contributes to advancing equality of opportunity by allowing users to manage, host and attend large scale events (such as conferences) online instead of in person. This could advance equality of opportunity across a few of the protected characteristics, particularly for people with caring responsibilities, for users who have certain disabilities, those living in different countries and those who observe and adhere to specific times of religious observance but allowing greater flexibility in how and when people access events.

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

EventsAir has been introduced as a service at the University of Edinburgh in response to the need for a platform for end-to-end management of large-scale online events at the University, allowing these events to go ahead without the need for in person venues. Implementing EventsAir could help foster good relations by positively impacting several protected characteristics. In completing this EqlA, we have identified the possible protected characteristics that may be affected, positively or negatively, by the implementation of EventsAir. We have considered ways to mitigate and provide support and information to users in these groups. Hopefully this demonstrates the commitment Information Services and the University has to Equality and Diversity issues. That the platform is as accessible as possible when we customise it for use at the University of Edinburgh by removing moving banners, pop-ups and making colour contrasts more

¹ This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

accessible. Providing feedback now to the supplier, EventsAir, regarding a lack of in platform subtitling may also help.

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?

We do not anticipate that the implementation of EventsAir will create barriers for any other groups. However, because EventsAir is an online service, there is a possibility that people with lower incomes may not have personal access to IT devices from which to use the service (laptop/smartphone/desktop). Staff and students normally have free 24/7 access to free computing facilities or use their own devices. Student and staffs who need to use free IT facilities can access the buildings at the University or visit local libraries.

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?

Users will be provided with information, help and guidance on how to use EventsAir on the University of Edinburgh webpages for EventsAir. The webpages are part of the University website and were therefore created following the University Web Accessibility Policy (in accordance with level AA, 2.1 standard, of the W3C version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). In accordance with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, [an accessibility statement has been added to this website](#). If a user requests to have this information and guidance from the webpages in alternative format, this will be provided.

- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?
- **Many stakeholders from different areas of the University (such as EUSA) have been involved in the development of the EventsAir project and service. We have consulted with the Disability Information Team in Information Services and will continue to do so and ask them to test and changes to the system for accessibility. We have also consulted with the Staff Disability Network and the Student Disability Service.**
- 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:

Nothing other than what has been mentioned above.

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 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations. We will ensure the accessibility issues identified within the system are resolved as far as possible for the Edinburgh branded version and for the reasons detailed above

G. Action and Monitoring

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

We will monitor feedback on EventsAir within the University of Edinburgh for any impact, positive or negative, on any of the protected characteristics. Where we find any issues, we will attempt to resolve these in a timely and appropriate manner and issues that are out-with our control we will report this back to the supplier, EventsAir. Users of EventsAir and those running large scale events on the platform within the University will be reminded of the need to make reasonable adjustments where applicable and to provide information about EventsAir available in alternative formats upon request.

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

The EqlA for EventsAir will be reviewed either within the next year and will be updated as and when any changes to the service are made, or when we receive any feedback related to any of the protected characteristics.

H. Publication of EqlA

Can this EqlA be published in full, now? **Yes/No**

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

I. Sign-off

EqlA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)):

Eilidh Macleod, Messaging Service Assistant, Service Management, Information Services Group

Accepted by (name): **Alex Carter, Head of Service Management, Applications Directorate, Information Services Group**

Date: 03/2021

Update 2023:

EqlA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)):

Sharon Chen, Online and Digital Events Service Assistant, Service Management, Information Services Group

Accepted by (name): **Alex Carter, Head of Service Management, Applications Directorate, Information Services Group**

Date: 07/2023

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