THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Equality Impact Assessment Template

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): **Procurement - and planned implementation - of Suite Assured software (supplied by Sales Agility Ltd) for Hope Park Counselling Centre, which is part of the School of Health in Social Sciences.** **This EqIA is a draft as part of IS Applications project code HSS021 (for the procurement).** **This is a new system for counsellors (including students acting as trainee counsellors during their placement year), administrators and centre managers to provide:** • **Client care from initial enquiry to assessments to session notes and client endings** • **Student experience including logging practice hours for their academic programme** • **Support for recording and managing research requests** • **Data management and reports**
B. Reason for Equality Impact Asessment (Mark **yes** against the applicable reason): • Proposed new policy/practice **Yes** • Proposed change to an existing policy/practice **No** • Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice **No** • Other (please state): **No**
C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice: Name: **Fiona Wight** Job title: **Director of Professional Services** School/service/unit: **School of Health in Social Sciences**
D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any if 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**

- 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
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership[1]

Suite Assured is a customer relationship management system which can be adapted for use by Hope Park Counselling Centre. Until now, the centre been using an MS Access database to manage clients, however this has become an unsupportable tool. The new Suite Assured software will greatly improve efficiency, reliability, data protection and reporting.

The practice of using a client relationship management system to help manage clients is potentially relevant to all equality groups, however we feel the protected characteristics of Disability and Race are most likely to be affected.

With regards to Disability the software will need to be accessible to disabled users in terms of meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2 AA standard which is the criteria standard referred to in the University Web Accessibility Policy and this includes the requirement for the system to be compatible with assistive technology.

There will be a need for staff to be aware of the need to make reasonable adjustments, for instance if the system is not able to be made fully accessible for a particular user then assistance will be provided to allow the user to record the information required.

With regards to Race the software can be provided in other languages; however as English is the main teaching and business language of the University we do not believe this should lead to any disadvantage, if the centre can only use the English language version at one time.

User data is only accessible by the user and admin users – the Suite Assured security groups and roles modules can be configured to lock down module data to specific users.

The system offers greater flexibility when recording information about protected characteristics– i.e.it does not require gender to be recorded, and there is no requirement to record title such as Mrs. Miss, Mr etc. The system doesn't record sexual orientation or religion. Photos of clients are not uploaded so this means there is no potential issue with religions who have beliefs regarding photographic images of themselves.

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[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.

Staff may be able to log into the system from home – where deemed acceptable practice - which will be beneficial to those requiring some flexible working, e.g. for those with caring/parental responsibilities, disabled users and those who practice times of religious observance.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

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

The Hope Park Counselling Centre Management team identified finding software to replace the MS Access database as a high priority. A project was undertaken to develop a set of requirements – with all stakeholders represented – which led to the procurement of the new system.

The Disability Information Officer for Information Services has conducted an accessibility evaluation of the software to check the system's compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2 AA standard and several recommendations have been made. She will continue to work with the suppliers to ensure the system is as accessible as possible.

The project team was aware that there needed to be flexibility where protected characteristics were recorded such as not just male and female if recording gender etc.

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

At this stage we feel we have sufficient evidence to proceed.

- 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 the application will lead to any form of prohibited conduct, as noted we have tested the product to ensure accessibility for disabled users and will monitor and respond accordingly to any feedback positive or negative relating to any nine of the protected characteristics.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity[2]

Staff may be able to log into the system from home – where deemed acceptable practice - which will be beneficial to those requiring some flexible working, e.g. for those with caring/parental responsibilities, disabled users and those who practice times of religious observance.

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

By demonstrating the commitment of the University to Equality and Diversity, through ensuring the system results in no prohibited conduct, and by ensuring the system is as accessible to disabled users as possible, it is hoped that this will help to foster good relations.

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

We do not believe this new system will create any barriers, for the reasons stated above, and any reasonable adjustments required such as assistance to use the system will be put in place. All staff and trainees will have free 24 hour access to IT facilities so there should be no barriers for those on low incomes.

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

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

All staff and students on placement at Hope Park have been made aware of the change face to face or by email and Information about the system will be provided in alternative formats at no cost on request.

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

The Information Services Disability Information Officer will continue to evaluate the system as various changes are made to ensure it is as accessible as possible. Users can provide feedback during the implementation project and this will be evaluated for any positive or negative impacts relating to any of the nine protected characterises and appropriate action taken. Users will be able to provide feedback via the Project Manager. We will record all requests for reasonable adjustments and requests for alternative formats

- 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:

Training on the new system will be provided by documentation in alternative formats as required and one to one training from system administrators which will take into account equality and diversity considerations such a location, timing of training etc to take account of accessibility, times of religious observance, parental/caring responsibilities etc

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 1 – for the reasons stated above.

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).
   Make staff aware of the need to make reasonable adjustments and provide information in alternative formats upon request

   Monitor all feedback for any issues related to any of the 9 protected characteristics and take action as necessary

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

   When there is next any significant change to the policy or when we receive any positive or negative feedback related to any nine of the protected characteristics.

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes**

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

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Ben Armstrong, Project Manager, Information Services Group**

Accepted by (name): **Fiona Wight, Director of Professional Services, School of Health in Social Sciences**

[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: **August 2018**

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