



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Equality Impact Assessment Template

If you require this template in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background please contact HRHelpline@ed.ac.uk.

You'll find it useful, before filling in this assessment template, to complete the online course:

[Introducing Equality Impact Assessment](#)

This template is designed to be used alongside the:

EqIA [Guidance and Checklist](#)

EqIA [Policy Statement](#)

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

A. Key Information	
Policy/practice name:	Community Plan 2025-30
General background/aims of policy/practice:	<p>The University has had a Community Plan since 2017. The current version of the Plan expires in November 2025. A new version, for 2025 to 2030, has been in development since spring 2023 and is due to launch in October 2025.</p> <p>The Community Plan 2025-30 sets out the University's goals for engaging with local residents from 2025 to 2030. For the purposes of the Plan, 'local' refers chiefly to Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Scottish Borders.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of the Plan is for the University to improve the lives of people living in the local region, by providing support to local communities who drive positive change. More specifically, the Plan aims to ensure the University contributes towards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Collaborative working with local communities of residents.2. Building an inclusive local and regional economy.3. Promoting equalities, including social, economic and digital inclusion.4. Helping to promote the many factors that ensure people thrive, e.g. feeling connected to the place they live, or having access to appropriate outdoor exercise.

School/Dept:	Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Assessed by: (name & job title)	Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager
Sign off by: (name & job title)	Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact
Sign off date:	24 th June 2025
Review date:	June 2028

B. Reason for EqIA	(check one)
New policy/ practice is proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change to existing policy/practice is proposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe in Section D below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Who will most impacted by this proposal?

Consider carefully how your proposal will impact both positively and negatively on people from different groups.

Consider the 9 protected characteristics as below in your proposal. There may be other identity characteristics that you wish to also include in your impact assessment. It is expected that you will consider all equality groups for impact. Please indicate below (with a tick) which groups you feel will be most affected by your proposal.

Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race (including ethnicity and nationality)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and civil partnership¹	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief (including no religion or belief)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy and maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>				

D. Consideration of Impact

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

Show your considerations of how all of the above protected characteristics may be impacted. The following prompts will help you to reflect:

- What information and evidence do I have about the needs of relevant equality groups – is this sufficient to fully assess impact?
- Could this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, or create barriers or less favourable treatment for particular groups and how can you mitigate any negative impacts?
- Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?
- How can communication of the policy/practice be made accessible to all relevant groups?

Consultation

Extensive consultation within and beyond the University's community of staff and students has informed the development of the 2025-30 Plan. Given the geographic focus of the Plan, it is, of course, the case that many University staff and students are also the local residents that are intended to be the direct beneficiaries of the Plan.

As a result of the extensive consultation that was completed, key themes became clear which have informed how the Community Plan has been shaped. These have included: Housing, Health & Care, Student Projects & Placements, Staff & Student Volunteering, Community Driven Research, Employability, Poverty, Wellbeing, Community Benefits.

External consultation with residents

Consultation with local residents has been both direct – asking them directly – and indirect – asking organisations that, in turn, have knowledge of local residents' needs. The intermediary organisations we spoke with are mostly from the local third sector. By definition, the third sector focuses on the needs of people more likely than others to experience disadvantage. Some of these organisations have a mission to support certain equality groups, e.g. parents, people of minority ethnic/global majority origin, disabled people, people who are younger or older. Others are likely to support people belonging to groups against which there is a long history of discrimination for intersectional reasons: an effective anti-poverty charity could be working especially with families with children, women, people of minority ethnic/global majority origin and disabled people, as people belonging to one or more of these groups are at higher risk of poverty

(<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s64814/Item%204.1%20-%20End%20Poverty%20Edinburgh%20Annual%20Report.pdf>).

Direct consultation with local residents:

- 168 pieces of data from the Meadows Festival. This activity (dream jars and wishing tree) was designed to be accessible to ages 3+ and also inviting to adults. Supports were in place for participants with mobility or other impairments.

- 343 interactions at voting on Plan themes at Doors Open Day. This activity was aimed at ages 11+.

Indirect consultation with local residents:

- 80 participants in workshops including local politicians, government, local and national third sector and civic representatives. Two workshops at different times of day were scheduled – one afternoon, one evening – to take into account participants' other responsibilities.
- Online [Pol.is](#) poll available to those unable to attend in-person workshops.
- 5 critical friends representing the local third sector reviewed an earlier draft of the Plan.

Internal consultation with University staff and students

Many University staff and students belong to equality groups where there is a long history of discrimination. It has also been important to consult with our internal community to identify how to most appropriately respond to the needs of the Plan's intended beneficiaries, recognising the University's particular strengths, purpose and assets.

Internal consultation has included:

- Sessions for Edinburgh Community Engagement Forum (over 500 staff and student members).
- Student pop-ups in lectures and campus libraries.
- Workshops with high-interest student groups.
- 1:1 and small group consultation with senior leadership within University colleges, professional services departments and University-wide.
- 1:1 consultation with those implicated in operational delivery of the new version of the Plan and who have contributed to the current version of the Plan.
- Formal progression through a University governance route that, overall, focuses on social responsibility (Community Board; Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee; the new Social and Civic Responsibility Committee).

Analysis by Protected Characteristic

Age

Children

15.3% of Scotland's population was aged under 15 in the [2022 Scottish Census](#), a 2% drop from the [2011 Scottish Census](#).

Children are more likely than adults to be affected by poverty (<https://www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2024-the-essential-guide-to-understanding-poverty-in-the-uk>). As well as its immediate effects, it can also affect future life chances. The second priority of the Plan ("Promoting equalities, now and in the future"), with its focus including economic inclusion, particularly aims to address this, including a special focus on action for ages pre-birth to five due to the disproportionate impact the experiences of these first five years have on future life chances.

Young people

18.5% of Scotland's population was aged 16 to 29 years in the [2011 Scottish Census](#).

Young people (those aged 16-24) are more likely not to be in employment, education or training than a few years ago (<https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/news/youth-employment-2024-outlook-report/>). In the first priority of the Plan ("Partnering for positive social impact: We will support communities to create the change that matters to them"), we commit to promoting University opportunities that can help younger people into employment, education or training: apprenticeships, mentoring, work experience and paid internships.

The 2025-30 Plan emphasises the prevention of future health, social and economic challenges for local residents. There is particular opportunity for prevention with those younger in age. One stated example is the work of our Centre for Psychological Therapies, which specifically supports the mental health of children and young people and hopes to reduce the prevalence on mental ill-health in adulthood.

Adults aged 25-49

We know that the heads of households experiencing homelessness in Scotland in 2024 were most likely to be in this age bracket ([Understanding Glasgow](#), consulted 27 March 2025). These households may, of course, include members from other age groups. The 2025-30 Plan commits the University to continuing collaborative research that supports pathways out of homelessness. It also commits the University to continuing teaching on inclusion health, including through our Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health.

Older people

There are now more people aged 65+ in Scotland than under 15 ([2022 Scottish Census](#)) - [20.1% of Scotland's population](#). The size of this group has increased by 4% since the 2011 Census ([Scotland's Census 2022 - Rounded population estimates | Scotland's Census](#)).

Older adults are especially vulnerable to social isolation (<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/loneliness-in-older-people/>).

The third priority of the Plan ("Thriving communities") includes a focus on building community connections, which could benefit people experiencing social isolation, including older adults.

The second focus of the Plan includes improving digital inclusion of local residents, and we know digital exclusion disproportionately affects older adults (e.g. <https://audit.scot/publications/tackling-digital-exclusion>).

It is well-recognised that lifelong learning can benefit older adults (see e.g. work by the [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#)) and we know that people aged 65+ are the majority of our Centre for Open Learning learners. The 2025-30 Plan commits to making lifelong learning even more accessible to local residents, including via the Centre for Open Learning.

The prevalence of disability increases with age ([Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people](#)). The 2025-30 Plan's third priority commits us to continuing research that supports people of all abilities to be active outdoors. The second focus of the Plan commits the University to continued preventative healthcare research that corresponds to the needs of local residents.

Race

Around 183,000 people living in Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife reported being from a minority ethnic background in the [2022 Scottish Census](#), which is around 13% of the regional population.

The refreshed Plan commits the University to learning from its own race review and continuing its support for New Scots (people who have recently immigrated or moved to Scotland) through its University of Sanctuary status and Education Beyond Borders programmes. Our commitment to continuing student community volunteering could include students using their languages other than English in supporting local residents – the University already has a track record of this and the high proportion of international students in our student body equips us for it well. Our commitment to undertaking even more research that preserves and promotes local cultural heritage has and can continue to include the cultural heritage of local residents of minority ethnic/global majority background.

We know around 80,000 people living in Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife – around 6% of the population – lack skills in reading, writing and/or speaking English or have no English skills at all (2022 Scottish Census). In some cases, this could be linked to a person originally being from a non-English speaking country (education and disability could be other causes). The new Plan commits us to continuing the community access to rooms scheme, a key user of which is local charity the Welcoming who teach English to speakers of other languages. We believe it would be disproportionate to translate the new Plan into languages other than English given strategy documents themselves do not have high public interest. This does not prevent residents with limited English skills from benefitting from Plan activities, as described. Organisations that in turn support residents with limited English skills are among our target audience for the Plan's launch communications.

The 2025-30 Plan commits the University to improving how it responds to opportunities to collaborate on research with a particular priority on research that benefits groups currently underrepresented in our engaged research. These groups could include people of Gypsy Traveller or BAME ethnic origin.

We know that poverty intersects with race: BAME-headed households are more likely to be in poverty ([Institute of Race Relations](#), consulted 27 March 2025) and more likely to be in very deep poverty ([Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#), consulted 27 March 2025). It also interacts with employment, with White people 8% more likely to be in employment than those from other ethnic groups ([Gov.uk](#), consulted 27 March 2025). The 2025-30 Plan's ambitions of building an inclusive local and regional economy and promoting economic equality will hopefully play a part in creating some improvement for some local residents

from minority ethnic backgrounds currently affected by poverty. ('Inclusive growth' is defined as including marginalised groups in economic growth, which can include groups marginalised due to race or ethnicity - [Inclusive growth: it's the government's big idea, but what does it mean? | TheCityUK](#), consulted 31 March 2025)

Disability

In the [2022 Scottish Census](#), 7.1% people reported being d/Deaf or hearing-impaired, 2.5% reported being blind or vision-impaired, 0.3% reported a speaking difficulty, 5.2% reported a learning difficulty, learning disability or developmental disorder, 9.7% reported a physical disability, 11.3% reported a mental health condition and 21.4% reported a long-term illness.

Our commitment to collaborative research that benefits underrepresented groups could bring benefit to local people affected by disability and long-term health conditions. The strength of the University's health research means we have much to offer here and, indeed, we are already doing so.

There are likely some differences in levels of certain types of impairment – notably, physical disability – between the University student ([Disability & Learning Support Service Student Statistics 2020/21](#)) community and residents of the local region at large, the level being higher in the wider region (disability breakdown data unavailable for University staff). This is something especially relevant to public access of the University's estate, such as the 2025-30 Plan's commitment to continue community access to rooms and the public use of our outdoor spaces. It is already factored into initiative-specific project design and equalities impact assessment for community access to rooms scheme. It is also factored into some of the design of and support to use our public outdoor spaces. The 2025-30 Plan will continue to shine a light on the importance of this type of accessibility.

As already noted, the 2025-30 Plan promotes the continuation of research which encourages physical activity by people of all abilities.

As the range of needs related to disability are so diverse and public interest in a strategy document itself is likely to be limited, we do not think it is proportionate to produce versions that take into account specific impairments. We will, however, adopt all standard accessibility good practice in communication around the Plan. Third-sector organisations which include those that support local residents with disabilities are part of the target audience for initial communication of the Plan.

Religion or belief

This is relevant to the 2025-30 Plan through the intersection with race and ethnicity (notably, Islam and Judaism) and also in its own right.

There is some limited evidence that people in Scotland who follow a minority faith are less likely to participate in sport; this is especially the case for Islam, notably Muslim women ([Sport Scotland](#), consulted 27 March 2025). The third priority of the 2025-30 Plan, Thriving Communities, addresses in various ways how to broaden the demographics of

local residents who are active outdoors. Our second priority commits to continuing community access to our sports facilities; related to this, University of Edinburgh Sport has recently piloted community access to meet the needs of a local Muslim women's group that had approached the University.

The 2025-30 Plan commits the University to learning from its recent race review. The race review includes some recommendations related to groups where ethnicity and religion intersect.

Sex

The inclusive growth theme of the Plan's second priority will, if delivered well, reduce gender-based economic inequalities (see e.g. UN Women's publication "[Gender Equality and Inclusive Growth](#)", accessed 27 March 2025).

Women in Scotland are a little less likely than men to be getting adequate physical exercise ([Scottish Public Health Observatory](#), accessed 27 March 2025). Our Thriving Communities priority includes a commitment to continue to support local people of all genders to be more active outdoors.

Gender reassignment

Again, our commitment to continue to support local people of all genders and abilities to be more active outdoors is relevant to this group. There is some precedent of what this could look like in, for example, a previous University community grant award to [LEAP Sports Scotland](#).

Pregnancy and maternity

Our second priority includes targeting the pre-birth to five age group with a view to improving the future life chances that are heavily determined at this age. While not direct beneficiaries of this commitment, pregnant women and those who have recently given birth are key stakeholders in delivering on this commitment and, based on our past experience, we suggest that interventions which benefit a child have the potential to often benefit the mother too.

Across all equalities groups, including those not specifically mentioned

Some specific commitments of the 2025-30 Plan are, based on past history, likely to benefit all equalities groups (with the exception of marriage and civic partnership) to some degree. Our community grant scheme is a key example of this, with evidence coming from its [five-year evaluation](#). Volunteering activity is likely to deliver the same.

E. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome	(check one)
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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.	
Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects which cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>

F. Action and Monitoring

Describe any actions you will take to address the findings of this EqIA.

- How can I involve equality groups or communities in the ongoing monitoring, review and potential future development, of this policy/practice?

Describe how the policy/practice will be monitored going forward, to ensure that impact is frequently reviewed. Make sure you add a review date in Section A above.

We will report annually on activities delivered through the Community Plan which will include reflections on equalities where appropriate.

A communications and engagement plan is being prepared for the Plan's launch for which there is a very comprehensive stakeholder list, many of which are local third sector organisations that work to meet the needs of equalities groups we have highlighted here. The implementation of the communications and engagement Plan will be evaluated.

G. Publish

Send your completed EqIA to the HR EDI team (equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk) to published, and keep a copy for your own records.