

Grant Process Equality Impact Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

Winchester City Council currently provides three grant funding schemes for Community Groups. These include Community Capital Grants and Community Revenue Grants which are annual funding schemes. A Small Grant Scheme is also available which currently has a minimum of three rounds per year. Small grants include Biodiversity, Carbon Reduction, Community Chest, Community Planning and Twinning Grants.

This report briefly summarises how the generic Equality Impact Assessment on Grant Processes for community grants was undertaken, its scope and the key findings.

The assessment was undertaken by 4 officers drawn from relevant departments and facilitated by the council's Equality & Inclusion Consultant.

In addition to one training session, the assessment required three 2 hour meetings spread over several weeks, some time for members of the team to check or research some points that arose and time to complete the forms.

2. PROCESS

During the scoping sessions three key areas were identified for assessment:

- (i) Initial publicity and information about the grants available
- (ii) Application process
- (iii) Process by which grant awards are made.

An assessment did not take place concerning the support offered to groups as it was considered that this fell within the remit of Community Engagement and there should be a separate impact assessment of this area of work.

3. FINDINGS

During this process it was discovered that it is necessary to:

- (i) Undertake mapping of the district in order identify where minorities are likely to be located – current data is insufficient.
- (ii) Ask groups/organisations to provide information about which of the 6 equality groups will benefit from their projects/activities.
- (iii) Ask groups/organisations to explain what monitoring they undertake in order to ensure that all/most needy sectors of society benefit the services they provide. .
- (iv) Update application forms to include a requirement for groups/organisations to be aware of the impact of equality and diversity issues on their projects/activities.
This has been implemented.
- (v) To exercise our duty in promoting equality and diversity by having more stringent requirements for groups to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity in the application process.

- (vi) Undertake separate Community Engagement impact assessment as this is separate from the grant process.
- (vii) Provide a leaflet to groups outlining what Equality and Diversity awareness is and giving information on how to access help in producing their own Equality and Diversity policy.
- (viii) Improve publicity of all of the grant streams to ensure they are accessible to all groups within the District by:
 - Producing leaflets in order to reach those organisations not able to access the internet.
 - Having direct contact with the BME Forum and Disability groups
 - Making better use of WACA and CAH to disseminate information on the grants available and process for accessing grants.
 - Making better use of in house staff to promote grants, eg. Neighbourhood wardens, housing staff, customer services.
 - Including a copy of the scoring matrix which is used to assess applications in the application packs.- this will help them to understand the significance of their responses to questions on the application form.

4. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the assessment process it was found that the following improvements should be made to the grant application process:

- (i) To work with the Communications Team to promote grants more widely.
- (ii) That a step by step guidance sheet be included with the application pack with clear instructions on how best to complete the form.
- (iii) Liaise with WACA and CAH in order to map where minority groups are located.
- (iv) A statement to be included in the application pack that help is available and how to access this help.
- (v) Information should be included on the grants web pages stating that an interpretation service is available with details on how to access this service.
- (vi) All documents relating to the grant application process to undergo 'Plain English' proof reading.
- (vii) The following statement to be included in the application form:
 - Groups in receipt of grants in excess of £5,000 will be required to supply evidence that they are using Community Action Hampshire's Equality and Diversity toolkit.
 - Groups in receipt of grants less than £5,000 should demonstrate a commitment to Equality and Diversity.

The Partnership and External Funding Officer along with the Community Wellbeing Manager will be responsible for implementing any actions identified.

5. CONCLUSIONS

(i) Detailed Assessment

No detailed assessment is required

(ii) Improvement Plan

Seven key actions were identified to address the issues that arose during the assessment. These are summarised below.

If you have any comments on this impact assessment please contact the Partnership & External Funding Officer

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Grants Process - Improvement Plan

Key Actions	Responsibility	Completion Date	Resource Implications
1. To work with the Communications Team to promote grants more widely.	PEFO/ Community Wellbeing Manager	Ongoing	Staff time
2. Arrange presentations to minority group forums	PEFO/ Community Wellbeing Manager	Ongoing	Staff time
3. Target information on grants available to staff and councillors	PEFO/ Community Wellbeing Manager	Annually	Staff time.
4. Produce guidance sheet and instructions on how to complete revenue and capital grant application forms.	PEFO/ Community Wellbeing Manager	August 2009	Staff time
5. Statement on commitment to diversity to be included in revenue grant application form.	PEFO/ Community Wellbeing Manager	Completed	Staff time
6. Statement to be inserted into application packs regarding interpretation services and explaining that help is available as well as how to access help.	PEFO/ Community Wellbeing Manager	(Community Chest) March 2009 (Revenue Grants) August 2009	Staff time
7. Ensure application packs have undergone 'Plain English' proof reading.	PEFO/ Community Wellbeing Manager	(Community Chest) March 2009 (Revenue + Capital Grants) August 2009	Staff time