

# NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE HAMPSHIRE AREA

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### Section Two: Full Impact Assessment

This "Equality Impact Assessment" documents the outcome of a full impact assessment on the specified function, policy or procedure, addressing the equalities strands of: Race, Gender, Disability, Sexuality, Faith and Age. It is to be completed, published as specified, and appended to policy and/or strategy documents.

#### 1. Function Name, Policy or Procedure:

Offender Travel Reimbursement

#### 2. Aims and Approach of Function/Policy/Procedure

This policy aims to provide a consistent, efficient and equitable method to assess, and where appropriate reimburse, offenders' travel costs to and from Probation appointments.

A set of qualifying criteria is provided by which to assess whether an offender is eligible to make a claim for travel expenses (i.e. for public transport and petrol costs if disabled and using own car).

Diversity issues, including disability, are addressed in this criteria, and in addition, Offender Managers, whose responsibility it is to make the decision as to whether to reimburse, also have the ability to over-ride the criteria if diversity issues lead them to feel it is appropriate to do so. This should however be recorded.

This is Phase 1 of the approach. DRR offenders are exempt from the first phase but will be addressed in Phase 2 following further consultation.

#### 3. What data/information is available & does it suggest differential impact for any of the groups identified as part of the impact assessment process?

***(A range of different data may be used for this section – e.g. internal monitoring data, national reports/research, locally commissioned reports/audits/research, results of previous consultations/workshops, statistical data such as census data, Home Office Statistics)***

**Race:** Not available

**Gender:** Not available

**Disability:** Not available

**Sexuality:** Not available

**Religion or Belief:** Not available

**Age:** Not available

**If there are gaps in data provision how are these to be addressed in order to inform a full EIA?**

There is no data available in relation to whether or not individual offenders claim and receive travel reimbursement as this information has not been recorded. Such monitoring will be possible following the introduction of the new procedures however.

**4. What consultation has been undertaken and with whom?**

***(include information on what was needed from the consultation, how it was carried out and with whom)***

The offender travel proposals were taken to HPA's Equalities Consultation Panel for discussion and also to HPA's Offender Service User's Group.

**5. What are the main findings of the consultation undertaken (what positive or negative impacts were identified for any of the different groups)?**

Consultation focused on a set of proposals and some of the concerns raised by this process have now been addressed and are covered in the final document. The concerns raised at the proposal stage by the Equalities Consultation Panel were:

- examples of discretion need to be given so that OM's are aware of the sorts of things they can take into account when over-riding the basic rule of over 5 miles and on benefits e.g. people with a disability, women (pregnant women or women who may be bringing children with them)

- Discretion should be applied to mileage threshold and being on benefit
- Disabled offenders who use their own cars (blue badge holders) should be provided with disabled office parking where this is available
- Disabled offenders who need to use their own cars (blue badge holders) can reclaim petrol at a rate to be agreed

#### Service Users Group:

- Nobody ever explained to them the policy on travel claims. They picked it up for themselves. Feel it should be made much clearer and guidance given.
- Nobody felt that 5 miles was realistic – seemed an unreasonable distance to expect anybody to walk. It was felt that it should be set at what is a “walkable distance” before help kicks in and this was felt to be 3 miles.
- If attending for multiple appointments in a week and do not qualify on a single journey, the multiple journeys can add up to a substantial amount of money.
- Everybody agreed that people needed to be on benefits to claim.
- Was suggested that perhaps a staggered system was put in – i.e. 50%, 75% or 100% depending upon mileage.
- In order to ensure method of payment was used appropriately, group suggested a voucher system which has an ID system attached. One offender was saying how this system has been set up with the bus company that did his school run.
- Staff in the group said that officers are chasing compliance targets all the time. They will be more concerned about getting people to attend than policing a complex set of entitlements to travel, where discretion is also applied. How do they know home to office mileage for example?
- Offenders said it would definitely impact on their compliance if they do not get assistance if they are at the point of bus fare or food.
- Free bus travel is available for everybody who is on Disability Living Allowance and a lot of offenders are in receipt of this benefit and are not getting a bus pass, or have a bus pass but are asking for assistance on top of it. Therefore OM needs to check out whether somebody has this benefit entitlement before agreeing assistance/
- Also felt that if people are given vouchers and then “lose” them they shouldn’t be offered any further assistance.

**6. Does this policy have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination, exclusion of some groups of people from its benefits or lead to negative relations?**

Adjustments have been made to the proposals and it is now believed that this policy has been written in such a way to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination or exclusion of specific groups

**7. What measures have been identified in order for the policy/procedures to achieve its aims without risking any adverse impact?**

Diversity has been identified as a critical factor in the criteria for reimbursement and in relation to the decision making processes for overriding this criteria. As such, maximum measures have been taken to ensure there is no adverse impact.

**8. What action is now to be undertaken?**

Phase 1 of the policy to be implemented from 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009

**9. Monitoring arrangements and review process**

Monitoring information will be gathered and reviewed in October 2009

**10. How results will be published**

.This impact assessment will be published on HPA's intranet and website.

**Signature of Policy Lead** .....

**Position** .....

**Date** .....