

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE HAMPSHIRE AREA

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Section One: Preliminary Screening

1. Function Name, Policy or Procedure:

Essential Car User Status

2. Aims and Approach of Function/Policy/Procedure

See Section Two

Is it possible that the policy/procedure may be discriminating unlawfully?	Yes
Could some groups be excluded from the benefits of this policy/procedure or could it have a negative impact on them?	Yes
Is it possible that the policy/procedure may cause negative relations between groups?	Yes

If the answer to any of these questions is **Yes**, go on to the full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

If the answer to all of the questions is **No**, please provide explanatory evidence and attach the following statement to be signed off by senior management.

“This policy and/or set of procedures have been written with a view to avoiding any adverse impact on an individual by reason of their ethnic origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief. The policy has been screened for any illegal discrimination and to ensure that no group is excluded from any benefits or experiences any disadvantage. It is not believed that this policy will have any such adverse impact, but future reviews of policy and procedures will revisit this evaluation, drawing on data to monitor outcomes”

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:

Essential Car User Strategy

2. Aims and Approach of Function/Policy/Procedure

This Strategy lays out the reviewed structure and guidelines for Hampshire Probation Area staff making official journeys in the discharge of their duties. It makes clear HPA’s policy in relation to the criteria for Essential Car User Status (ECU) and the procedure for applying the criteria; car parking arrangements; the use of public transport, car hire, pool cars and taxis.

The key underlying principle is that ECU will be paid in line with the criteria established in the “Taylor” report; in essence that staff should receive ECU where on grounds of the efficiency and economy of the Service, it is in the interest of the Service for a private care to be used, rather than public transport, hire car, taxi or other options. In making a decision the cost, in terms of staff time, must be taken into account.

The Strategy therefore lays out that from 1st April 2007, ECU will only be granted to staff who use their vehicles for official business and:

- whose official annual mileage in that respect exceeds the qualifying mileage during the previous calendar year (currently set at 500 miles per annum, pro rata for part time staff) and/or
- whose frequency of journey exceeds the threshold of a minimum of three days per week and/or
- for whom there is no practical public transport, taxi or other alternative or whether safety factors mean that these options are not viable.

All other car users will qualify for reimbursement on the Casual Car User Scale.

Car parking facilities or reimbursement for parking charges will be provided for all authorised EC users who qualify under the above criteria.

An Implementation of ECU review accompanies the revised Strategy, which has meant that all HPA staff currently in receipt of ECU have had their car usage assessed against the criteria, resulting in some staff's Essential Car User Status put forward for review with their line manager. Procedures for how this review will take place and the opportunities for contesting decisions, through the grievance procedure, made clear.

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)

At this stage of the Impact Assessment there is limited data through which to evaluate differential impact. Monitoring has been undertaken of which members of staff, when the criteria are applied, will be subject to a review of their ECU status. From this group of staff there is at present a slight gender imbalance with 79% being female (female workforce 73%) and 4.7% being from minority ethnic backgrounds (minority ethnic workforce 3.4%). More valid data will be available after the review process when it will be possible to evaluate whether any particular groups have been over-represented in terms of actually having lost their ECU and if so identified, assess what the reasons for this may be.

Race:

Gender (including transgender):

Disability:

Sexuality:

Religion or Belief:

Age:

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

[Empty box]

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)

Hampshire Probation Area's Equality Consultation Panel considered the reviewed Essential Car User Strategy. The panel is made up of staff members from diverse backgrounds, members of different local communities, Union representatives, Disabled Staff Network representatives, Black Staff Group representatives, LGBT Staff Support Network and the Diversity Adviser.

The Panel wished to consider the criteria and the position on car parking, use of public transport and other methods of transport, to ensure that no staff member was disadvantaged on the grounds of their group membership.

A key concern for the panel was whether this would be disadvantageous for disabled staff.

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

In relation to disability, there were two areas of discussion which had been clarified with the strategy owner. The first relates to the criteria, whereby if a disability means that a member of staff who needs to travel for work purposes is unable to access public transport, taxi or other alternative, would this be covered by the qualifying criteria. Although not specified as such, this is deemed to be covered by the third element of the qualifying criteria.

The second point of clarity that was raised to ensure no negative impact on disabled staff related to the use of Taxis where staff who are unable to drive because of a disability will have approval for the use of a taxi for all necessary journeys where public transport is not accessible or appropriate. Although not specified within the document, this would be covered by the overall proviso.

A further equalities issue in relation to gender was mooted for consideration by the panel. The pro-rata mileage allowance for part-time staff, who if they reach the threshold will get the full ECU lump sum and

parking paid, could be said to indirectly discriminate against male staff who are under-represented among part-time staff. Consideration to this was given by the panel, with discussion around the decision to pay full ECU lump sum to part-time staff on a pro-rata mileage threshold. It was felt that although possibly in numerical terms more female staff would benefit from this than male staff, this was objectively justifiable in terms of ensuring part-time staff were not disadvantaged.

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?

Consideration of the Strategy, some limited monitoring data and scrutiny by the Equalities Consultation Panel has not at this stage revealed any concerns that these procedures will cause unlawful discrimination or the exclusion of some groups of people by virtue of their group membership.

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

Not applicable.

8. What action is now to be undertaken?

Further monitoring needs to be undertaken once the review period is completed to check which staff lost ECU status and whether there are any groups over-represented in this. If this turns out to be the case, further analysis will be undertaken to provide an explanation of this.

9. Monitoring arrangements and review process

Ongoing monitoring through HR of this strategy will be undertaken on an annual cycle

10. How results will be published

.This equality impact assessment will be published on the HPA intranet and made available on the Area's website.

Signature of Policy Lead

Position

Date