



People Impact Assessment

Our People Impact Assessment identifies how HIE’s strategies, policies, projects, programmes etc (the proposal being assessed) can help address inequality. Identifying positive impact strengthens the case for approval and identifying potentially negative impact allows HIE to make changes early which will eliminate or mitigate negative effects in delivery. Most importantly this strengthens our ability to influence and deliver inclusive growth, particularly as it affects people.


It guides you through three stages:

- **Screening:** screens out proposals which do not need assessment
- **Assessment:** identifies how your proposal is likely to address inequality
- **Action Plan:** identifies action you will take as a result of the assessment

Proposal being assessed:

Title:	HIE’s Procurement Strategy
Type of activity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership activity <input type="checkbox"/> HIE Own Hand <input type="checkbox"/> Third Party Client
Is your proposal:	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing and being revised <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to Procurement
MyHIE Reference (if applicable):	
Directorate/Team delivering the proposal:	██████████
Name and role of person leading on the assessment:	██████████

Screening Section

For detailed guidance hover next to each Guidance heading and click on the blue arrow that will pop up on the left to expand 

Screening Guidance

Question A1

Will the proposal affect individual service users* or HIE employees, and could these people have different needs and priorities?

Yes No

*Individual service users are people who will participate as individuals on HIE programmes and/or who use HIE spaces (ie, our land and buildings).

Question A1 Guidance

Question A2

Does the proposal contribute to the following in relation to any of the **protected characteristics** : age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity or pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. (please tick all that apply below)

- eliminating **unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment**
- advancing equality of opportunity:
 - by removing or minimising disadvantage for a group(s) of people e.g., increasing participation in economic activity by women
 - by meeting the needs of particular groups which differ from the needs of others e.g., by taking account of disabled people's impairments.
 - by encouraging participation in public life for a group(s) of people
- fostering good relations:
 - by tackling prejudice
 - by promoting understanding between groups of people

Question A2 Guidance

If you have ticked Yes to Question 1 and/or any of the options in Question 2, proceed to the Assessment section below

If you have ticked No to question 1 and have **not ticked** any of the options in Question 2, your proposal is not relevant to equality. You should now complete the Screening Sign Off below and place this document on file as outlined below.

Screening Sign Off

You **must** confirm in relevant approval papers that the proposal has been screened for impact in relation to equality and that you consider full assessment is not required

Screening assessment completed by (project officer)	
Date of decision:	
Screening reviewed by (Senior Responsible Officer - SRO)	
Date of decision:	

You must retain this screening document with your strategy, policy, project or programme papers. Screening documentation is subject to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation effective from May 2018 and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

If you have completed the Screening Sign Off and it has been signed off by delegated authority, the assessment of the proposal ends at this stage.

Assessment Section

Requirements to publish impact assessments

Impact assessments must be published, demonstrating that HIE has paid due regard to equality in the development and delivery of our functions. Assessments are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Question B1 - Purpose of the proposal

What is the purpose of the proposal, who are the main beneficiaries (e.g. employees/service users, equality groups, other stakeholders) and what are the intended outcomes?

HIE's Procurement Strategy 2024 -2028 was published in January 2024 and is subject to an annual review. Some small amendments are being proposed to the Strategy and as part of the review a People Impact Assessment is being conducted.

The Procurement Reform Act 2014 requires all Scottish contracting authorities with an annual regulated procurement spend of £5 million and above to publish a procurement strategy. HIE's Procurement Strategy supports the Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland <https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-procurement-strategy-scotland-2023-2028/> which aligns to the National Performance Framework and HIE's Strategy 2023-2028 and continues to work to help deliver Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) in the Highlands and Islands.

HIE's Strategy encompasses four pillars – People, Place, Planet and Prosperity, with core cross-cutting themes related to embedding net zero, fair and inclusive growth and regional transformational opportunities. These cross-cutting themes influence the procurement strategy which is also aligned with HIE's purpose 'Build and sustain a greener, fairer and more resilient region that benefits everyone'.

The procurement strategy is also influenced by procurement and wider legislation and policy (including Scottish Procurement Policy Notes (SPPN's) that impact on procurement processes and practices.

The types of people who may be affected by the Procurement Strategy are:

- HIE employees
- Economic operators, businesses, service providers, bidders and supply chain workers
- Third sector organisations
- Supported Businesses
- Third party clients.

People impacted may be located in remote, rural or island communities.

HIE's aim is to conduct our procurement processes in an open, fair, inclusive and transparent manner ensuring we can demonstrate value for money, innovation and fully embrace the principles of sustainable procurement and support the transition to net zero strategy, implement community benefits and community wealth building and contribute towards reducing inequalities within the region.

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 includes a duty to treat relevant economic operators equally and without discriminations. The Act incorporates a Sustainable Procurement Duty – for example sustainability, fair work practices and equalities.

Our approach to community wealth building into the HIE region helps identify appropriate lotting of requirements to help local small and medium sized businesses, third sector organisations and supported businesses have an opportunity to bid for and win work. We also promote procurement opportunities through our social media platforms, include HIE region businesses in our unregulated procurements, and include community benefits in our regulated procurements (where relevant and proportionate).

HIE employees need to be aware of the procurement objectives HIE is seeking to achieve through its procurement strategy and how this is interlinked with the national procurement strategy and Scottish government policies and procurement legislation, and how our procurement of goods, services and works contributes to these objectives.

Business and providers in the marketplace who are interested in public sector contracting opportunities may be affected by the Strategy. Competitive tendering processes enable a consistent, fair, transparent and the equal treatment of bidders and their bids, and not all tender submissions will be successful.

Question B1 Guidance

Question B2 - Evidence of potential impact on people

What does evidence tell you about the likely impact of the proposal on different groups of people? Consider the impact of the proposal on people with [protected characteristics](#).

What does the evidence tell you	Source of evidence
Public sector procurement contracts are of interest to a wide range of economic operators, including SMES, third sector organisations and supported businesses, employing individuals of varying working ages	Previous experience showing a wide range of organisation types, sectors and sizes bidding for public sector procurement opportunities.

<p>Fair Work Criteria included in procurements can positively help influence pay, workforce voice, equality, flexible working and inclusive employment practices across the supply chain.</p>	<p>Previously published HIE Annual Procurement Reports.</p> <p>Scottish Government Fair Work practice guidance - Fair Work Practices Procurement Journey</p> <p>HIE Procurement Strategy 2024-2028 - Fair Work and Living Wage commitments, including promotion of the real Living Wage, workforce voice, tackling the gender pay gap, flexible and family-friendly working, and monitoring through contract management.</p> <p>Inclusive procurement practices, use of equality impact assessments, promotion of the real Living Wage, community wealth building and community benefits as set out in the Procurement Strategy.</p> <p>HIE's Strategy Strategy and operating plan Highlands and Islands Enterprise HIE</p>
<p>Clients – where services are procured that will be used directly by clients, ensuring that resulting contracts meet the needs of different client groups.</p>	<p>Previous client consultation where required. Use of Equality Impact Assessments and inclusive specifications of requirements.</p>
<p>Community wealth building approaches enable more opportunities for local businesses to bid and win work.</p> <p>Community Benefits included in relevant procurements help support local priorities.</p>	<p>Delivery of targeted community benefits within the HIE region.</p> <p>Appropriate lotting of requirements to help create more opportunities to the local marketplace.</p>
<p>Procurement processes are designed to be proportionate and accessible, with equality impact assessments applied at individual procurement level.</p>	<p>Scottish Government Procurement Journey Home Procurement Journey</p> <p>Supplier feedback</p>

Summary of what the evidence tells you, who may be affected and how:

The evidence indicates that HIE's procurement activity is of interest to a wide range of organisations across different legal structures, sectors and sizes, including SMEs, third sector organisations and supported businesses. These organisations employ individuals of varying working ages and backgrounds.

The inclusion of Fair Work practices within procurement can positively influence workplace standards and terms and conditions for employees within the supply chain, including pay, workforce voice, equality, flexible and family-friendly working.

Community wealth building approaches and the inclusion of community benefits can help create opportunities for local and regional businesses and support local priorities within the Highlands and Islands.

The use of equality impact assessments at individual procurement level is important in identifying any potential impacts on people with protected characteristics and ensuring the appropriate mitigations or enhancements are applied where relevant and proportionate.

Question B2 Guidance

Question B3 - Evidence gaps

Are there any evidence gaps? If so, how will you fill these? For example, are there any experts or stakeholders you should involve/consult now? Please add N/A in the box below if there are no further evidence gaps.

N/A

Question B3 Guidance

Question B4 - Assessing impact

Include below any positive or adverse impact which may occur as a result of the planned delivery of the proposal - consider employees, clients, service users, and any other relevant groups.

Does your analysis of the evidence indicate any possible adverse impact on a **particular equality group**? In some cases adverse impact may amount to **unlawful discrimination**. For own hand projects where you have a concern that an adverse impact may amount to unlawful discrimination you should refer to HIE legal service for advice. If the project is third party, you should advise the client to seek their own legal advice. Guide for SMEs on unlawful discrimination is available [here](#)

**Hover over each category below for further information	Impact			Please explain the potential impacts
	Positive impact	Negative impact	No/neutral impact	
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>HIE employees involved in procurement processes and businesses/providers in the marketplace can be of any age. The Procurement Strategy applies equally across age groups, with no differential impact identified at strategy level.</p> <p>Promoting the payment of the real Living Wage to our suppliers and contractors supports low paid workers which are often younger or older.</p>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Supplier feedback has identified that aspects of procurement documentation and processes may be more challenging for some neurodivergent tenderers, including those with ADHD. HIE will review, and where appropriate, amend procurement documentation and guidance to improve clarity and accessibility.</p> <p>The Procurement Strategy has due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, including consideration of equality impacts and reasonable adjustments where relevant.</p> <p>Equality impact assessments applied at individual procurement level remain the primary mechanism for identifying and addressing, where appropriate, accessibility and equality considerations through specifications and contract requirements.</p>

<u>Gender Reassignment</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Procurement Strategy applies equally and without discrimination. No specific impacts are identified at strategy level; an relevant considerations would be assessed through equality impact assessments at individual procurement level where relevant and proportionate.
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No specific impacts identified at strategy level.
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No specific impacts identified at strategy level.
<u>Race</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Procurement Strategy applies equally and without discrimination. Suppliers, clients and employees may be of any race, and no specific impacts are identified at strategy level.
<u>Religion or Belief</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Procurement Strategy applies equally and without discrimination. Suppliers, clients and employees may hold a range of religions or beliefs, and no specific impacts are identified at strategy level.
<u>Sex</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Procurement Strategy applies equally and without discrimination regardless of sex. No specific impacts are identified at strategy level.
<u>Sexual orientation</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Procurement Strategy applies equally and without discrimination regardless of sexual orientation. No specific impacts are identified at strategy level.

Question B5 - Assessing impact - General Equality Duty

Please explain in more detail how the proposal will meet the general equality duties

	Please explain
<p>Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation <i>We can do this by eliminating less favourable treatment or indirect discrimination</i></p>	<p>Regulated procurements are undertaken in compliance with procurement legislation, ensuring equal treatment, non-discrimination, transparency and proportionality.</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty apply across all procurement activity, including consideration of equality impacts and reasonable adjustments where relevant.</p> <p>Procurement activity is also undertaken in accordance with HIE's internal governance arrangements, including delegated authorities, approval processes and internal controls.</p> <p>Use of Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) supports open and transparent advertising of regulated procurement opportunities where applicable, with proportionate and transparent evaluation criteria applied consistently in competitive processes. The current contractor providing PCS is committed to making its websites available to as many people as possible and has a dedicated accessibility team, an accessibility section on the PCS website and a contact email address for users with an queries/feedback.</p>
<p>Advancing equality of opportunity <i>We can do this by removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting needs which are particular to some groups of people and encouraging participation of under-represented groups, e.g. taking account of disabled people's impairments</i></p>	<p>Procurement activity is undertaken in compliance with procurement legislation and the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>The Procurement Strategy supports advancing equality of opportunity through inclusive and proportionate procurement practices, including continued signposting to Supplier Development Programme training and support to help suppliers engage with public sector procurement opportunities.</p>
<p>Fostering good relations <i>We can do this by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding amongst our staff and client groups</i></p>	<p>Use of consistent and proportionate procurement processes helps foster good relations by promoting transparency, equal treatment and confidence in procurement activity among suppliers, stakeholders and internal staff.</p> <p>Community wealth building and the inclusion of community benefits can support the fostering of good relations into the HIE Region.</p>

Question B5 Guidance

Question B6

Could the proposal be modified to reduce the potential for **unlawful discrimination**, advance/promote equality, reduce any identified negative impacts and foster good relations? If necessary, consider other ways in which the aims and objectives of the proposal could be met. What can be done now/later?

The Procurement Strategy reflects the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and relevant procurement legislation.

No modifications to the Strategy are required at this stage. Equality considerations will continue to be addressed, where relevant and proportionate, through individual procurement activity in line with legislative requirements.

Question B6 Guidance

Question B7 - Procurement

Does your proposed activity involve procurement activity in:

Goods/Services £10k and above: **Yes** **No**

Works £50k and above: **Yes** **No**

If you have answered Yes to one/both of the above, please advise HIE Procurement Team procurement@hient.co.uk for further support on how the potential impacts can be included (as appropriate) into:

1. Your Scope of Requirements for the procurement(s)
2. Evaluation criteria
3. Key Performance Indicators
4. Contract Management process

Question 7 Guidance

The degree to which equality and diversity requirements are specified and incorporated within procurement documentation will vary according to the goods, services or works being purchased and are assessed on a case-by-case basis. This helps to ensure that full consideration is given to the needs of, and the likely impact on, all users and others who will be affected by the contract.

You will need to ensure any expectation to take action to ensure the service delivery is inclusive to equality groups is explicit within your procurement brief and contract and is a regular part of any contract management discussions with the supplier. Contact HIE Procurement Team for further guidance: procurement@hient.co.uk

Question 8 - Summary of actions and monitoring review arrangements to address inequality

The following summarises actions to be taken as a result of the People Impact Assessment and **should be outlined in the social and people impact assessment section of the appraisal paper.**

A key part of every impact assessment is the actions that HIE will take, and the recommendations made as part of due diligence to enhance or mitigate the impacts identified. Actions and recommendations should be based on evidence available at the time and aim to mitigate negative impacts or enhance positive impacts on any or all of the protected characteristics.

What are the main impacts on equality (if there are no equality impacts to enhance any of the protected characteristics, please enter N/A)?

The People Impact Assessment has identified that HIE's Procurement Strategy supports equality through the promotion of open, fair, inclusive and transparent procurement practices.

Positive impacts include the embedding of Fair Work practices within procurement, community wealth building approaches, and the use of proportionate procurement processes that support access to opportunities for a wide range of suppliers, including SMEs, third sector organisations and supported businesses.

No specific adverse equality impacts have been identified at strategy level. Equality and accessibility considerations will continue to be identified and addressed, where relevant and proportionate, through individual procurement activity.

What are the main recommendations to enhance or mitigate the impacts identified? (If there are no mitigations or enhancements to be made, please enter N/A)

No specific mitigations or enhancements are required at strategy level.

As part of ongoing continuous improvement, supplier feedback will continue to be used to inform the review of procurement documentation and guidance, including consideration of clarity and accessibility for neurodivergent tenderers where appropriate. Equality and accessibility considerations will continue to be addressed, where relevant and proportionate, through individual procurement activity.

ACTION PLAN

The actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Potential impact to be addressed	Action to be taken	Person responsible for delivery	Timescale for delivery
Accessibility and clarity of procurement documentation for neurodivergent tenderers/employees.	Review procurement documentation and guidance, informed by supplier feedback, and amend where appropriate to improve clarity and accessibility. Review with relevant internal colleagues.	[REDACTED]	30/06/2026
Equality and accessibility considerations in procurement activity	Apply equality impact assessments proportionately at individual procurement level to identify and address relevant equality and accessibility considerations through specification, evaluation criteria and contract requirements.	[REDACTED]	Ongoing

Monitoring and review of the action plan above should be part of standard project aftercare and monitoring arrangements.

Question 8 Guidance

The full signed assessment is held with proposal papers and published on the [HIE website](#).

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):	[REDACTED]
Job Title:	[REDACTED]
Date of signing off completed assessment:	[REDACTED]