

EqIA - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Policy or Service to be assessed:

Review of deckchair subsidy policy

Service and lead officer:

Nick Thornley

Officers involved in the EqIA:

Simon King, Kevin Good and Susan Ward-Rice

What are you impact assessing?

Existing

New/proposed

Changing/Update/ revision

Other, please list:

Step 2: Scoping – what are you assessing?

Q1: What is the title of your service/strategy/policy/project?

Economy, Leisure and Tourism - Beach and Seafront management Service

Removal of policy that provides free deckchairs for anyone aged 60 and over and reside in the Borough of Weymouth and Portland.

Q2: What is the aim of your service/strategy/policy/project?

The Service covering leisure (including beach and event management), culture and harbours play an important role in attracting visitors to the area and maintaining a high quality of life for local residents.

Currently the service is responsible for putting out and taking payment for deck chairs on Weymouth Beach on a seasonal basis (from Easter to the end of September), however, there are times when deckchairs are not available for use (e.g. weather conditions). In addition to the deckchairs there are a number of alternative free seating along the seafront, such as public benches and seafront shelters, to accommodate those wishing to sit for a short time without having to pay or those who wish to sit on an alternative type of seating,

as the deck chairs are not suitable for everyone. There is also no restriction with people bringing their chairs to the beach (many do already), a deckchair costs £2.20 to hire for a full or part day.

The current policy has been in operation for over 30 years, without being reviewed and there have been complaints regarding the current policy from those who feel discriminated against because they are not eligible. This includes people who live in the Lanehouse, Chickerell and Preston areas of Weymouth as some of these areas fall under the jurisdiction of West Dorset District Council and therefore not eligible for a permit.

In the past Weymouth & Portland Borough Council have used the concessionary bus pass as the qualifying criteria for a free deck chair pass, however, this criteria has now changed and the council currently carries out its own tests and issues its own passes which costs about £750 per annum in staff time.

As part of the proposal to review the deckchair pricing policy, it has been suggested that any additional funds raised from the potential increase in income would be used to support swimming for disabled people at Weymouth Swimming Pool.

A report was taken to WPBC Policy Development Committee on the 20 February 2017 asking members to consider ending the policy; members deferred the decision to allow a period of public consultation to ascertain the views of residents in Weymouth & Portland.

Consultation was carried out between 18 May 2017 – 18 June 2017, the survey was available online via

https://consultationtracker.dorsetforyou.com/00_consultation_12202_330_00.htm

In addition, paper copies of the consultation were available from the Council offices on Commercial Road and the Beach Office on the Esplanade. Residents could also visit the library and the council offices to use free computers to access the internet to complete the survey. The survey was advertised through local media.

The total number of people who responded to the survey was 370.

Q3: Who does/will it have an impact on? e.g. public, visitors, staff, members, partners?

- Anyone aged 60 and over and who reside in the Borough of Weymouth and Portland.

Q4: Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project?

- Feedback from public consultation
- Political barriers
- Reputational risks to the council

Q5: Who else will be involved in implementing this service/policy

service/strategy/policy/project?

The beach and seafront management service will be implementing the policy.

Step 3: Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers?

Q6: What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by equality strand?

- Weymouth & Portland¹ has a population of 65,134 consisting of:
0-17 years 12,281 (19%)
18-64 years 38,009 (58%)
65 and over 14,844 (23%)
- The only data held by the Beach and Seafront Management Service is the number of passes issued. Claiming a free hire pass requires the person to attend the beach office with photographic identification showing current address and date of birth (i.e. driving licence or a combination of a utility bill and photo id.) Once this information has been confirmed the pass is issued (current passes in circulation are approximately 4,250). No personal information is retained by the Beach and Seafront Management Service.
- Complaints documented to WPBC (either through its formal complaints service or via the Beach office – from people unable to access the scheme due to not living in the Weymouth & Portland Borough area.

Q7: Do you need any further information broken down by equality strand to inform this EqlA?

Yes No

If yes, list here and add actions to gather this data to your action plan at Step 5:

Q8: Is there any potential for direct or indirect discrimination?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, please explain how you are going to change this?

Step 4: Making a judgement about impacts

Age:

The current policy allows free deckchairs and half price suntraps/windbreaks for residents of Weymouth & Portland aged over 60. The policy has been in operation for 30 years without being reviewed. Since 2013, approximately 4500 passes have been issued to Weymouth & Portland residents aged over 60.

The Council have used the concessionary bus pass as the qualifying criteria for a free deck chair pass, however, this criteria has now changed and the council currently carries out its

¹ Weymouth & Portland Key Facts; 2015

own tests and issues its own passes. As the working age has increased the number of people aged 60 and over who are still employment both full and part time shows that there is a need to review this policy. Any changes to the proposal and remove the free pass to over 60's could potentially impact on current holders and some of these may be financially impacted.

Consultation Results

The consultation asked respondents what age group they belonged to; the responses were:

Age group	Number of respondents
Under 18	0 (0.0%)
18-24	10 (2.7%)
25-34	11 (3.0%)
35-44	21 (5.7%)
45-54	26 (7.1%)
55-64	120 (32.7%)
65 or over	169 (46.0%)
Prefer not to say	10 (2.7%)

Disability:

Some of the current users of the scheme may have a disability, however no data is collected on disabilities and the current scheme is only open to those aged 60 and over, whether they have a disability or not. There are no additional schemes for people with disabilities.

If there is a removal of this current policy, some of the revenue created would be used to provide free or subsidised swimming for disabled people at Weymouth Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre.

Consultation Results

During the consultation respondents were asked the following question;

'Would you like to see any increase in income from changes to the free provision of deckchairs to be made available to provide free or subsidised swimming for disabled people at Weymouth Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre?'

88 (25.25%) answered yes to this question and 261 (74.8%) answered no.

Disability data was collected during the consultation.

Gender re-assignment:

No impacts identified.

Race:

No impacts identified.

Religion or belief:

No impacts identified.

Sex:

No impacts identified.

Sexual Orientation:

No impacts identified.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

No impacts identified.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships:

No impacts identified.

Conclusion:

The results of consultation favour keeping the deckchair scheme, however, evidence does suggest that the current age requirements for eligibility onto the scheme need to be updated to take into account changes in society with people working longer. The new proposal suggests keeping the scheme but increasing the age of eligibility to fit in line with the English National Concessionary Bus Pass. This bus pass concession for older people has been in place since 2001. To be eligible for the scheme men and women must have reached the state pension age for women. Previously the eligible age for concessionary travel was 60 years of age. However, since 6 April 2010, the age of eligibility for concessionary travel in England has been tied to the pensionable age for women. So, as the pensionable age for women gradually increases from 60 to 65, so too will the age of eligibility for concessionary travel increase for both men and women. The age of eligibility for concessionary travel is therefore:

- For women = pensionable age
- For men = pensionable age of a woman born on the same day

As part of the Spending Review 2010 the Government announced plans to speed up the alignment of the pension age so that the pensionable age for women will now reach 65 by 2018 instead of 2020 as previously planned. Furthermore, the pensionable age for both men and women will now rise to 66 by 2020. The age of eligibility for concessionary travel will increase in line with these and any other future changes to the pensionable age for women.

The scheme will still only be open to residents of Weymouth & Portland Borough Council. To be eligible for the scheme, residents will be asked to provide :

- Proof of residence: i.e. council tax / utility bill, bank statement, driving licence
- Proof of age: concessionary bus pass, passport, driving licence, birth certificate

Existing pass holders will continue to be users of the scheme and these changes will be implemented in April 2018.

Step 5: Action planning

See action plan

Step 5: Improvement plan – what are you going to change?

Expand boxes as necessary

Issue	Action	Performance Target (what difference will it make)	Lead Officer	Achieved
Increase the age of eligibility onto the scheme broadly in line with the English National Concessionary Bus Pass rules.	New eligibility criteria to be implemented in April 2018			

EqlA approved by:

Date:

Review date:

Check with your equality officer for the EqlA signing-off process and for posting the EqlA on the web