



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Introduction of Byelaws for the regulation of businesses involved in acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing, and electrolysis, made under Part VIII of the Local Governments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (as amended by the Local Government Act 2003)

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

New Byelaw

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

External (residents, communities, partners)

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

The aim of this is to consolidate legacy Byelaws for the regulation of piercing practices into one Byelaw for the whole of the Dorset Councils area to deal with what is currently a fragmented enforcement landscape. The objective is for the protection of public health through the regulation of acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis - to reduce the risk of transmission of blood borne virus infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C and other infections.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

Part VIII of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 originally provided for the regulation only of tattooing, acupuncture, ear piercing and electrolysis. This was subsequently amended by the Local Government Act 2003 to substitute the more comprehensive term 'cosmetic body piercing' for 'ear piercing' to accommodate the growing practice of piercing other parts of the human body, and to regulate the relatively new practice of semi-permanent skin colouring which has grown up in the interim.

The model Bylaws were adopted within two of its previous five district councils' administrative areas: West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council. However, in the East Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council and North Dorset District Councils' administrative areas, the Council has previously undertaken only the regulation of the practices of acupuncture, tattooing, ear-piercing and electrolysis.

This means there is discrepancy in the enforcement action which could be taken based on where the premises were located.

Therefore, it is proposed to introduce new Byelaws to consolidate enforcement for the whole of Dorset Councils area based on the Department of Health's model for the regulation of acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis, revoking all the existing Byelaws.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g national statistics, employee data):

Data from the following sources:

- Idox information on registered skin piercers
- Officer intel from visits to registered skin piercers
- Information contained in the CIEH Tattooing and Body Piercing Toolkit

Consultation has also taken place with:

- Registered skin piercers
- The public

The consultation ran from the 22/05/25 till the 14/08/25 and was available online, and through a paper survey. Business support sent letters to all piercing premises and practitioners to inform them of the consultation. It was also promoted in the Council's business e-newsletter.

7. What did this tell you?

Data and service knowledge/information suggests that:

The adoption of the byelaws will unlikely have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics, the introduction will provide protection equally to all.

The public consultation data and information received tell us

- 3 piercers responded to the survey (across residents and private businesses)
- of those, 2 operate from commercial premises, and 1 residential
- 9 out of 10 respondents were aware of the need to be registered with Dorset Council as a piercing practitioner
- 9 out of 10 respondents were also aware of the need for a premises to be registered
- 80% respondents agreed with the proposal to consolidate the Byelaws.
- Of those, 5 strongly agreed and 3 agreed. 2 disagreed
- 5 respondents identified as practitioners
- 4 practitioners thought the proposals would not add an extra burden on their business. 1 did
- there was some concern about the food and drink rule for clients, particularly for sessions longer than 1 hour

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

A 12-week public consultation ran from the 22/05/25 till the 14/08/25 and was available online, and through a paper survey.

We also sent out letters to all 130 registered piercing premises and practitioners to inform them of the consultation.

It was also promoted in the Council's business e-newsletter.

Officers also promoted the consultation to piercing practitioners when carrying out inspections.

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

No

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqlA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqlA, please answer the following question:

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require a EqlA because (provide details):

The adoption of these Byelaws will ensure consistent standards across all skin piercing businesses within Dorset Council. The council is not responsible for who uses these services, but for ensuring that any skin piercing activities are undertaken in a safe and hygienic manner. We do not anticipate any adverse impacts on businesses already registered as the standards will be applied consistently.

We have reviewed all of the responses to the consultation which tell us that the adoption of the consolidated Byelaws is supported, with 80% of respondents stating that they either strongly agree or agree. They also did not feel that the adoption of the consolidated Byelaws would place extra burden on their businesses.

Where respondents raised concern around the requirement to display a sign stating, 'No food and drink' to be displayed in the treatment areas, we have reviewed this and made an amendment to the consolidated Byelaws to add 'apart from water'.

All piercers are currently registered under legacy Byelaws and therefore there will be for those operating in Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset area, no changes and for those operating in Purbeck, East Dorset and North Dorset areas, minor change in the terminology, ie replacing ear piercing with body piercing.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
N/A			

Sign Off: *LJ Brewer*

Officer completing this EqIA: Laura Brewer – Food, Safety and Port Health Service Manager

Officers involved in completing the EqIA:

Date of completion: October 2025

Version Number: 3

EqIA review date: 24 October 2025

Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palfreman-Kay

Next Steps:

- the EqlA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqlA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqlA, to get a better understanding.
- EqlA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)

Hi Laura

Happy to sign off on this EqlA. Thank you for sharing it.

Best wishes

James

James Palfreman-Kay
Equality Diversity and Inclusion
Officer

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