



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the [Dorset Council style guide](#) and also use the [accessibility checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council [website](#)

Before completing this form, please refer to the [supporting guidance](#). The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#).

1. Initial information

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

Dog-related Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) 2024, made under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

2. Is this a

New Order

3. This is for both internal and external stakeholders

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

- To protect public health and public safety from the adverse actions of dogs and less responsible dog owners.
- To protect the welfare of animals, including dogs.
- To support the welfare of people through responsible dog ownership.
- To recognise and implement the requirements of the Equality Act, 2010 and the updated guidance conferred by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2024- Assistance dogs: a guide for all businesses.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

This Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order 2027 provides controls over;

- Removal of dog fouling
- Exclusion of dogs from certain public spaces either permanently or during specified periods
- Requirement for dogs to be kept on-lead permanently or during specified periods
- Requirement for dogs to be on lead when required by an Authorised Officer of the council
- Specifying the maximum lead length where on-lead controls exist
- Specifying the number of dogs to be walked at any one time (usually used for commercial walkers where large numbers exist – usually in urban parks)
- Any other dog-related restriction that meets the legal test and ensures the control of a dog in a specified area or controls antisocial behaviour from dogs and less responsible owners.

The Order will be in force for a period of 3 years, from 1st January 2027 to 31st December 2029, after which there will be a further statutory review.

The enforcement of this Order is via a fixed penalty notice, the fine of which is currently set by central government at £100, payable within 28 days, reduced to £75.00 if paid within 14 days.

Evidence gathering and engagement

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

We have collected data from the following sources:

- [Census 21](#) (ONS/NOMIS)
- State of Dorset 2025 [Topic Data - Dorset Council](#)
- [English indices of deprivation 2025 - GOV.UK](#)
- A review of the easing of the restrictions at Front Town Beach Lyme Regis over the winter period (September 2024). No noticeable increase in public safety or significant dog-related welfare concerns were identified.
- Dorset Council Complaint Data
- Previous consultation for superseded Orders has taken place with a range of organisations.
 - The Kennel Club
 - RSPCA
 - Dogs Trust and Dorset Dogs
 - Dorset Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner
 - Dorset Blind
 - MS Society
 - Dorset Stroke Organisation
 - Diverse Abilities
 - Access Dorset

The information received from the organisations has been consistent over time, and it was considered that, as there has been no substantial change to the nature of maintaining animal welfare or equality requirements, a very limited stakeholder engagement was required in drafting the current EqIA, namely Dorset Police, Dorset Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Town and Parish Councils and other relevant landowners.

7. What did this tell you?

The reports identify Dorset as having one of the oldest populations among unitary authorities in England, with approximately 31% of residents aged 65 and over. While Dorset's overall population has grown only modestly, the ageing profile of the population is likely to result in a greater proportion of residents experiencing reduced mobility, sensory impairments, long-term health conditions and disabilities. This has implications for accessibility and the design of public spaces.

Whilst most stakeholders did not raise concerns, Dorset Council receives communications from a small group of residents regarding accessibility issues on both Weymouth and Lyme Regis beaches due to the dog-exclusion requirement.

The drafting of the Order therefore considers accessibility requirements, applying exemptions where appropriate.

There is no data on the number of dog owners or on the number of specifically accredited assistance dogs, but it is appreciated that their needs must be considered as part of this process.

This is a legal requirement of the Equality Act 2010, Dorset Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2024 to 2027 and our Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) defines an assistance dog as

“dogs that are trained to help people with hearing difficulties, epilepsy, diabetes, physical mobility problems and more. Assistance dogs carry out a variety of practical tasks for people as well as supporting their independence and confidence.”

Assistance dogs are not pets and are treated as 'auxiliary aids'. Assistance dogs are highly trained, which means they:

- will not wander freely around the premises,
- will sit or lie quietly on the floor next to their owner,
- are unlikely to foul in a public place.

Most are instantly recognisable by a harness or jacket. However, the law does not require a dog to wear a harness or jacket to identify it as an assistance dog, nor does it require owners to carry paperwork for that purpose.

Some, but not all, assistance dog users will carry an ID book that provides information about the assistance dog and the training organisation, along with other useful information.

(Source: Assistance dogs: A guide for businesses and service providers, EHRC updated 2024) Assistance dogs: a guide for all businesses| EHRC

Officers will be instructed on our approach to enforcement when dealing with assistance dogs or persons claiming exemption due to mobility issues or other impairments. Where the disability is hidden, and the dog is not liveried, the person will be approached and reasonable enquiry made.

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

Residents were consulted as part of the Public Consultation exercise together with official stakeholders namely Dorset Police, Dorset Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Town and Parish Councils and other relevant landowners.

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

Not at this stage but will keep under constant review

Is an EQIA required?

Yes

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

Positive Impact	• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	• protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	• no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	• not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Negative and positive	Negative - Increased age may lead to reduced mobility and mental impairment. Challenges may be faced with picking up dog faeces, restraining dogs on lead, walking to exercise areas and walking on gradients, unstable or slippery ground. Mitigation can be found in the Summary of Impacts below. Positive - The benefit is the reduction in the risk of public exposure to harmful bacteria and parasites, particularly to children, as widely recognised in the field of public health. Dog faeces contain pathogens which poses a risk through hand to mouth contact. Children are recognised at greater risk because they are more likely

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		to play on the ground and transfer the faeces to their mouths.
Disability	Negative and Positive	Negative - Persons with impaired vision, reduced mobility or heightened anxiety to the extent that an assistance dog is required should not be discriminated by the restrictions contained within the Order. Mitigation can be found in Summary of Impacts below. Positive -Dog interaction can be alarming for some with heightened anxieties, and the council has received feedback to say that exclusion areas or dogs kept on leads is considered a positive requirement.
Care Experience	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
	Neutral	Clear unambiguous signage is used, suitably located and in

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Race and Ethnicity		adequate numbers using internationally recognised symbols. A simple, clear font of a suitable size is used. The provision of information on website and leaflets which are easy to understand. DC website also has Read Speak facility. Officers use translation apps on mobile phones, such as google translate.
Religion and belief	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
Sex (consider men and women)	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
People with caring responsibilities	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
Rural isolation	Neutral	It's likely that in rural areas there will be more places to exercise dogs, and this can be a social activity.
Socio-economic deprivation	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Single parents		not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.
Armed forces communities	Neutral	This protected characteristic is considered not to be impacted by this proposal. Dorset Council has not received any queries regarding this cohort and is not aware of any evidence of impacts.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

The introduction of the dog-related PSPO identifies both positive and negative impacts as highlighted above.

The following mitigations are in place

- The Order will exempt people who require a dog to provide assistance. The definition of an assistance dog is described in the main body of the EqlA. The dog forms an auxiliary aid that helps the individual maintain independence and access public spaces, services and facilities on an equal basis with others.
- Persons may apply to DC for an exemption if unable to pick up their dog faeces. This can be by email. Unless the officer judges otherwise, the dog owner/walker will be required to provide medical evidence as part of the application that they have a significant disability that prevents them from picking up the fouling. This will include their inability to use specialist equipment for the said purpose. If an exemption is granted, the council will provide a photo ID letter to that effect, which can be shown if approached by an officer.
- For those who do not require an assistance dog but are unsteady on their feet, the council will make every effort to ensure suitable alternative exercise areas are available, including discussions with the landowner where the land is not owned by the council.
- Concerns have been raised regarding the summer dog exclusion on Lyme Regis Front Town Beach. These relate to the unsuitability of the adjacent beaches for exercising dogs for persons with limited mobility. The Town Council states that it has accessibility matting on Monmouth beach, with level access from the nearby car park. There are inland green spaces where dogs can be exercised off lead. This issue will be monitored and reviewed.

The approach to enforcement has been revised and is now included in the Officer instruction programme.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqlA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Officer Training	Training undertaken annually. The training will cover the requirements of the PSPO and the enforcement approach.	Team Leader	01.01.2027
Lyme Regis Front Beach	The suitability of alternative locations to Front Town beach for dog owners with limited mobility.	Service Manager	1.04.2027

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqlA: Janet Moore

Officers involved in completing the EqlA: Janet Moore; Rebecca Buck

Date of completion: 21.09.2026

Version Number: v3

EqlA review date: 1.04.2027

Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palfreman- Kay 22.09.2026

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](#)