



# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## (EqIA)

### Summary results of the EqIA

#### **Title of policy/practice/process/service:**

Civil legal aid: cost limit amends.

#### **Is the policy new (proposed), a revision to an existing policy or a review of current policy?**

Review of current policy.

#### **Key findings from this assessment (or reason why an EqIA is not required):**

We have analysed the available internal applications data regarding requests for a cost limit to be amended in civil legal aid. (We acknowledge that the full range of protected characteristics is not covered). For those areas where data is available, our assessment is that the data does not show any detrimental equalities impacts likely to arise because of our policy position.

We note that protected characteristics may have a degree of relevance to requests for cost limit amends, in particular, insofar as they may be relevant to whether an expert or counsel is required (with various types of experts relating directly to applicants' protected characteristics); whether some forms of unusual work with relevance to equalities are needed (for example special measures); and whether interpreting/translation is required. (There are also a range of other reasons why cost limit amends may be required that have no bearing on equalities issues whatsoever).

We further note that this policy area is a specific element of the legal aid regime, with few parallels externally and as such, we have been unable to find any significant volume of external evidence relevant to a direct assessment of this policy position.

Finally, given the clear intersection of this policy with our other policies on prior approval (for counsel, experts, unusual work, and work of unusually large expenditure), we suggest that this EqIA is read in tandem with those to fully understand the relevance of equalities to this policy.

#### **Summary of actions taken because of this assessment:**

No specific actions following this impact assessment have been taken, given the conclusions reached. We will however continue to gather and analyse data to monitor the impact of this policy.

#### **Ongoing actions beyond implementation include:**

Ongoing actions include the gathering and analysis of data in relation to this policy. We intend to continue monitoring the grant rate in relation to protected characteristics, to establish more information on the impact of this policy on assisted persons with equality related circumstances.

**Lead person(s) for this assessment (job title and department only):**

Head of Civil and Children's Legal Assistance.

**Senior responsible owner (SRO) agreement that the policy has been fully assessed against the needs of the general duty (job title only):**

Director of Operations.

**Publication date (for completion by Communications):**

21/05/2026.

# Step 1: Scoping the work being assessed

## 1.1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/practice/process/service.

The relevant part of the associated policy statement is set out below:

“Our policy is that we will grant a request to increase a cost limit where we consider that firstly, the work proposed in order to bring the case to a conclusion appears to be proportionate; and secondly, the specific sum sought appears to be reasonable in all the circumstances of the case.

### ***“The proportionality test***

“In terms of whether the costs to be incurred are likely to be proportionate, our policy is that we will grant the increase where the request is *not* premature (that is, where the case has reached a stage where there is a sound basis on which to suggest higher costs will actually be incurred) and it can be shown that one or more of the following is present or likely:

- There are likely drivers for higher costs linked to the nature of the case:
  - Whether counsel is involved / likely to be involved;
  - Whether an expert is involved / likely to be involved;
  - Whether any other unusual - and in particular, unusually expensive -work is involved / likely to be involved;
  - Likely length or number of any court hearings;
- There are likely drivers for higher costs linked to the assisted person’s equality characteristics;
- There are other indicators linked to other relevant aspects of the legal aid schemes:
  - High cost or exceptional case status, or an additional fee has already been granted;
  - Work has already been done under special urgency which would take up most of the cost limit later imposed; and
  - A transfer of the grant has taken place, with regards to the amount of work undertaken by the outgoing solicitor.

“When considering whether the specific case cost increase sought is reasonable, we will have regard to data we hold about typical case costs, as well as to any quotes for specific outlays provided by the solicitor for the case at hand. An increase request must address the specific circumstances which will result in this case (and specific items within the request) costing more than would normally be anticipated.

“There is no limit to the number of amend applications that may be submitted.

“For the purposes of this policy, case cost limits are attached to individual LARNs, rather than applied at case level.

### ***“Retrospective approval for cost limit amends***

“There are no specific provisions in regulation for the retrospective approval of requests for cost limit amends. However, as a matter of policy we make provision for retrospective requests.

“For retrospective requests to amend a cost limit, we first consider whether approval would have been granted had it been sought timeously (that is, does the amount for which approval is sought appear proportionate and realistic).

“We then consider whether a ‘special reason’ has been shown for late submission of the request. Our policy on ‘special reason’ is that where a solicitor can show that:

- they were prevented from making a prospective amend application by circumstances which were beyond their control and these circumstances were ones which could not have been reasonably foreseen; or
- the circumstances were within the solicitor’s control, and ought to have been foreseen, but the oversight was nonetheless justifiable given the particular or unusual circumstances in which the expense was incurred,

“this will generally be accepted as a special reason for late submission of a request to amend a cost limit. SLAB’s policy is that the particular circumstances described should amount to more than simply plain oversight: a ‘special reason’ must be provided to justify any oversight.”

## **1.2. Why is the policy/practice/process/service being examined?**

Review of policy/process/service/practice.

## **1.3. Who is affected by this policy/practice/process/service?**

The customer for the purpose of this policy is the assisted person. The extent to which assisted persons (and by connection, their solicitors) can employ counsel or experts or undertake specific forms of work will be affected by how SLAB sets policy in this area.

## **1.4. Policy/practice/process/service implementation date.**

Currently live.

## **1.5. What other SLAB policies or projects may be linked or affected by changes to this policy/practice/process/service?**

There is a relationship between cost limit amends and other forms of prior approval (for example, for counsel). There will also be a relationship with the task undertaken at Accounts assessment stage.

## **Step 2: Consider the available evidence and data relevant to your policy/practice/process/service**

### **2.1. What information is available about the experience of each equality group in relation to this policy/practice/process/service?**

#### **General information about the policy/practice/process/service**

Some contextual information on cost limit amends follows. In 2024-25, we received around 5,100 requests for a cost limit to be amended, from just over 3,800 applicants. In a large majority of these cases, only one amend was sought: in a smaller number, multiple requests were received.

Over 90% of requests for a cost limit to be amended were approved.

The size of the cost limit amends sought varied significantly, from £1,000 to over £30,000.

A comparison of cost limit amends and civil legal aid applications by subject matter is set out below:

Case subject matter	Percentage of cost limit amend requests	Percentage of civil legal aid applications
Contact/parental	30.7%	15.5%
Residence	23.2%	10.1%
Adults with incapacity	19.0%	47.2%
Family/matrimonial - other	11.8%	8.4%
Divorce/separation	4.8%	9.6%
Protective order	2.6%	1.2%
Property/monetary	1.7%	0.9%
Housing/recovery of heritable property	1.5%	3.8%
Other	1.3%	0.7%
Appeals - family	0.5%	0.2%
Medical negligence	0.5%	0.2%
Debt	0.5%	0.2%
Judicial review	0.4%	0.6%
Appeals - other	0.4%	0.2%
Reparation	0.4%	0.2%
Fatal accident inquiries	0.3%	0.1%
Immigration and asylum	0.3%	0.7%
Discrimination	0.1%	0.0%
Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBO)	0.0%	0.0%
Breach of contract	0.0%	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Contact/parental and residence make up a significantly larger proportion of cost limit amend requests than they do of civil legal aid applications (53.9% versus 25.6%), whilst in contrast, adults with incapacity cases make up a significantly lower proportion of cost limit amends.

The average size of amend sought also varied significantly by case type: whilst the average was around £10,000, for medical negligence cases (for instance), the average was around £55,000, whilst for adults with incapacity cases, the average was around £3,500: this is likely to reflect differences in how complex or labour intensive a case is likely to be (for instance, the likely need for experts or counsel, or the number of court hearings).

## Age

### Statistics

- **SLAB's data**

Applicant age band	Percentage of cost limit amend requests	Percentage of civil legal aid applicants	Scottish population (census 2022)
<=24	5.8%	5%	27%
25-34	30.5%	22%	13%
35-44	33.9%	27%	13%
45-54	15.3%	19%	13%
55-64	9.7%	16%	14%
65+	4.9%	10%	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The age profile of applicants seeking cost limit amends in civil legal aid is slightly different to that of applicants for civil legal aid generally, with applicants seeking counsel being more likely to be in the >=24; 25-34, and 35-44 age bands, and somewhat less likely to be in the older age bands. It differs significantly from the Scottish population, with those requesting approvals being much more likely to be in some of the younger age bands: particularly 25-34 and 35-44. Our view is this likely reflects the age profile of the parties who tend to be involved in certain types of civil proceedings most likely to need an increase in the cost limit (for various reasons), rather than resulting from a particular impact of this policy suppressing the number of requests from older persons. For instance, it may reflect the large proportion of family matters (particularly people of parenting age) amongst the cost limits applications data.

Applicant age band	Granted	Not granted	Grand Total
<=24	91.8%	8.2%	100.0%
25-34	93.1%	6.9%	100.0%
35-44	93.9%	6.1%	100.0%
45-54	94.0%	6.0%	100.0%
55-64	93.8%	6.2%	100.0%
65+	91.1%	8.9%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Although the table above shows minor differences in the grant rate by this protected characteristic, statistical testing confirms that the differences are **not** statistically significant. We are not aware of any broader evidence or insights (for instance complaints) which would otherwise suggest that there are detrimental impacts of our policy which relate directly to age.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

*Evidence on different age categories*

No specific evidence seen.

## Disability

*Statistics*

- **SLAB's data**

Applicant disability status	Percentage of requests for cost limit amends
Disabled	17.2%
No disability	82.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Applicant disability status	Granted	Not granted
Disabled	93.2%	6.8%
No disability	93.8%	6.2%

It should be noted that the disclosure rate for this protected characteristic is slightly under 50%, which may obscure the true picture.

Whilst it might have been expected that requests cost limit amends might be more frequent amongst applicants with disabilities (because of either additional assistance/support being required in

providing legal advice, or greater use of experts) this does not appear to be borne out by the data: this contrasts with the position seen in civil experts, for instance, where around 35% of requests were from applicants with disabilities, and the general profile of the Scottish population, in which over 25% of people have some form of disability. We are not aware of additional evidence that would suggest that the profile of requests indicates the existence of barriers faced by disabled people because of our policy position, however.

It is not possible to determine from the data what proportion of requests from disabled people related specifically to costs arising in direct connection with their disability, rather than other relevant factors present in the case.

The data in the second table above shows that there is very little difference in the grant rate by this protected characteristic: for both disabled and non-disabled assisted persons, the grant rate for requests for a cost limit amend is over 90%. In the absence of any other evidence, our view is that the data above suggests there is no discriminatory impact arising from the policy position.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

The specific equalities factor within our policy position could feasibly be relevant to this protected characteristic, if it were shown that the case was particularly costly for reasons relating to the applicant's (or possibly another party's) disability; for instance, where the client '*has special needs that will require additional assistance*' (per our published guidance).

In addition to expert witnesses, such as psychologists and psychiatrists, AWI cases can require the use of safeguarders or specialist reporters, whose involvement can lead to increases in case costs. These elements further demonstrate the policy's relevance to the protected characteristic of disability and highlight the importance of clear and proportionate decision-making around cost-limit amendments.

However, we are not readily able to undertake analysis to this level of detail, and to our knowledge, the frequency to which this protected characteristic is in fact relevant in applications for cost limit amends counsel is fairly limited.

### **Evidence on different disabilities**

- **Physical disabilities**

There are a small number of requests for cost limit amends which appear to relate to costs relating to physical disabilities – for instance, costs associated with BSL interpreters.

- **Learning disabilities**

No specific evidence seen.

- **Mental health**

As noted above, a sizeable number of requests arise because of further funding being required to instruct an expert who would be instructed to speak to an applicant's mental health in the context of the case.

## **Sex**

### **Statistics**

- **SLAB's data**

Applicant sex	Percentage of total cost limit amends	Percentage of total applicants for civil legal aid
Female	55.9%	61%
Male	39.5%	39%
Prefer not to say	4.6%	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The profile of applicants who requested a cost limit amend is fairly similar to the profile of applicants for civil legal aid generally, with women forming a majority (and being somewhat over-represented compared to the profile of the Scottish population as a whole). We are not aware of evidence that suggests there are particular barriers to either men or women applying for cost limit amends because of their sex.

Applicant sex	Granted	Not granted	Total
Female	93.4%	6.6%	100.0%
Male	93.9%	6.1%	100.0%
Prefer not to say	91.0%	9.0%	100.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>93.5%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The table above shows that the grant rate for men and women is very similar, with statistical testing confirming there is no significant difference. This does not suggest any obvious need for concern in relation to the policy’s impact with regards to this protected characteristic.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

*Evidence on women*

No specific evidence seen.

*Evidence on men*

No specific evidence seen.

**Race**

*Statistics*

- **SLAB’s data**

Applicant ethnicity	Percentage of requests for cost limit amends
White majority	47.5%
White minority	1.9%
Non-white ethnic minority	2.9%
Prefer not to say	47.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Compared to the Scottish population data in the Core Surveys Questions for 2025, the proportion of requests from all three declared categories is low. Our view is that this is in part explained by the very high level of applicants answering with ‘prefer not to say’.

It is important to state that we are not (for instance) aware of any barriers to greater levels of requests from any of the groups within this protected characteristic.

Applicant ethnicity	Granted	Not granted	Total
White majority	94.3%	5.7%	100.0%
White minority	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
Non-white ethnic minority	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
Prefer not to say	93.9%	6.1%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Although the table above shows minor differences in the grant rate by this protected characteristic, statistical testing confirms that the differences are **not** statistically significant. This does not suggest any obvious need for concern in relation to the policy’s impact with regards to this protected characteristic.

### Data relevant to the policy

#### *Evidence on different ethnicities*

No evidence seen.

#### *Evidence on people whose first language is not English*

We anticipate that

### Gender reassignment

#### *Statistics*

- **SLAB’s data**

No evidence available.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

#### *Evidence on trans people*

No specific evidence seen.

### Sexual orientation

#### *Statistics*

- **SLAB’s data**

No evidence available.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

#### *Evidence on gay men*

No specific evidence seen.

#### *Evidence on gay women/lesbians*

No specific evidence seen.

#### *Evidence on bisexual people*

No specific evidence seen.

### Religion or belief

#### *Statistics*

- **SLAB’s data**

No evidence available.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

#### *Evidence on different religions*

No specific evidence seen.

### **Pregnancy or maternity**

#### *Statistics*

- **SLAB's data**

No evidence available.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

#### *Evidence on pregnancy and maternity*

No specific evidence seen.

### **Marriage/civil partnership (only applies to policies related to employment)**

#### *Statistics*

- **SLAB's data**

Not relevant for this policy.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

#### *Evidence on marriage and civil partnership*

Not relevant.

### **Care Experienced**

#### *Statistics*

- **SLAB's data**

<b>Applicant care experience</b>	<b>Percentage of requests for cost limit amends</b>
Care experienced	1.9%
Never been "looked after" by a Local Authority	34.4%
Prefer not to say	63.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Drawing conclusions about the impact of this policy in relation to this characteristic is challenging because of the high rate of 'prefer not to say' amongst the applications data, combined with the relatively low rate of disclosure.

We do note that we are not aware of specific evidence that suggests there are particular barriers created by our policy position that would have a disproportionate impact on people who are care experienced.

<b>Applicant care experience</b>	<b>Granted</b>	<b>Not granted</b>	<b>Total</b>
Care experienced	96.2%	3.8%	100.0%
Never been "looked after" by a Local Authority	93.7%	6.3%	100.0%
Prefer not to say	94.0%	6.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.9%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Having undertaken a statistical analysis of the data above, we can confirm that there is no statistically significant difference in the grant rate by this protected characteristic.

- **Data relevant to the policy**

*Evidence on care experienced people*

Whilst we are aware there is a body of evidence which indicates care-experienced individuals are over-represented in the criminal justice system, we are not currently sighted on data as to whether this also occurs in the civil justice system, or if so, how exactly that translates into greater or lesser need for an amended cost limit.

**2.2. Using the information above and your knowledge of the policy/practice/process/service, summarise your overall assessment of how important and relevant it is likely to be for equality groups.**

Our assessment is that equalities issues will have a direct relevance to this policy, including the likelihood of needing a cost limit amend in the first place, in some scenarios. In particular, the interaction between cost limit amends and the need for expert witnesses and counsel (as well as for unusual work), in the context of the relevance of those policies to equalities issues (for instance, expert reports relating to applicants' mental health, or requests for counsel relating to the vulnerability of applicant) means that our policy on cost limit amends can potentially be highly important for equality groups.

On the other hand, it is important to note that there are many reasons why a cost limit amend might be sought on which equalities issues may have no bearing at all: for instance, cases involving multiple court dates, or where counsel is involved on the grounds of the complexity of the law (rather than the nature of the applicant).

In terms of groups affected, we anticipate that age, disability, and race would be the protected characteristics for which this policy has the most obvious relevance (in line with our conclusions in the EqIAs on counsel, experts, and unusual work). However, we note that the policy clearly enables decision-makers to take any equalities issues into account where those appear to be relevant to the request.

Having analysed the applications data we have available to us for some protected characteristics, we note that in none of them did we find a statistically significant difference in the grant rate.

We note that the grant rate for cost limit amends is very high.

**2.3. Outcome of Step 2 and next steps. Select the outcome below to inform the next stage of the EqIA process.**

**Please select your decision:** Proceed to Step 3 - complete full EqIA.

**Please outline the reasoning behind your decision:**

Per the evidence set out in the rest of step 2, which indicates that equalities issues may be relevant to cost limit amends, a full EqIA is justified.

## Step 3: Stakeholder involvement and consultation

### 3.1. Do you/did you have any consultation or involvement planned for this policy/practice/process/service?

No.

### 3.2. List all the stakeholder groups that you will talk to about this policy/practice/process/service.

None.

### 3.3. What did you learn from the consultation/involvement?

N/A.

## Step 4: Impact on equality groups and steps to address these

### 4.1. Does the policy/practice/process/service have any impacts (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative) on any of the equality characteristics?

#### Cross-cutting observations

Outcomes of this policy will tend to be driven by factors which are no more than indirectly related to the applicant's protected characteristics – for instance, the length of a case and the number of court date. However, there are factors in the policy which *could* (at least potentially) make an applicant's protected characteristics relevant to our decision. The framing of those factors is wide enough – in principle – to allow for *any* of the protected characteristics to be considered, where relevance is shown to the factors set out in the policy. Our view is that this means that the policy position as described should be seen as having the potential to advance equality of opportunity across the range of protected characteristics.

However, on the other hand, we also wish to make clear that an applicant's protected characteristics in and of themselves are not relevant to our decision-making: a relevance of the characteristics to the factors set out in the policy must be demonstrated.

#### Age

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

In terms of relevance, as noted above, there are some forms of work which may be undertaken by solicitors, counsel or experts – for instance the use of commissioners under unusual work; or the instruction of child psychologists – which may be directly related to an applicant's age and vulnerability. More broadly, age does not appear to be obviously relevant to most requests made.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into

account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## Disability

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

Some case work, such as instructing psychologists or psychiatrists, may relate directly to an applicant's disability and can result in the need for a cost-limit amendment. Safeguarder appointments in Adults with Incapacity cases, including for young adults moving into guardianship, also often lead to increased case costs. More broadly, disability is not relevant to most requests, and the policy framework is flexible enough to consider any protected characteristic where this is relevant.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## Sex

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## Race

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

As set out in section 2, there are several reasons why an applicant's race could be relevant to the need for a cost limit amend: for instance, where there are significant costs relating to interpreters.

Whilst we are aware of general evidence that indicates people from minority ethnic backgrounds can face barriers in readily accessing public services, we are not aware of any specific evidence that suggests our policy on approval on cost limit amends creates specific difficulties in this regard.

There are a few limitations to the applications data we have available – in particular, the high rate of prefer not to say and the rate of non-disclosure of ethnicity data – therefore the conclusions we can draw robustly are limited. Given the lack of a statistically significant difference in the grant rate, in combination with our broader operational decision-making experience, overall, our view is that there is no clear evidence that the policy is discriminatory with regards to race.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## Gender reassignment

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

We did not find any evidence that indicated a specific relevance of our policy on cost limit amends with regards to this protected characteristic, or which suggests that applicants are more or less likely to seek and to be granted approval for a cost limit amend depending on their gender reassignment status (in line with similar conclusions reached in relation to our assessment with regards to counsel and experts). However, nor are we aware of any current issues. There are no known adverse impacts to be mitigated.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## Sexual orientation

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

We did not find any evidence that indicated a specific relevance of our policy on cost limit amends with regards to this protected characteristic, or which suggests that applicants are more or less likely to seek and to be granted approval for a cost limit amend depending on their sexual orientation (in line with similar conclusions reached in relation to our assessment with regards to counsel and experts). However, nor are we aware of any current issues. There are no known adverse impacts to be mitigated.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## Religion or Belief

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

We did not find any evidence that indicated a specific relevance of our policy on cost limit amends with regards to this protected characteristic, or which suggests that applicants are more or less likely

to seek and to be granted approval for a cost limit amend depending on their religion or beliefs (in line with similar conclusions reached in relation to our assessment with regards to counsel and experts). However, nor are we aware of any current issues. There are no known adverse impacts to be mitigated.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## **Pregnancy & Maternity**

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

We did not find any evidence that indicated a specific relevance of our policy on cost limit amends with regards to this protected characteristic, or which suggests that applicants are more or less likely to seek and to be granted approval for a cost limit amend depending on their religion or beliefs (in line with similar conclusions reached in relation to our assessment with regards to counsel and experts). However, nor are we aware of any current issues. There are no known adverse impacts to be mitigated.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), our assessment is that the factors set out within the policy are broad enough to allow for issues relating to any protected characteristic to be taken into account where relevance can be demonstrated; and that this means that the policy has a positive impact with regards to equality of opportunity.

## **Marriage & Civil Partnership (only applies to policies related to employment)**

*This protected characteristic is not relevant for the purpose of this EqIA.*

## **Care experience**

**Potential for discrimination:** No impact.

**Potential for developing good relations:** No impact.

**Potential to advance equality:** Positive impact(s).

Whilst we are aware of general evidence that indicates people who have experienced care can face barriers in readily accessing public services, we are not aware of any specific evidence that suggests our policy on approval for cost limit amends creates specific difficulties in this regard.

As noted above, in [cross-cutting observations](#), the policy is framed in such a way that the factors potentially allow protected characteristics, including care experience, to be considered as part of our decision-making, where relevant. This allows an applicant's full circumstances to be considered and as such, our view is that the policy advances equality of opportunity.

## **4.2. Which actions have you taken as part of this assessment?**

**Please select the outcome of the assessment:** Confirm that the policy/practice/process/service described in section 1.1 was robust.

**Please explain the changes that have been made:** Given the conclusion above, no change to the policy is required.

## Step 5: Discuss and review the assessment with decision makers and governance structures

**5.1. Record details of the groups you report to about this policy/practice/process/service and impact assessment. Include the date you presented progress to each group and an extract from the minutes to reflect the discussion.**

This assessment was discussed with key operational leads in April 2026, followed by review by senior leadership at the GALA Review meeting which took place on 20/04/2026.

## Step 6: Post-implementation actions and monitoring impact

**6.1. Record any ongoing actions below**

No specific ongoing actions at present.

**6.2. Note here how you intend to monitor the impact of this policy/practice/process/service on equality groups**

Measure	Lead department or individual	Reporting (where and frequency)
Number of requests for cost limit amends and grant rate by protected characteristics	AMI/Policy	Head of Civil and Children's Legal Assistance, three year review cycle

**6.3. EqIA review date**

*Should be reviewed as part of the post-implementation review of the policy/practice/process/service. The date should not exceed three years from the implementation date.*

20/04/2029.

## Step 7: Assessment sign off and approval

**Director/SRO sign off:** 20/04/2026.

**Chief Executive approval:** 20/04/2026.