

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

Title of Policy	Hate Crime Security Fund (HCSF) for places of worship (POW)
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	To deliver a one-off £500K fund to places of worship (POW) to install security measures to mitigate the threat from hate crime. To ensure that the POW most vulnerable to hate crime are better protected. To help ensure that Faith communities can attend their POW without fear of hate crime or incidents.
Directorate: Division: team	Connected Communities Division Faith and Belief Policy

Executive summary

This is a summary of the full Equality Impact Assessment conducted on the Hate Crime Security Fund (HCSF) which opens for applications on 26 May 2021.

The aim of the HCSF is to provide 100% grants to places of worship (POW) that are vulnerable to hate crime or incidents. The HCSF covers all hate crime that occurs at a POW and not just religious hate crime. Up to £20,000 is provided to individual POW to install security measures to mitigate these threats. The fund is open to all faiths, and POW are eligible to apply for up to three separate capital security measures. The Fund opens on 26 May 2021 for 8 weeks and grants are expected to be paid by 30 September 2021.

The EQIA process identified:

No negative impacts from the HCSF on any of the protected characteristics

A lack of specific hate crime data for the protected characteristics in relation to places of worship with the exception of sex, race and religion.

The HCSF is likely to help all faith communities/protected characteristics to feel safer attending their POW.

The EQIA process did not identify indirect or direct discrimination through the policy intention, design or the planned delivery of the HCSF.

The HCSF is targeted at faith communities who are vulnerable to hate crime or incidents. As such the HCSF is inclusive and is open to all faith communities in Scotland.

This EQIA analysis will be kept under regular review, and following the delivery of the HCSF any relevant new data will be added to aid our understanding of the potential impact of HCSF on faith communities and protected characteristics.

Background

Following the March 2019 Christchurch terror attacks, the First Minister and Justice Secretary committed to explore further what more the Scottish Government could do to provide reassurance to all faith communities and their POW, including exploring the issues around safety and security. Officials were asked to provide advice on whether a fund similar to the Hate Crime Security Fund available in England and Wales could be developed in Scotland. This was followed by the announcement on 27 January 2020 of a Hate Crime Security Fund (HCSF) in Scotland.

The Scope of the EQIA

The EQIA has been delivered with support from the Scottish Government Equalities Unit, Justice Analytical Services, Faith and Belief Policy and Hate Crime Policy.

This EQIA considered the potential effects of this new fund and how it might affect people with one or more protected characteristics. The findings are informed by a stakeholder consultation exercise and feedback about the draft design as well as desk based research.

In order to determine the impact of HCSF, a desk based review of evidence was undertaken, taking into account a variety of statistical information, reports, and other publications including:

- Lord Bracadale’s Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Scotland
- Consultation on Scottish hate crime legislation
- Equality Evidence Finder,
- Developing Information on Hate Crime Recorded by the Police in Scotland
- Criminal Proceedings in Scotland, 2018-19,
- Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSAS) 2015
- Scottish Household Survey 2018
- Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2017-2018.
- Hate Crime in Scotland Statistics 2019-2020 recorded by Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)
- Scotland’s Census 2011
- Living in Scotland in 2019
- Scottish Crime and Justice survey 2019/2020
- A Study of the Characteristics of Police Recorded Hate Crime in Scotland 2021
- Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland 2016-2017
- Lord Bracadale’s Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Scotland
- Results of a Scottish Government Consultation on Scottish hate crime legislation
- A consultation on the draft design was carried out from 10 December 2020 – 19 January 2021. This involved the main faith denominations in Scotland.

This EQIA also draws on the EQIA and related evidence base collated for the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill as the HCSF is intended to prevent hate crime and incidents and provide reassurance to faith communities.

Key Findings

Following the EQIA assessment, it is considered that the fund will not cause a negative impact on, adversely affect or cause indirect or direct discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership. The Fund is intended to meet the needs of all faith individuals and communities attending a place of worship.

The stakeholder engagement and discussions did not identify that the HCSF design had a potential negative impact on any of the protected characteristics .

The EQIA has provided a better understanding of the potential impact of the HCSF on faith communities in Scotland and in particular those most likely to be affected by hate crime and incidents. We have designed the fund to be open to all faiths in all geographic locations so that it is inclusive. Any individual POW may apply.

We considered initially that HCSF would be targeted solely at religious hate. However, having considered the evidence from Police Scotland and the reports above we decided that it needed to cover any hate crime that occurs in a POW, to be fully inclusive and open to all characteristics and given the aim of the fund was to protect everyone who attends a POW.

There is a lack of specific hate crime data for the protected characteristics in relation to places of worship, with the exception of sex, race and religion. The data on these protected characteristics provides details of the groups/denominations most likely to be affected by hate crime. In 2018, minority ethnic adults were more likely to have experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months (17 per cent) compared to white adults (8 per cent). Minority ethnic adults were also more likely to have experienced harassment (11 per cent) than adults from 'White' ethnic groups (6 per cent).

We considered consulting faith organisations about the protected characteristics for which we do not have specific data, however we do not believe that they are likely to have this data in a form that could be of value in this context.

We consider that some installations of security measures are likely to enhance access for people with a disability, such as enhanced lighting and entry systems that allow easier access.

In particular we were made aware that some faith groups did not own their POW's and have designed the HCSF so that all, including this category of faith groups can apply, as long as they have permission to install security measures.

As a result of the EQIA, we have built in additional support from the fund administrator during the application process. Applicants who require the

application in accessible formats or different languages will be able to request this support. In addition, applicants will be able to contact the administrator in a number of ways – email, telephone, video calls.

The Scottish Government has sought to ensure that applicants fully understand what is required and are steered to the most effective security measures. It is hoped that this support makes the application process simpler for all, and that POW's that are less experienced in applying for funding are provided with the support that they need to make an application.

In addition, the Scottish Government has decided to provide to applicants the Assessment Scoring Matrix which is to be used for the assessment of applications by Police Scotland. This is to ensure that applicants understand in detail how the information they submit in their application will be scored. This will provide all applicants, whatever their resource/capacity and prior experience of applying to such funds, with information which it is hoped will improve their application.

Feedback from certain faith groups indicated that flexibility was needed in the range of security measures and improvements that could be proposed by applicants. For example one faith group said that their POW had to have a specific lock which was related to their faith practice. The HCSF was designed to take account of this requirement and applicants can choose the measures that are most appropriate to their situation and faith specific practices.

Following the EQIA assessment, it is considered that the fund is designed to meet the needs of all faith individuals and communities attending a place of worship and therefore should have a positive impact on protected characteristics. We do not consider that the fund will adversely affect or cause indirect or direct discrimination in respect of the protected characteristics of age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership.

Our stakeholder engagement and discussions did not identify that the HCSF design had a potential negative impact on any of the protected characteristics .

The HCSF design and application process is intended to be accessible. Any individual or organisation can request information about the fund and the application form in alternative formats.

The HCSF will encourage faith organisations to support individual POWs in the preparation of their applications to the fund. In addition applicants can contact the external fund administrator to request help with their application by telephone or email. This ensures people of all protected characteristics are supported in their application to the Fund.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The EQIA process did not identify any indirect or direct discrimination resulting from the HCSF design or delivery.

This EQIA will be reviewed following the delivery of the HCSF to identify any new data or evidence relating to the impact of the HCSF on protected characteristics.

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