# **Equality (Impact) Assessment**



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## **1. BACKGROUND**

The Money and Pensions Service was formally launched on 6 April 2019. The Single Financial Guidance Body (its original legal name) was formed on 1 October 2018. On 1 January 2019, it came into operation and took on the responsibilities of:

- Pension Wise
- The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)
- The Money Advice Service (MAS)

The Money and Pensions Service is funded from multiple levy budgets across money guidance, debt advice, pensions guidance and pension freedoms; and is sponsored by the Department of Work and Pensions, but also engages with HM Treasury, which is responsible for policy on financial capability.

The vision of the Money and Pensions Service is of a society where everyone makes the most of their money and pensions. The ability to manage money is central to people's health and wellbeing; it impacts their ability to fulfil their potential, and to care for their families. Enabling people to manage money and pensions well is vital for our economy and for society as a whole.

## 2. MaPS' OBLIGATIONS UNDER EQUALITY LEGISLATION

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them
- Fostering good relations between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.
- There is also a 'Specific Duty' to publish information about people affected by the policies and practices of the public body.

As an arms-length body of DWP, MaPS is a public body required to have due regard to this Public Sector Equality Duty. We meet this requirement by ensuring that we carry out a vulnerability and equalities impact assessment of any customer facing proposition or service that we deliver or commission to ensure that we meet the needs of consumers in vulnerable circumstances, or consumers with protected characteristics.

In relation to our organisational strategies and business plans, internal policies, processes and practices, we undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to evaluate the impact on people with protected characteristics, and address any area of potential disadvantage.

## **3. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS: DEFINITIONS**

Throughout this guidance there is reference to 'protected characteristics'. The following provides more information on each of the nine protected characteristics.

**Age:** Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 years old) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 years old).

**Disability:** A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment: The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** Marriage is no longer defined as a 'union between a man and a woman' but now includes marriage between same- sex couples. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

**Pregnancy and maternity:** Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavorably because she is breastfeeding.

**Race:** Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

**Religion and belief:** Religion has the meaning usually given to it, but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex: A man or a woman.

**Sexual orientation:** Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

More detailed definitions of these protected characteristics can be found on the Office of Public Sector Information website.

## 4. EIA STAGE 1: RELEVANCE ASSESSMENT

Activity and purpose (brief outline)	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on the Money and Pension Service's (MaPS) Debt Commissioning Programme: Lot 1: National Services			
Name of person drafting:				
Department or Team:	Money & Debt Operations Debt Policy & Strategy			
Date:				
objective, what are the stated aims (in	he strategy, policy or process. For example, what is its overall cluding who the intended beneficiaries are), a broad d, what the measure(s) of success will be, and any relevant			
The Money & Pension Service initiated the focused around the delivery of four linked	e Debt Advice in England Commissioning Programme, which is procurement processes named:			
<ul> <li>Lot 1: National Services;</li> <li>Lot 2: Regional Services;</li> <li>Lot 3: Business Debt; and,</li> <li>Lot 4: DRO Administration Hubs.</li> </ul>				
Commissioning will take place in 2021/22 2022.	with contract commencement dates for all Lots of 01 April			
debt advice services for individuals and sm Administration Hubs in England. Access to	sform existing service delivery through newly commissioned nall businesses and also Debt Relief Order (DRO) the free, high-quality debt advice services will be available to naPS statutory duty as laid out in the Financial Guidance and			
Given the differing propositions of each Lo specifically in relation to:	ot, a separate EIA has been completed per Lot. This EIA is			
Lot 1: National Services				
MaPS' aim is to commission three supplier throughout England, for an initial three-ye	rs for the delivery of multi-channel debt advice to people ar funding period.			
<ol> <li>There is diverse workforce of highly meet customer need (e.g. includes</li> </ol>	nt exercise which result in contracts being awarded. y skilled and well-motivated advisers and support staff to recognition of vulnerability). lity debt advice (contributes to the UK Strategy for Financial			

4. Longer-term contracts can provide an opportunity for service improvements to be rolled-out incrementally, beneficial to addressing identified gaps and/or streamlining services to serve more people efficiently and effectively.

The procurement timelines are:

Lot 1: National Services	
PIN Issued	27.04.21
Bidders Information event – Webinar	13.05.21
Issue of ITT to Bidders	16.07.21
Deadline for ITT clarification questions	08.10.21
Return of Tenders	15.10.21
Completion of evaluation of Tenders	19.11.21
Award approval/ Notification of intention to award	15.12.21
Standstill period ends	+10 days
Contract Award	31.12.21
De-commissioning period (where applicable)	01.01.22 - 31.03.22
Contract commencement	01.04.22

2. Impact – Screening process for relevance to diversity and equality issues. Please X as appropriate.

Does this strategy, policy or process have any relevance to:	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible
Age	х		
Disability	х		
Gender reassignment			х
Marriage and civil partnership	х		
Pregnancy and maternity	х		
Race	х		
Religion or belief			х
Sex	х		
Sexual orientation			х
	1		

If you have identified any impacts (other than negligible ones), positive or negative, on any group with protected characteristics, please complete Part 2.

Only if there are no or negligible impacts should you go straight to part 3 and sign off the EA.

## 5. EA STAGE 2: FULL EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

**IMPACT:** Please complete the next sections to show how this strategy, policy or process could have an impact (positive or negative) on the protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

Lack of evidence is not a reason for not progressing to carrying out an EA.

Please highlight any gaps in evidence that you have identified and explain how/if you intend to fill these gaps.

1. Do you think this will have a positive or negative impact on people because of their age?						
Age	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible		ur decision (incl w might it impa	-
Younger people (Children and young people, up to 18)	х				l lives: the comp 2013) showed t	
Working age people (18-54)	Х			indebted. Look indebted popu research revea	le who are over ing at the over- lation as a whol led the age prof ing with their de	e, the ile of
				Age	% of Over- Indebted Population	-
				18-24	21	-
				25-34	22	
				35-44 45-54	32	
				55-64	3	-
				65+	1	
Older people (55+)	х			middle age are our service use continuing serv	age population over-represent ers suggesting th vice provision w act on this group	ed in at ill have
				report (2018) s in the UK need half of those th younger (just 2 population is a	f Over-Indebted howed that 5.3 debt advice. Ar nat need debt ac 6% of the UK ged 18–34, but vithin that age g	m adults ound dvice are 48% of
				report (2018) io suggesting an i	f Over-Indebtec dentified variab ncreased likelih ness, on those a	les ood of

				39 who had three or more children as home. Citizens Advice's Delivering debt advice during a pandemic – Debt Advice impact report 2020/21 confirms the spread pf customers accessing their debt advice services reflects the same spread as those age groups found within the over-indebted population (2013). <b>Age of clients accessing our advice</b>
				away.
2. Because they are disabled?	·			
Disability	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Visual impairment	x			MaPS' funding will ensure commissioned services contribute to fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. Services delivered under contract must provide equality of access to customers with additional needs including, but not limited to, this group.
Hearing loss	X			MaPS' funding will ensure commissioned services contribute to fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. Services delivered under contract must provide equality of access to customers with additional needs

		including, but not limited to, this
		group.
		MaPS' funding will ensure
		commissioned services contribute to
		fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality
		Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
Physical disability	X	Services delivered under contract
		must provide equality of access to
		customers with additional needs
		including, but not limited to, this
		group.
		MaPS' funding will ensure
		commissioned services contribute to
		fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality
		Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
Learning disability	X	Services delivered under contract
		must provide equality of access to
		customers with additional needs
		including, but not limited to, this
		group.
		People living with an illness or on long- term health condition can experience
		adverse impact on their financial
		situation due to increased essential
		living costs to manage their illness or
		limit earning potential which could
		potentially lead to debt – see
		https://www.stepchange.org/debt-
		info/debt-long-term-sickness.aspx
Long-term health condition	X	
		MaPS' funding will ensure
		commissioned services contribute to
		fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality
		Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
		Services delivered under contract
		must provide equality of access to
		customers with additional needs
		including, but not limited to, this
		group. MaPS' Levels of Over-Indebtedness
		report (2018) showed that 5.3m adults
		in the UK need debt advice. A
		proportion are more likely to be
Mental health problem	x	struggling with their mental health,
		with 51% saying they have had mental
		health problems within the last 3 years
		(21% in the whole population).

		Nearly half of those in problem debt have a mental health problem. But symptoms of common mental health problems, such as difficulties communicating, impaired clarity of thought and reduced concentration or problem-solving skills, can make it difficult to engage with debt advice. With growing recognition of the importance of debt advice being accessible to all those who need it, there are opportunities to better serve customers with mental health problems (Help Along the Way, Money & Mental Health (July 2020)).MaPS funding will contribute to delivering the UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing, this includes the cross cutting lens on mental health.
Other disability	Х	MaPS' funding will ensure commissioned services contribute to fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. Services delivered under contract must provide equality of access to customers with additional needs including, but not limited to, this group.

## 3. Because of their sex?

Sex	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Male			х	No evidence to suggest positive or negative effect.
Female	x			MAS' Indebted lives: the complexities of life in debt (2013) showed that of the 8.8m people who are over- indebted. Looking at the over- indebted population as a whole, the research revealed women (64%) are over-represented than men (35%). The Insolvency Service's Individual Insolvencies by Location, Age and Gender, England and Wales (2019) report revealed the insolvency rates for females was higher than the male

				rate for the sixth successive year, and the gap has continued to widen. Insolvency rates were highest in the 25 to 34 age group for females and 35 to 44 for males. MaPS funding will contribute to delivering the UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing, this includes the cross cutting lens on gender, closing the gap.
4. Because of their gender rea	ssignment	?		
Gender reassignment	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Gender reassignment			х	No evidence to suggest positive or negative effect.
5. Because of their marriage o	r civil part	nership?		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Marriage	х			Marriage and civil partnership are often
Civil Partnership	X	:+.2		high-cost events with the potential to lead to debt. Conversely separation may also lead to financial difficulty. Many advice services engage this group, e.g. <u>How to deal with</u> problem debt after separation - Money Advice Service MaPS funding will ensure commissioned Services provide a holistic service to people to ensure their debt problem and root problem are om the journey to be resolved.
6. Because of their pregnancy	or matern	ity?		
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Pregnancy	х			Pregnancy/Maternity is likely to or
Maternity (the period after birth)	x			may trigger additional and/or anticipatory expenditure as well as potential for fluctuation in household income which may trigger a need for debt advice. Many advice services engage this group, e.g. <u>Maternity,</u> <u>Preparing For a Child And Debt.</u> <u>StepChange</u> .

7. Because of their race?				
Race	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Black, Asian or other minority groups	x			Research conducted by the Finance Conduct Authority, Insight show: <u>Covid-19 and the Uk's BAME</u> <u>communities – an economic perspective</u> – show BAME consumers have seen a higher fall on average in earnings since February . Looking at the use and behaviour around specific financial products we see BAME consumers have been more likely to use credit or rent deferral, to cash in savings and reduce pension contributions – which may be significant in terms of longer term financial security. <u>Ethnicity, personal finances and</u> <u>Coronavirus</u> - show before Coronavirus, a higher proportion of BAME consumers were over-indebted – 22% compared with 13% of White consumers. BAME consumers were also more likely to class domestic bills or credit commitments as a heavy burden – 17% compared with White consumers were over-indebted compared with a quarter (26%) of BAME consumers were over-indebted compared with a quarter (26%) of BAME consumers. However, when we control for gender, age, and income, our initial modelling shows that there is no significant relationship between ethnicity and being over-indebted. The most influential factor was age. A higher proportion of BAME consumers report that their financial situation has worsened in any way in the period since the epidemic began – 42% compared with 36%. However, a higher proportion of BAME consumers are also reporting their financial situation has improved –

				6% compared with 3% of White consumers. Numerous research reports have shown the need of debt advice services to support this group even more so. MaPS funding will ensure commissioned Services accommodate access into debt advice for this group.
National Origin e.g. Welsh, English etc.			х	No evidence to suggest positive or negative effect.
Gypsies and Travelers			х	No evidence to suggest positive or negative effect.
Others	x			All those for whom their first language is not English. MaPS funding will ensure commissioned Services accommodate access into debt advice for this group e.g. access to interpreting services. MaPS' funding will ensure commissioned services contribute to fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. Services delivered under contract must provide equality of access to customers with additional needs including, but not limited to, this group.
8. Because of their religion and	belief or	non-belief	?	
Religion and belief or non- belief	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Different religious groups including Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus or others			х	No evidence to suggest positive or negative effect.
Belief e.g. Humanists			х	
Non-belief			х	
9. Because of their sexual orier	ntation?			
Sexual Orientation	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Same sex			х	No evidence to suggest positive or
Opposite sex			х	negative effect.

Either sex attraction			х		
10. Building on the evidence you gathered and considered in Part 1, please consider the following:					
How could, or does, the strategy, policy or process help advance / promote equality of opportunity?					
(For example, positive measures designed to address disadvantage and reach different communities or					
protected groups)					

MaPS undertakes an annual survey to look at the need for debt advice (MaPS 2020 Need Survey) – the I&E team have completed work (as yet unpublished) to better understand the severity of need. This work breaks down those that need advice into three groups based on the characteristics driving their situation (such as the number of priority bills customers are behind on, the severity of the action being taken against them etc). It shows that within the 6.7m that need debt advice there are significant numbers with complex debt situations that may need casework and advocacy to help them resolve their debt problems. As well as supporting work to encourage earlier intervention, services commissioned need to make sure that they are meeting the needs of these cohorts of customers who may require more intensive support. MaPS is best placed to achieve this.

The outcome of the procurement exercise will support people in crisis debt with managing their debt through the offer of free, high-quality debt advice. The impact to customers, including those with protected characteristics, will help them achieve positive outcomes and in turn live better lives both financially and mentally.

The design of the procurement exercise will ensure equality of opportunity is addressed both within operational service delivery and reaching/serving customers.

- Tenderers will need to demonstrate how they will utilise funding to serve those in need across England. For example, we would expect Tenderer to state and evidence they have established working relationships (national, regional or local) either directly or through a third-party intermediary to ensure that the debt advice provision offer is extended to all communities including those with protected characteristics.
- Suppliers must hold an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Successful Suppliers will be contractually obliged to deliver the Statement of Requirements (SOR). When developing the SOR, consideration was given to ensure debt advice is made available to those most in need of it, bearing in mind the particular need of people in vulnerable circumstances and our ambition to exceed our statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Specifically, stated in the Lot 1 Statement of Requirements, Suppliers will be mandated to ensure:
  - Public Sector Equality Duty

8.13.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality and Vulnerability Policy: MaPS is bound by statue to address the needs of people with protected characteristics and of people in vulnerable circumstances in the delivery of our guidance, information, and advice. The Public Sector Equality Duty is applicable to people with protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

• Social Value: Theme 4: Equal Opportunity; Policy Outcome 9.3.1 MaPS is committed to tackling inequality and giving everyone across the country the opportunity to fulfil their potential. MaPS expects it's commissioned services to support this ambition by addressing training, employment, skills and pay inequalities which may exist in the contract workforce including any supply chain.

9.3.3 The Prime Contractor will support in-work progression to help people in the contract workforce, including those from disadvantaged or minority groups, to move into higher paid work by developing new skills relevant to the contract (MAC 6.2).

• Accessibility

8.14.1 MaPS has a statutory duty to ensure its services accommodate the needs of people in vulnerable circumstances, for example those with mental health problems. MaPS-funded Services therefore must ensure all stages of their customer journeys are accessible to vulnerable groups, to ensure these customers' needs are met.

## • User Input/User Research and Service Design

8.28.1 The Prime Contractor is expected to undertake user research to design, assess or monitor the quality of the service. All customer groups and stakeholders are expected to be included and actively involved in all service development and delivery phases. Evidence resulting from such endeavour is expected to support all service design decisions. User research should include the end-to-end journey of customers as well as all the ways they interact with the service.

11. Addressing any negative impacts

If the strategy, policy or process is likely to have a negative effect ('adverse impact') on any of the protected groups what are the reasons for this?

What practical changes/actions will be taken to reduce or remove any negative impacts identified? N/A

If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative / adverse impact, please justify why. (Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination (immediate or potential) as a result of the new activity, it must be changed or revised.

N/A

12. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

How will you monitor the impact of the strategy, policy or process on people with protected characteristics?

MaPS has taken due consideration on customer data to be collected from MaPS funded services and has prescribed a list of appropriate data fields (please refer to the Statement of Requirements). Services will be required to undertake monitoring on protected characteristics and vulnerability indicators. As part of the Performance Reporting and Responsibilities of the contract, Services will be required to monitor and analyse the data collected and report on insights, with the intention to address identified gaps to ensure no communities or protected groups are disadvantaged.

The Operational Delivery Team will influence continuous improvements by conducting checks that the contractual requirements are satisfactorily being met during the lifetime of the contract. This will be done through general performance reporting and or open visits to service premises.

The Operation Delivery Team will continue to engage MaPS' wider business PSED and Vulnerability experts to ensure the team is kept up-to-date with best practice approaches to ensure the team is continuously striving to meet its MAPS' statutory obligations, but most importantly the customer groups are not disadvantaged as a result of our funding.

The results of all impact assessments where the impact is significant will be published on the MaPS website, together with any planned or implemented remedial action where impact is negative

## 6. EA STAGE 3: REVIEW AND APPROVAL

### **Declaration**

We have reviewed the impact of the strategy, policy or process and ensured that it will not disadvantage anyone because they have a protected characteristic

Person completing the EIA			
Department or Team	Money & Debt Operations		
Date completed			
Person signing off (Head of Department)			
Date signed off			
Proposed review date (if any)	January 2022 (Post evaluation of Tenders), and annually thereafter.		

### 8. GOVERNANCE

Policy and process EAs: To be approved by Business Head / Head of Department.

**Strategies:** To be approved by ELT and, where necessary, MaPS Board. Whether an EA needs to be approved by MaPS Board will be decided by ELT.

### 9. STORING YOUR EIA

This EIA is stored within the following directory: