

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Part 1 – Initial Screening

1. People responsible for completing the assessment:

Sue Shipston (EqIA trained)
Terri Edwards (EqIA trained)
Gavin Stark – Senior Project Manager – National Trails
Sheila Talbot – Adviser – National Trails

2. Name of the policy, strategy or project:

National Trails

This is an existing project delivered through regional teams within Natural England and in partnership with local authorities

3. What is the main purpose or aims of the policy, strategy or project?

To provide a network of high quality long-distance walking and riding trails

4. Who will be the beneficiaries of the policy/strategy/project?

Members of the general public who might use or who might benefit from others using the Trails

Natural England in terms of enhancement of its reputation

5. Has the policy/strategy/project been explained to those it might affect directly or indirectly?

There is a National Trail website available at www.nationaltrail.co.uk. Free printed leaflets are available on request and through local Tourist Information Offices. A full series of guidebooks – published by Aurum Press – is available to buy. Each Trail has a Trail Officer responsible for it and available to the general public. Specific information on specific Trails is made available for educational purposes. Attendance at travel and tourism shows.

6. Have you consulted on this policy/strategy/project?

Before each route is designated as a National Trail it undergoes a consultation process with all interested parties – individuals, businesses, local authorities, interest groups etc.

Changes to the designated route undergo a consultation process as above.

A user survey is always available on the website and a face-to-face user survey takes place every second year.

National Trails appear in relevant Rights of Way Improvement Plans which are subjected to full consultation.

In 2004 a consultation was undertaken to ascertain people's desire to set up a National Trail Trust to manage the network.

A current review of the management of National Trails along with other routes has recently undertaken a consultation process.

7. Please complete the following table and give reasons/comments for where:

(a) The policy/strategy/project could have a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contributes to promoting equality, equal opportunities and improving relations within equality target groups.

(b) The policy/strategy/project could have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups, i.e. disadvantage them in any way.

If the impact is high, or the policy will impact significant amounts of people, a full EqIA should be completed.

Equality Target Group	a) Positive impact		b) Negative impact		Reason/Comment
	High	Low	High	Low	
Men		X			<p>This project has been defined as having a positive impact on the general public (both men and women) as it provides access to the countryside. This means that people can be encouraged to use the outdoors which can contribute to the health and well-being of both men and women. Good, consistent signage means that users are reassured about the route and can feel confident to walk alone.</p> <p>The positive impact is defined as low as the positive effects are not deemed to be major (or life changing) for the majority</p>
Women		X			<p>The remoteness of some routes may be seen as having a negative impact on women but this is mitigated by good information and good signage.</p>
Asian or Asian British people Black or Black British people White people (including Irish people) Chinese people Mixed Race people Other racial/ethnic group (please specify)		X			<p>It is generally assumed that these groups have traditionally been one of the under represented groups using the natural environment.</p> <p>Research shows that the best ways to encourage these groups to visit new places, to participate in outdoor recreation, is to build confidence and to help them feel more welcome. Good information and signage helps here.</p> <p>Where possible/appropriate, attention is also be given to improving links to the Trails to assist these groups (of whom a larger proportion traditionally inhabit towns and cities). Public transport guides to all Trails are available.</p> <p>Future policy developments should include a marketing plan and processes which will further address the above in terms of targeting specific groups as appropriate at that time</p>
Disabled and deaf people		X			<p>All Trails provide information about lengths which are suitable for people with mobility problems.</p> <p>Current policy is to seek to replace stiles/kissing gates with gates or gaps where possible. Guidance produced in Paths without Prejudice was used to inform the publication of National Trail Quality Standards.</p> <p>MP3 downloads are becoming available and some Trails are beginning to produce a series of user guides which promote accessible circular walks.</p> <p>The National Trail website provides information on the above and the whole site is built to accessibility standards.</p> <p>Baggage carrying services are highlighted where available on the website</p>

					<p>There is a general consensus that access to the countryside is advantageous to health and evidence to show that such access has a positive impact on mental health.</p> <p>Further consideration should be given to helping this group to feel more confident about visiting National Trails through any future policy changes or marketing plans</p>
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people		x			<p>As with other sectors of society, these groups benefit from the opportunity to escape and enjoy the space and tranquillity that National Trails offer.</p> <p>Further consideration should be given to helping this group to feel more confident about visiting National Trails through any future policy changes or marketing plans</p>
Transgender people		x			
Older people (50+)		x			<p>The 'Walking Your Way to Health' project suggests that increased access to walking and riding opportunities will have positive benefits for these groups.</p>
Younger people (17-25) and children		x			<p>Further consideration should be given to helping these groups to feel more confident about visiting National Trails through any future policy changes or marketing plans</p>
Working patterns (P/T or part year)	x				<p>The Trails should be open all of the time, thus this group should not be affected any differently than other sectors of society.</p>
Faith groups (please specify)		x			<p>This opportunity to connect with nature and experience tranquillity should have a positive impact on all faith groups. Again, attention should be given to making these groups feeling confident about using the National Trails</p>
Low income groups		x			<p>This project promotes the British holiday option, which might benefit this group.</p> <p>Public transport information is available for all Trails</p> <p>The availability of camping fields, youth hostels and bunk barns etc is promoted where available</p> <p>There are however some issues which may counteract the positive impact. The closure of some Youth Hostels and the lack of suitable camping facilities means that some people may find it too expensive to undertake longer trips on some Trails. Work is on-going to engage with accommodation providers to provide such facilities or make it possible for people to stay further away from the Trail itself – eg through the provision of taxi-ing services</p> <p>Clearly there are also the generic health benefits that increased exercise would bring.</p>

8. If there is a negative impact on any equality target group, is the impact intended?

No intended negative impacts are identified

9. What actions could be taken to amend the policy/strategy/project to minimise the negative impact?

We have not identified any negative impacts on any target groups mentioned in the table. Any new policies and procedures which are introduced in the future will be subjected to a further EqIA.

10. If there is no evidence that the policy/strategy/project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improves relations within equality target groups, what amendments could be made to achieve this?

It is seen that this project promotes equality.

Future policy changes and marketing plans will be used to address the issue of promoting equality and equal opportunities to a greater extent than at present.

11. How will the policy/strategy/project be implemented including any necessary training?

The project will continue, at present, to function through partnership work between NE teams, National Trail staff and local authorities. All these people receive proscribed training in equal opportunities and diversity through their employers.

Full assessment necessary? No

Is this Policy/Strategy/Project:

A new policy/strategy/project **No**

A change to an **existing** policy/strategy/project **No**

An existing policy/strategy/project **Yes**

Is this Equality Impact Assessment:

Predictive

No

Retrospective

Yes

Date completed:

18 December 2008

Signed by Line/Project Manager: Terri Edwards

Approved by Senior Management /Project Management Team:

Signed by Diversity lead: Jo Collinge

(This indicates that the EqIA has been through the QA process and has been approved as sufficient quality and appropriate for publication)