



Equality Impact Assessment-Trading Standards Policy Change- Charging for Business Advice 4 May 2016

Context of Policy Changes

Trading Standards are seeking approval to implement changes to the charging policy to allow charges to be made for almost all of the business advice it provides, not just Primary Authority Partnerships (PAP) as present.

Aims and Objectives

Trading Standards are seeking to standardise their provision of business advice and charge for bespoke tailored advice requested by businesses, not just those who have formal PAP in place.

The aim is to commercialise business advice and provide a higher level of bespoke service whilst also maximising income potential. This will free up resources to protect the most vulnerable consumers who are unable to help themselves.

Beneficiaries

Kent consumers, Kent based businesses and businesses based in south east who currently do not have access to paid for advice from Trading Standards.

Potential Impact

The EqlA focuses on the potential for impacting on those people who are covered by one or more of the nine protected characteristics which form the basis of all our identities. They are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Race
- Religion / belief or none
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

Initial screening

The policy change does not impact on any of the nine core areas specifically.

Trading standards staff who provide the business advice service are bound by the standards set by Kent County Council in relation to equality of access of services and the provision of additional support for those who require it. There is nothing in the policy change that would affect the continued delivery of those standards.

As the first hour of business advice is provided free regardless, the identified most vulnerable group - those businesses at start up stage - are provided with free advice to assist them in complying with consumer protection law and what is required of them to help their business flourish.

If any business owner or employee needs additional assistance due to mobility issues, language or other cultural issues, or has other commitments such as caring responsibilities these can be taken account of when the business advice is given, e.g:

- Provide key advice in alternative formats and other languages when requested
- Meet face to face if preferred by the person requesting advice
- Visit the person requesting advice if they have mobility issues
- Arranging to advise the person at a time that takes account of their other commitments

There is no evidence that this policy change would cause any group or persons to be excluded from the services provided.

Conclusion

There is no identified negative impact from the proposed policy change on any group covered by the nine core protected characteristics as set out in the Equalities Act 2010. There is the potential for positive impact; as income is generated, resources may be strengthened thereby allowing further adjustments to be considered reasonable in any consideration of such matters.

The initial screening is sufficient and no further action is required.

Steve Rock
Head of Trading Standards
4/5/2016