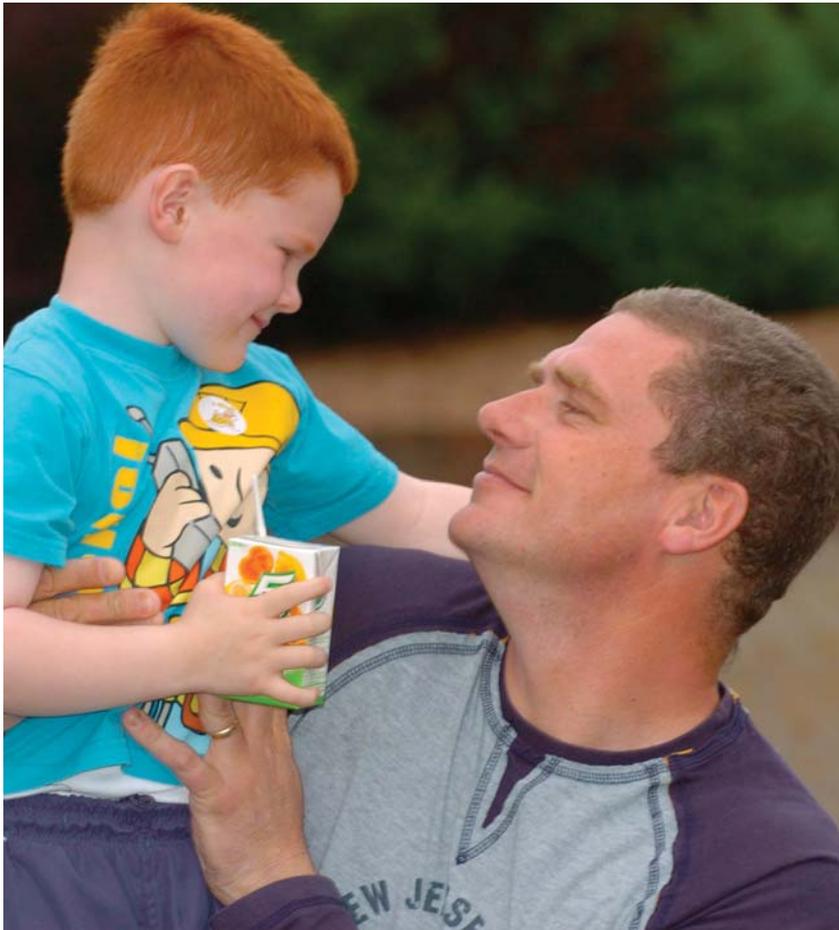


Report on the screening of policies
December 2005



Introduction

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) is a new Lottery distributor created by merging the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund. BIG will hand out 50 per cent of the money from the National Lottery that goes to good causes. BIG is committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality of opportunity, both as a grant maker and employer. BIG will aim to ensure grant applicants and recipients, stakeholders, job applicants and employees are treated fairly. It is the responsibility of all staff and Board members to uphold and implement our equality policy. BIG aims to bring real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need. To do this, we have identified seven values that underpin our work. They are, fairness, accessibility, strategic focus, involving people, innovation, enabling, and additional to government.

New funding programmes

In 2004-05 BIG carried out consultation on 'How we should Fund' and 'Outcomes and Priorities for Funding.' As part of this consultation we asked people how we could promote equality of opportunity in our grant making.

Respondents told us BIG should:

- build on the positive legacy of the equality work of both Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund
- monitor the participation of equality groups in new funding programmes
- ensure funding programmes are inclusive
- ensure application processes are clear and user friendly
- ensure those receiving grants practice equal opportunities.

These, and other responses, will also be used to inform the screening of new funding programmes and policies. Screening is the procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to a full equality impact assessment (EQIA), and how these impact assessments will be prioritised.

Section 75

Throughout the autumn and into the winter we will be working to develop our new programmes. We will be prioritising the development of our open programme, which will be open for business early next year. All our new funding programmes in Northern Ireland will be open by late 2006. The Big Lottery Fund will distribute funding worth over £90 million in Northern Ireland between now and 2009. We have developed a framework following consultation that provides an overview of future funding. (See Annex 1).

We have a clear focus to fund projects and programmes within three key themes:

- supporting community learning and creating opportunity
- promoting community cohesion and safety

- promoting well-being.

These three themes are supported by four outcomes for Northern Ireland, which set out what we hope our funding will achieve:

- people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential
- people can actively participate in their communities to bring about positive change
- community ownership of better and safer rural and urban environments
- improved physical and mental health for all people.

More information is available on our website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk or by contacting our information team on:

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BIG will not be designated for the purposes of Section 75 until 2006, but both legacy organisations, New Opportunities Fund and Community Fund were designated bodies and will retain their equality duties.

Both legacy organisations have discussed with the Equality Commission the impact of the merger on their respective Equality Schemes and how BIG can continue to meet Section 75 commitments, as fully as possible, in light of these significant changes.

BIG has been developing lots of new policies to support its core business of funding and will continue work to ensure that all new and proposed policies are screened. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies.

Recent equality developments for BIG

BIG has agreed with the Equality Commission that equality assurance on new policies being developed for BIG will be a priority. BIG set up a working group to review the screening processes that had been put in place by Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund and a range of external organisations, to identify examples of good practice. From this, BIG has developed a new process which builds on this work. This incorporates the statutory requirements for screening as set out in the guidance from the Equality Commission.

BIG has recently agreed a number of equality principles that underpin all our work and which we believe will enhance the implementation of our statutory duties. The principles have been agreed by BIG's Board and include:

Promoting accessibility

We believe that accessible services are those that people can use relatively easily, without spending too much time and money and are sensitive to the different cultures of the people using them.

Valuing cultural diversity

We value cultural diversity by recognising that people have different needs, beliefs, values and abilities and that those differences need to be both respected and promoted.

We recognise that having a diverse public face can help us build trust and confidence among the varied communities we seek to fund. A diverse workforce can also provide a richer mix of ideas and talents. We also believe we are more efficient and effective when our decision-making structures are reflective of the diverse views of society.

Promoting participation

Our new policies, processes and programmes must be developed on the basis of real need. This means that the people who will be affected by them should be involved in their development. We know that there are groups that are traditionally under-represented in consultation processes. We need to work in partnership with those groups to establish structures that will help them to take a more active role in shaping the work that we do. In this way we will be able to encourage participation, openness and honesty.

Promoting equality of opportunity

We recognise that some groups commonly experience poorer access to employment, have fewer training opportunities and are under-represented in the workforce, particularly at senior level. In addition, we know that not all groups have the same access to services and their experiences of receiving services may be poorer.

We believe that in order to level the playing field we may need to treat people differently to help them have the same chance to participate in employment and service opportunities.

Promoting inclusive communities

We believe an inclusive community is one where people feel they belong, and where their lives are appreciated and valued. People have similar life opportunities and strong and positive relationships develop between people who are from different backgrounds.

Reducing disadvantage and exclusion

We will fund initiatives that deal with the causes of disadvantage and exclusion, and target our money on initiatives that promote inclusion of groups at greatest risk of being disadvantaged and excluded. Our understanding of what 'disadvantage' and 'excluded' means will take account of such factors as people's experience of discrimination.

This document

This document sets out the new policies that have been developed by BIG within the past 12 months and which have been screened. The policies cover a range of business areas. For each policy we have screened we have provided a brief overview of the aim of each policy, its description and the outcomes of the screening exercise.

We have used our new equality assurance process to screen these policies. Over the past year we have worked to ensure that equality issues relating to new policies are identified at the stage of policy development and measures to mitigate/remove these are put in place before policies are finalised. By adopting this approach we have made efforts to mainstream equality, making changes to policies to more effectively promote equality of opportunity. As a result of this work, we do not believe that there are significant equality implications arising from the policies listed in this report. We recognise, however, that all of the policies listed are new policies and for many, we have put measures in place to help us review and assess more fully in 12 months time whether a full EQIA is required.

New policies screened

The following table is a list of the screened policies with details on the outcome of that screening. There are several policies listed and for the purposes of this report we have only provided a short note on each policy within this report. However for each policy we have completed a screening template that contains more detailed information and we would encourage you to contact us if you are interested in further details about any of the policies listed. Please contact our equality adviser, using the details at the end of this document, for more information.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Young People's Fund programme NI	To target resources at young people at greatest risk of exclusion and/or offending.	<p>There is £14.8 million available through the Young People's Fund (YPF). The YPF puts young people at the centre of creating, planning and delivering projects that will achieve four main outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increased participation of young people ● wider family and community support for young people ● improved health and well being ● increased achievement and learning. 	<p>All application forms, guidance forms and supporting materials were screened.</p> <p>S75 monitoring questions have been put in place to enable BIG to assess the actual impact of the programme.</p> <p>Internal monitoring arrangements have been put in place to enable BIG to report on impact.</p> <p>Applicants and award partners are asked to meet clear equality standards in line with legislative and statutory responsibilities.</p>	<p>This is a new programme, through screening a number of changes were made and as a result no significant equality implications were identified. However, we will monitor this programme and review in six months to assess whether a full EQIA is recommended.</p>
People's Millions programme NI	A new competition in partnership with ITV to celebrate first birthday of BIG and 50th birthday of ITV.	<p>To improve the quality of life of local communities by funding projects that transform local environments – its buildings, amenities, public and green spaces and the natural environment.</p> <p>The scheme helps meet BIG's commitment to public involvement in its work and will raise awareness of the Lottery funding opportunities offered to local communities.</p>	<p>Communication needs questions added to the application form.</p> <p>Section 75 monitoring questions added to the application form.</p>	<p>This is a new programme, through screening changes were made and as a result no significant equality implications were identified. However we will review this policy in six months to assess whether a full EQIA is recommended.</p>

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Pre-application support strategy NI	To reduce the number of poor quality applications and to improve customer care.	<p>This was a new funding process implemented on a pilot basis for the Voluntary and Community Sector programme. It involves prospective applicants contacting BIG before making an application. Grants staff can then discuss the project idea with potential applicants and guidance is given to callers on continuing along the application process.</p> <p>A previous EQIA by Community Fund on 'Access to Services' indicated support for a two-stage application process with potential applicants being given initial feedback before submitting an application.</p>	<p>The timescales supporting the process have been adapted to build in time for groups with additional needs e.g. alternative formats required.</p> <p>Alternative communication/contact approach for groups for whom a telephone helpline can be a barrier.</p> <p>BIG will return the call (if this suits applicant) to ensure we bear the costs involved.</p> <p>A user survey, inclusive of equality groups was carried out. A question on access was included as part of the survey to identify barriers.</p> <p>An equality monitoring form was added to the outline proposal form (form used by prospective applicants before making a full application).</p> <p>Changes were made to the website to highlight the availability of alternative formats on request.</p>	<p>This was a pilot process, and changes were made during the pilot phase. As a result no significant equality implications were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.</p> <p>Where this approach is used for new funding programmes however, it will be reviewed after 12 months.</p>

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
<p>Proposed framework for NI outcomes and suggested priorities</p>	<p>Summarises draft framework on NI outcomes and suggested priorities for funding for the purposes of consultation.</p>	<p>In 2004, the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) announced the themes that will underpin BIG's work across the UK.</p> <p>Department for Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) co-ordinates Lottery matters on behalf of the devolved administration.</p> <p>The framework set out a number of proposed outcomes and suggested priorities for funding and sought the views of consultees on these proposals.</p>	<p>The BIG consultation ran from 14 February 2005 to 13 May 2005. We held three thematic meetings throughout Northern Ireland in partnership with the Northern Ireland Council on Voluntary Action. A meeting was organised by NICVA for network bodies. In addition to the consultation events, we held a number of smaller scale key stakeholder meetings and national stakeholder meetings with voluntary and community and statutory organisations.</p> <p>In total, we met with over 280 stakeholders throughout the consultation process.</p> <p>We asked respondents to tell us how we could promote equality of opportunity and good relations through our grant making.</p> <p>We used the feedback from these questions to inform the screening of the proposed framework. Overall, the comments from the consultation including those on equality, informed the revised framework which has also been screened.</p>	<p>The proposed framework was revised following consultation. The revised framework has also been screened (see next policy).</p>

Policy

Policy aim

Brief description

Amendments to policy during screening

Screening outcome

Proposed framework for NI outcomes and suggested priorities (contd)

Issues identified during screening:

One priority focuses on addressing disadvantage, social inclusion and safety within communities. It lists a number of groups with particular needs. There is potential for this to be restrictive and exclusive of other groups experiencing disadvantage for example women's groups, carers and those groups from the lesbian/gay/bisexual community. The revised framework should be more inclusive of groups experiencing disadvantage.

One priority focuses on reducing poverty in families with children. There is potential for this to be restrictive and exclude other groups experiencing issues relating to poverty.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Revised framework for NI outcomes and suggested priorities	Summarises revised framework on NI outcomes and suggested priorities for funding.	<p>The framework has been changed to reflect the outcomes of the consultation which ran from 14 February 2005 to 13 May 2005.</p> <p>Following consultation analysis BIG has agreed changes to the framework in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The key features of the Big Lottery Fund Northern Ireland Framework are:</p> <p>A number of the original proposed priorities have become 'underlying principles', which will inform all proposed programmes and projects in achieving the four outcomes. The number of priorities have been reduced to nine.</p>	<p>There are positives within the framework for many equality groups including the introduction of two principles to underpin all our grant making: addressing disadvantage and promoting tolerance and social inclusion and the reduction of poverty.</p> <p>The revised framework is open and more inclusive.</p>	This is a broad programme framework. Following screening and consultation on the proposed framework changes were made, as a result no equality issues were identified though clear recommendations were made regarding monitoring. An EQIA is not recommended, however, all new programmes will be screened separately as they are developed to assess whether an EQIA is recommended.
Customer service charter (UK- wide)	To provide customers with a guide to the level of service they can expect.	Policy sets out the standards of service that customers can expect when they use the services of BIG.	<p>Commitments to equality and diversity made more explicit, with the inclusion of a statement setting out BIG's commitment to take account and respond to customers diverse needs.</p> <p>Commitment undertaken to monitor equality impact of this policy.</p>	No significant equality implications were identified; any equality issues arising from customer care feedback will be addressed by our customer care and quality adviser. We will review this policy in 12 months to assess whether a full EQIA is recommended.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Change control (UK-wide)	Internal policy: to provide standards for change control of grant making systems and procedures within the Operations directorate.	This policy sets out the standards for change control of grant making systems and procedures within the Operations directorate. Staff must follow a standard procedure for requesting changes, the procedure applies to all staff regardless of grade or directorate.	<p>No amendments were made.</p> <p>Initial assessment of change control request already includes identification of whether equalities issues have been considered.</p> <p>Impact assessment stage includes confirmation that equalities issues have been considered and addressed.</p> <p>The policy provides for relevant consultation and communication with staff.</p>	Through screening, no significant equality implications were identified therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Corporate sponsorship policy (UK-wide)	Internal policy: policy is designed to complement in house learning and development opportunities.	Policy is designed to complement in house learning and development opportunities and represents a significant investment in developing staff to meet the evolving needs of our business.	<p>The costs of caring for dependents in line with BIG policy are considered eligible costs.</p> <p>The policy contains a commitment to carry out an annual review of qualification levels and take up across the whole of BIG. Panel decisions and line manager recommendations will also be monitored.</p> <p>Within the policy eligible qualifications include GCSE/AS levels, policy amended to include equivalent qualifications.</p> <p>Policy statement amended to make explicit its commitment to the continuing professional development of all its employees and to ensuring equal access to these opportunities.</p> <p>Priorities for sponsorship (re positive encouragement) broadened to also include disabled people.</p>	This is a new policy, through screening a number of changes were made and as a result no significant equality implications were identified. However we will review this policy in 12 months to assess whether a full EQIA is recommended.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Flexible working (UK-wide)	To enable staff to achieve a work life balance and to benefit the organisation through retaining staff and using employee resources more effectively.	This policy sets out the types of flexible working options available to staff.	New Opportunities Fund carried out an EQIA on their work life balance policy including flexible working provisions. The outcomes from this were taken into account during the screening of this new policy.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified. Flexible working impacts positively on staff with dependents in particular. Monitoring arrangements have been put in place and the policy will be reviewed in 12 months to assess whether a full EQIA is recommended.
Notice policy (UK-wide)	To specify notice periods and practice for giving notice.	This policy is contained within the staff handbook and provides details on the requirements for providing notice.	Process for conducting exit interviews amended so that it is the same for both permanent and fixed term staff.	This is a new policy, through screening one change was made and as a result no significant equality implications were identified. No EQIA is recommended.
Bullying and harassment (UK-wide)	To set out the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment.	The policy provides guidance for staff/managers on the principles and procedures for dealing with bullying/harassment.	Policy amended to include monitoring arrangements.	This is a new policy. No significant equality impacts were identified. The policy will be reviewed in 12 months to assess whether an EQIA is recommended.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Retirement (UK-wide)	To support employees approaching retirement.	The policy sets out the process for supporting employees approaching retirement.	This policy will be further reviewed in light of forthcoming age legislation.	This is a new policy. No significant equality impacts were identified. Monitoring arrangements have been put in place and the policy will be reviewed in 12 months to assess whether an EQIA is recommended.
Speaking engagements (UK-wide)	To provide guidance and procedures on undertaking speaking engagements.	The policy outlines the internal procedures and guidance that should be followed when undertaking speaking engagements.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Mobile phones (UK-wide)	To provide guidance for staff on the use of mobile phones issued for business purposes.	The policy sets out internal principles and procedures that must be followed by staff issued with mobile phones for business use.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Political activities (UK-wide)	To provide guidance and procedures on involvement in political activities.	BIG operates certain rules regarding national and local political activities. This policy provides guidance on this.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified. However this policy will be reviewed in 12 months to assess whether an EQIA is recommended.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Transport difficulties (UK-wide)	To provide guidance for staff on dealing with travel disruptions.	This policy sets out guidance for staff as part of its commitment to work-life balance. BIG does not want employees to have to spend excessive time travelling to and from work due to transport difficulties.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Data protection (UK-wide)	To provide guidance on how information should be stored within BIG.	The policy provides guidance around issues relating to data protection.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Press and media relations (UK-wide)	To provide guidance for staff dealing with press/media enquiries.	The policy sets out guidance for staff on the procedure for dealing with media enquiries.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Probation (UK-wide)	To set out the policy for establishing and managing probation.	The policy highlights the policy and procedures in establishing/managing performance of employees during their probationary period.	Policy amended to include monitoring arrangements.	This is a new policy. No significant equality impacts were identified. However, monitoring arrangements have been put in place to assess whether an EQIA is recommended in 12 months.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Health and safety (UK-wide)	To provide health and safety procedures for staff to minimise the risk of injury while carrying out their duties.	The policy sets out health and safety guidelines for staff to minimise the risk of injury to themselves and other staff members while carrying out their duties at work.	Policy amended to more fully consider the needs of staff with visual impairments in relation to display screen equipment.	This is a new policy. Through screening, changes were made and as a result no significant equality implications were identified. The policy will be reviewed in 12 months to assess whether an EQIA is recommended.
Confidentiality (UK-wide)	To provide guidance on how information by employees should be used.	The policy sets out the principles of confidentiality and procedures for how information should be used.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Hospitality (UK-wide)	To set out guidance on acceptance of gifts from outside parties.	The policy provides guidance for staff on accepting gifts from outside parties.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Ethics (UK-wide)	To set out guidance on ethics.	Provides guidance on code of best practice. The code sets out the arrangements to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between private interests of staff and their responsibilities as employees.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.

Policy	Policy aim	Brief description	Amendments to policy during screening	Screening outcome
Use of equipment and office security (UK-wide)	Provides guidance on use of equipment and office security.	The policy provides guidance for staff on the use of equipment and office security.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Equal opportunities policy (UK-wide)	Sets out BIG's commitment to equality of opportunity as a grant maker and employer.	The policy provides detail on BIG's commitments to equality and what this means in practice for BIG. It covers many aspects relating to policy and procedure including communication, accountability, monitoring and compliance.	No amendments made.	This is a new policy. Through screening, no significant equality impacts were identified and therefore no EQIA is recommended.
Car parking policy (NI)	To implement a procedure for the allocation of car parking spaces to staff in NI.	The policy sets out the procedure to be implemented for allocating car parking and identifies business use as a priority.	None, however policy is subject to review three months following implementation.	This is a new policy and a planned review in December 2005 of the proceduralisation of the policy will take account of equality impacts. This will inform whether an EQIA is recommended.

Seeking your views

We would like to hear your views on the outcome of our screening. Please contact us if you wish to make a response using the details below. If you would like to make a response to this document please send it to us before **16 March 2006**. If you would like to request a summary version of this document in another format you can also use the contact details below to do this. Further copies of this document are available on the website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk.

Please contact our equality adviser if you wish to discuss any of the policies contained within this report in more detail.

Next Steps

As stated, Big Lottery Fund has been developing lots of new policies over the past 12 months. We will be developing new programmes and new policies over the next year and we will be repeating this consultation exercise in six months time for all new policies screened between October 2005 and March 2006. We will write to you again to let you know this is happening and to seek your views.

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Big Lottery Fund Northern Ireland Framework

People, places and communities 2006-2009

