

Equality Impact Assessment:

**Guidance for decision makers at the Initial
Assessment stage**

and

**Guidance for decision makers at the
Assessment stage**

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Description of Activity or Project Name	
Creation of new guidance for decision makers at the Initial Assessment and the Assessment (casework) stages of the fitness to practise process	
Summary of the aims and objectives	As part of the project to review and update decision-making guidance for each stage of the fitness to practise process, our aim is to ensure we have guidance for decision-makers at the Initial Assessment and Assessment stages of fitness to practise which is up-to-date, and which supports consistent, proportionate, transparent decision-making.
What consultation or evidence gathering has taken place to inform this EIA?	Internal consultation has taken place with relevant GDC teams. The two guidance documents will be subject to a 12-week public consultation in Q3 2026. As part of that consultation, we will publish this EIA and invite views about the equality impact assessments we have made. This will be the fourth and fifth sets of guidance we have consulted upon as part of this project. In the development of each previous set of guidance, we have had the same underlying objectives and principles as we have now (see above). In each of the three preceding consultations we have also published an EIA. As we have progressed in this project, we have considered any feedback previously received.
Who is impacted by the change?	Those subject to a fitness to practise concern being considered at the Initial Assessment and Assessment stages, and their legal representatives, are expected to benefit from improved understanding of decision making considerations. Those with protected characteristics who are subject to fitness to practise concerns being considered at the Initial Assessment and Assessment stages may benefit from improved confidence in the consistency of decision making which reduces the potential for unconscious bias. By introducing these guidance documents, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.

What are the arrangements for monitoring the impact of the change?

As part of the overarching project, we have developed a review and update process which is designed to iteratively capture and address change needs across each guidance.

We will rely partially on this review and update process, as well as the various existing quality assurance mechanisms for fitness to practise decision making.

Screening Questions – Assess the impact on different groups of people

Explanation of potential/actual impact – Screening Questions			What actions to mitigate adverse impact can/have been taken?		
Protected Characteristic	Potential impact: Positive Negative Neutral	Please explain and give examples/evidence	Actions planned to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Individual responsible	Updates on actions, with dates
Age	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			

Disability	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			
	Potentially negative	The guidance is primarily aimed at decision makers at the Initial Assessment and Assessment stages of the GDC's fitness to practise process, and so it has not primarily been drafted for a lay audience or for members of the public. The guidance has a readability score of 'very difficult'. That means it may not be suitable for those with a learning disability and advocacy may be required.	We are committed to supporting secondary audiences to understand our materials and will do so on a case-by-case basis where enquiries arise. We have added a note to page 22 of the Initial Assessment Guidance, and page 32 of the Assessment Guidance to make	N/A	N/A

			this clear and to provide direction on how best to raise an enquiry should this be needed.		
Gender Reassignment	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			

Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			

Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			

Race	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			

Religion or Belief	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			

Sex	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. Victims of sexual misconduct are predominantly women. The Assessment Guidance appendix includes a dedicated section addressing sexual misconduct (paragraphs A71 to A76) which underlines the seriousness of sexual misconduct on both public protection and public interest grounds. Due to the nature of the consideration at the Initial Assessment Test, and the matter being implicitly (at paragraph 21) and explicitly (at paragraphs 24 and 37) addressed elsewhere in the guidance, we do not consider it to be beneficial to address this matter in the Initial Assessment Guidance Appendix. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected			
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		characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			
Sexual Orientation	Positive	These new guidance documents will support consistent and proportionate decision making, reducing the potential for unconscious bias. The appendix of both guidance documents includes a dedicated section addressing concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (paragraphs A24 to A33 in the Initial Assessment guidance and A46 to A55 in the Assessment guidance), which highlights the Public Sector Equality Duty, the inherent seriousness of this category of allegation, and the resulting high likelihood that where there is evidence to support an allegation of discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation that this will meet the Test at each stage on both public safety and public confidence grounds. By introducing this guidance, we will reduce the likelihood that those with protected characteristics are treated less favourably than others.			