



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

**Brandon Lewis MP**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Department for Communities and Local  
Government**

Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 0303 444 3430  
Fax: 0303 444 3986  
E-Mail: [brandon.lewis@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:brandon.lewis@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.gov/dclg.gov.uk](http://www.gov/dclg.gov.uk)

To all Leaders and Chief Executives  
of Local Authorities

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Dear Colleague,

**Reducing Statutory Burdens: Equality Impact Assessments**

I am writing to you following the Prime Minister's speech to CBI last month in which he stated he wanted to call time on the production of Equality Impact Assessments.

I thought it would be helpful to write to you on some of the key points made by the Prime Minister in his speech. The Government Equalities Office has given clear guidance to Whitehall departments that Equality Impact Assessments are not and have never been a legal requirement. Indeed, they can be resource intensive and take staff away from planning and delivering important public services.

This advice applies to other parts of the public sector. Local councils should be able to use their judgment to pay due regard to equality without resorting to time consuming, bureaucratic, tick-box exercises at the end of the decision-making process. The key is to take a proportionate, timely approach to assessing equality and that this is properly considered from the outset with a simple audit trail.

This approach builds on our Best Value guidance released in September 2011 in which councils are asked to ensure that their policies and services are efficient, effective, appropriate and accessible to all – without resorting to unnecessary lifestyle or 'diversity' questionnaires of their local residents and suppliers.

Every bit of the public sector is seeking to reduce administrative costs; I hope this light-touch guidance will help in reducing statutory burdens on local government.

**BRANDON LEWIS MP**