

# Equality Impact Assessment Summary

**Name of policy, function or service**

Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) Policy

**Purpose and aim(s) of the policy, function or service**

The policy provides the focus for Forestry Commission Scotland's work on improving the quality of life in towns and cities through woodland creation, management and working with people to help them use their local woodland.

**Who will benefit mainly from this policy, function or service?**

People living and working within the WIAT area (1km of settlements with population of 2000 people or more).

**Information and Data (evidence) used**

The Scottish Government's Scottish Forestry Strategy principles of social inclusion and forestry for and with people are embodied in the FCS's WIAT Policy.

**WIAT area population profile**

Data from the 2001 Census has been used for the equality strands: age; gender; race and religion and belief. Data for disability is derived from the Scottish Household Survey 2003/04.

**Equality & Diversity considerations for forestry**

Forest Research has undertaken a literature review identifying the information available on the different equality strands and the positive impacts of using woodland and the real and perceived barriers they experience in accessing and using woodland.

**Summary of Impact**

The assessment indicates that the WIAT policy will have a positive impact on all groups. However, there is a need for further work, before the next revision of the policy, to review and develop good practice guidance ensuring any barriers to groups accessing woodland are addressed.

**Monitoring/Evaluation**

FCS will monitor the programme against its outcomes and objectives. Information will be collated for each delivery mechanism and where necessary data will be record on the profile of the public that are involved in specific WIAT projects and activities. For example, forestry challenge funds will require an annual report from applicants on the profile of people involved in their projects to include the equality strands (including social deprivation). This information will be complemented by the Public Opinion Survey of Forestry 2009 that will ask specific diversity questions.

FCS will review this data annually to determine the impact of the policy on the equality strands and if necessary will review and amend specific delivery mechanisms.

**Further Information**

Scotland's urban population is the most diverse and has significant numbers of most equality strands, in particular race and religion (data sourced from 2001 Census and presented in Annex 2). Having a specific policy to develop and promote the benefits of woods to people living in these areas provides an opportunity to actively engage the full diversity of Scotland's population. Furthermore, with 68% of the Scottish population living within the WIAT area an opportunity exists to engage with not only a more diverse range of people but also with greater numbers.