

UNITE WM7015

Sandwell Local Authority Branch

Welfare Assistance Application Webpage & Online Form

Quality Control

Title of proposal:

WM7015 Welfare Assistance Application Webpage & Online Form

Directorate / Service Area:

Unite WM7015 Sandwell Local Authority Branch

Officer completing EqlA:

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Contact details:

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Other officers involved:

N/A

Date EqlA completed:

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Date signed off:

TBC

Where published:

www.unitewm7015.co.uk/welfare-assistance-application

1. Purpose of the Proposal

The WM7015 Welfare Assistance Application webpage provides members with a clear, accessible route to request support when they experience misfortune.

It explains eligibility, evidence requirements, financial thresholds, and how decisions are made.

It also signposts members to crisis, debt, housing, mental-health and welfare-rights support.

This EqIA ensures the webpage and application process uphold dignity, fairness and equality, in line with Unite values and Sandwell's EqIA framework.

2. Evidence Considered

- WM7015 webpage content (eligibility, misfortune definition, privacy notice, support directory).
- Sandwell EqIA Toolkit (Template, Guidance, Help Sheet, Matrix).
- Unite Equality Briefings (including COVID-19 impact on women).
- Known patterns of digital exclusion in low-income communities.
- Informal feedback from members and branch officers.

“An EqIA provides a mechanism to systematically assess the possible effects that a policy... is likely to have on different people.”

3. Consultation

- No formal consultation undertaken.
- Informal feedback suggests members value clear language, alternative access routes, and flexible evidence requirements.
- Future consultation will include feedback from applicants and equality reps.

4. Summary of Likely Impact

The webpage is supportive and positive in intent. It promotes equality by offering crisis support, debt advice, welfare-rights guidance, and a flexible approach to evidence.

Risks relate to:

- Digital exclusion
- Language complexity
- Discretionary decision-making
- Financial thresholds (e.g., £1,000 savings limit)

These risks can be mitigated through accessibility improvements, officer training, and monitoring.

5. Equality Impact Assessment Table

Protected Characteristic	Impact	Assessment	Mitigation / Actions
Age	Positive / Negative	Older members may face digital barriers; younger members benefit from crisis signposting.	Maintain phone/email/post routes; simplify language; officer support for form completion.
Disability	Positive / Negative	Long text may challenge visually-impaired or neurodivergent users; upload requirements may be difficult.	WCAG-compliant layout; flexible evidence; highlight that lack of documents does not automatically mean refusal.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	No direct impact; risk only if discretion applied inconsistently.	Equality awareness training; monitor anonymised outcomes.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Neutral	Criteria apply equally regardless of marital status.	No action required.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Positive	Crisis support and financial assistance may help members experiencing income shocks.	Monitor outcomes; ensure signposting to relevant support.
Race / Ethnicity	Positive / Negative	Complex English-language explanations may disadvantage members with limited English.	Plain-language summaries; consider translated guidance; officer support.
Religion or Belief	Neutral	No direct impact.	No action required.
Sex	Positive / Negative	Women disproportionately affected by poverty and caring roles; award limits may be restrictive.	Monitor outcomes; review guidance if patterns emerge.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	No direct impact.	No action required.
Socio-economic groups	Positive / Negative	Strong positive impact through crisis support; savings limit may disadvantage some groups.	Clarify ring-fenced savings exemptions; monitor decisions for consistency.

6. Mitigation Actions

- Improve webpage accessibility and readability.
- Maintain alternative non-digital access routes.
- Provide equality and unconscious-bias training for welfare officers.
- Monitor anonymised outcomes by protected characteristic.
- Review financial-eligibility guidance for clarity and fairness.

7. Decision

Adjustments required to improve accessibility, clarity and monitoring.
No major change to the core purpose of the webpage.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

- Annual review of application rates, approval/decline patterns and equality-monitoring data.
- Collect user feedback on accessibility and fairness.
- Report findings to branch committee and equality reps.

9. Action Plan

Objective	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
Accessibility	WCAG review; plain-language summaries	More accessible webpage	Digital Officer	Q1–Q2 2027
Digital inclusion	Promote phone/email/post routes	Increased access for older/disabled members	Welfare Officer	Ongoing
Fair decisions	Equality training for officers	Consistent discretionary decisions	Branch Committee	Q1 2027
Equality monitoring	Collect and analyse EDI data	Identify patterns and address gaps	Welfare Officer	Annual

10. WM7015 Branding Footer

Unite WM7015 Sandwell Local Authority Branch
Supporting members with dignity, fairness and solidarity.