



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

EIA Register Reference Number:	EIA-276			
Name of activity:	Operational Equipment Replacement Programme 2026–2029			
Type of activity:	Programme / Procurement / Equipment replacement			
Directorate/department:	Assets – Fleet & Equipment			
Name of department head/policy owner/project lead:	Paul Brooks – Head of Assets (Estates, Fleet & Equipment) / Pete Skinner – Fleet & Equipment Manager / TBC – Operational Equipment Manager			
Name(s) and job title of person(s) completing this assessment:	Paul Brooks – Head of Assets (Estates, Fleet & Equipment)			
Date of commencement of assessment:	01 August 2026			
Analysis Rating:	RED	☐	AMBER	☒
			GREEN	☐
Changes to activity as a result of this assessment	Yes ☒		No ☐	

Approval Log

This must be completed prior to the commencement of the activity.

Name of Senior Sign off: (or committee)	Paul Brooks	Date approved:	01/08/2026
EDI Lead Sign off:	Claudia Trott	Date approved:	20/08/2026

Review Log

Date of Review:	Person Completing Review:	Reason for Review:	Outcome of Review:
Click to enter a date.	Click here to enter name.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click to enter a date.	Click here to enter name.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

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Overview

Please refer to the [EIA toolkit](#).

1. What is/are the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the activity you are assessing?

The programme is replacing or upgrading priority operational equipment over 2026–2029 through a planned, integrated approach. It is intended to maintain operational readiness, equipment reliability and compatibility; improve interoperability and procurement efficiency; address end-of-life, legislative, environmental and technological requirements; and secure value for money through coordinated fleet and equipment planning. The programme covers a varied portfolio including, inter alia, PPE, branches, water-rescue dry suits and helmets, heavy-rescue airbags, gas-tight suits, rescue equipment, tools, ventilation equipment and future PPE. Because detailed products and specifications are not all finalised, this programme-level assessment establishes inclusive design and procurement controls. Each equipment workstream must revisit equality impacts as requirements, trials and deployment plans are developed.

2. Who is/may be affected by the activity, and how? Consider applicants, service users, members of the public, RBFRS employees, partner organisations etc. Detail any consultation that has taken place to date.

- Operational employees who select, trial, wear, carry, operate, inspect, clean, maintain, store or train on the equipment, including wholtime, on-call and Control personnel where relevant.
- Fleet & Equipment, stores, procurement, ICT, training, health and safety and occupational health colleagues involved in specification, assurance, issue and support.
- Applicants, new starters, returners and employees requiring reasonable adjustments, alternative sizes, modified equipment, additional training or individual risk assessment.
- Thames Valley partners and other fire and rescue services where collaborative procurement, common frameworks or interoperability are used.
- Members of the public and communities, who should benefit indirectly from safer, reliable and effective operational capability.
- Consultation evidenced by the report includes RBFRS senior leadership, finance and procurement, the lead member and monitoring officer. For future structural PPE, an internal user group and a Thames Valley collaborative group are established. Additional representative user consultation is required for each equipment specification and trial.

Rationale for AMBER rating: potential disproportionate impacts may arise from equipment and PPE specification, fit, adjustability, physical demands, training and access. These can be managed through inclusive specification, representative user trials, reasonable adjustments and item-level review before award and deployment.

Information

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3. What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity has/will have on people? Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints etc. What does this information tell you?

- Management Committee report: Operational Equipment Replacement Programme 2026–2029 and Appendix A replacement plan.
- RBFRS Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2024–2029, Community Risk Management Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework 2026.
- RBFRS Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (19 June 2026, v08), including protected-characteristic prompts and the requirement for evidence-based, early assessment.
- Existing operational equipment risk assessments, PPE assessments, training records, defect and failure data, maintenance information, near misses, accidents, complaints, reasonable-adjustment requests and occupational health advice.
- Representative wearer/user trials and structured feedback, broken down by relevant protected characteristics and employee groups where lawful and proportionate.
- Supplier evidence on available size ranges, anthropometric coverage, adjustability, accessibility, human factors, compatibility, cleaning/decontamination and standards compliance.
- Relevant legal, environmental, procurement, technical and safety requirements for each specific equipment category.

Recognised evidence gap: The report does not contain item-level equality data, final specifications, trial outcomes or consultation findings for the full programme. The conclusions are therefore a proportionate programme-level assessment and must be validated before each procurement decision.

4. What impact may this activity have on the following groups?

	Please provide details of potential impact(s), positive and negative, including any relevant evidence from the information section above:	Is the impact disproportionate?
Sex (Men and Women)	Potential negative impact if PPE, dry suits, harnesses, helmets, gloves, tools or controls are based on a limited body-size range or do not accommodate differences in body shape, reach, grip and strength. Positive impact can be achieved through inclusive specifications, broad size ranges, adjustability and representative wearer/user trials.	Yes
Race (Includes colour,	No inherent adverse impact identified at programme level. Instructions, labels and training should use clear language and avoid	No

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	Please provide details of potential impact(s), positive and negative, including any relevant evidence from the information section above:	Is the impact disproportionate?
nationality and ethnic or national origins)	unnecessary jargon; equipment affecting skin, hair or head fit should be tested with a representative user group.	
Disability (Mental, Physical, Neurodiversity)	Potential barriers for people with physical, sensory, cognitive, mental-health or neurodivergent needs, including weight, grip force, dexterity, display readability, alarms, colour reliance, noise, complex controls and training format. Reasonable adjustments, accessible information and alternative methods/equipment may be required.	Yes
Religion or Belief (includes lack of religion or belief)	PPE and clothing systems may interact with religious dress, head coverings, facial hair, modesty or privacy needs. Safety-critical requirements must be identified and individual solutions considered through respectful consultation and risk assessment.	No
Sexual Orientation (All diverse sexual orientations)	No specific differential impact identified. Procurement, trials, issue and training must operate in an inclusive and respectful manner without assumptions about individuals or households.	No
Pregnancy and Maternity (Includes new mothers and those returning to the workplace)	Pregnancy and post-natal changes may affect PPE fit, manual handling, heat tolerance and suitability for operational activities. Individual risk assessment, temporary alternatives and review on return to work may be required.	Yes
Marital Status (Married and Civil Partnerships)	No specific impact identified. Access to equipment, trials, training and support will not be determined by marital or civil-partnership status.	No
Gender Reassignment	Potential impact where PPE sizing, issue records, changing arrangements or gendered assumptions reduce privacy, dignity or suitable fit. Processes should be confidential, respectful and based on individual fit and operational need.	Yes
Age	Potential differences in strength, dexterity, mobility, hearing, vision, recovery and confidence	No

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	Please provide details of potential impact(s), positive and negative, including any relevant evidence from the information section above:	Is the impact disproportionate?
	with new technology. Competence and safe use should be supported through accessible training and reasonable adjustment rather than assumptions based on age.	
People in different family circumstances (including those with caring responsibilities)	Trials and training scheduled only at limited times could disadvantage carers. Provide suitable notice, sessions across duty systems and catch-up arrangements.	No
People in different socio-economic circumstances	Employees must not be expected to purchase equipment, devices, data or specialist clothing needed for work. Required equipment and training should be provided by RBFRS.	No
Digital Inclusion (limited access to, confidence in, or ability to use digital technology)	ICT-based equipment, digital manuals or e-learning may create access or confidence barriers. Provide accessible digital content, supported practice and non-digital or instructor-led alternatives where appropriate.	No
Different employee groups (Control/Green Book/ On Call/ Wholetime, grades, contract status, non-employee groups i.e. volunteers)	Wholetime, on-call, Control, Green Book, trainees, temporary staff and partner users may have different access, availability, work settings and learning needs. Trials, communications, issue and training must cover all relevant groups and duty systems.	Yes
Other –other factors as relevant to the activity such as unemployment, homelessness, health and wellbeing implications.	Replacement of obsolete or unreliable equipment should improve safety, confidence and operational resilience. Poorly fitted, heavy, complex or incompatible equipment could increase fatigue, musculoskeletal strain, heat stress, contaminants exposure or operational error. Human-factors and compatibility assessment is essential.	Yes

5. Is further research or consultation needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity on different groups?

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Yes. Before finalising each specification and procurement award, the responsible workstream should:

- Identify the actual user population and likely exposure, including relevant protected characteristics, employee groups and intersectional needs.
- Run representative user/wearer trials across body sizes, roles and duty systems; record selection criteria, feedback, exclusions and changes made.
- Engage affected staff, staff networks, representative bodies, Health and Safety, Occupational Health, EDI, Training and Thames Valley partners as relevant.
- Confirm the availability of suitable size ranges, adjustment, alternative products and reasonable adjustments; test equipment compatibility as a complete system.
- Review accessible instructions and training, including plain English, readable displays, colour-independent cues, captions or demonstrations where needed.
- Monitor defects, injuries, near misses, complaints, return rates, fit issues, training outcomes and adjustment requests after deployment.

Summary of Assessment

6. Taking account of the assessment above, have any negative and/or disproportionate impacts been identified? If so, what amendments will you make to the activity?

Potential negative or disproportionate impacts have been identified, principally for sex, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, age, carers, digital inclusion and different employee groups. These arise from possible differences in equipment fit, body shape and size, physical or sensory demands, religious dress, confidentiality and dignity, scheduling, technology and access to training. The programme will be amended and controlled by embedding inclusive and accessible requirements into each specification; undertaking representative trials before selection; providing suitable size ranges and alternatives; completing compatibility, human-factors and accessibility checks; offering reasonable adjustments and accessible training; and completing or updating an item-level EIA where a workstream presents distinct impacts.

Ensure any actions identified are captured in the action plan below.

7. After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any group? If Yes, please explain.

Yes ☒

No ☐

Some residual impact may remain where safety-critical or standards-based requirements restrict available options, or where no single product fits every user equally. Any residual impact must be individually assessed, evidence-based, proportionate to the legitimate aim of safe and effective operational response, supported by reasonable adjustments, and approved before implementation.

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8. Can commencing or continuing the activity without further amendment be justified?Yes ☒ No ☐

Subject to delivery of the action plan and item-level review. Planned replacement supports safety, reliability, legal and environmental compliance, operational readiness and service resilience. Proceeding is justified only where inclusive specification, consultation, reasonable adjustments and monitoring are embedded and any residual disadvantage is demonstrably necessary and proportionate.

9. Does this activity adhere to the three aims of the [General Duty](#) of the Equality Act 2010?Yes ☒ No ☐**10. How will you monitor the impact of the activity in future and that positive impacts are maintained?** Identify timelines and responsible owners, including detail of links to project/service plans if relevant.

The controls are intended to eliminate or reduce discriminatory barriers, advance equality of opportunity through inclusive access to suitable equipment and training, and foster good relations by involving a representative range of users and responding transparently to evidence and feedback.

Monitoring:

- Fleet & Equipment will maintain an equality and accessibility checkpoint within each equipment workstream from specification through trial, award, issue and post-implementation review.
- Workstream leads will record the users consulted, trial findings, specification changes, reasonable adjustments and any residual impacts before procurement award.
- After deployment, defects, fit concerns, injuries, near misses, complaints, training outcomes and adjustment requests will be reviewed through normal programme governance and health-and-safety arrangements.
- This programme EIA will be reviewed at least annually, before material scope or specification changes, and where evidence identifies a new or changed equality impact. Positive impacts, including improved safety and access to suitable equipment, will be maintained through lifecycle review and user feedback.

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Action Plan

Where this assessment has highlighted potential inequalities or barriers, mitigation is essential. Outline the actions below that will be taken to reduce negative impacts, strengthen positive outcomes and support implementation.

Action Plan Owner: Pete Skinner		Commencement date: 20/08/2026		Sign off date: Click to enter a date. Please ensure all actions are completed before sign-off.	
Identified Impact:	Mitigating Actions:	Responsible Lead:	Target Completion Date:	Completion Date:	
Insufficient equality evidence at programme level	Create an item-level EIA/equality checkpoint for each equipment workstream before final specification and award; record evidence, consultation, impacts and decisions.	Pete Skinner	Before each specification / award	Click to enter a date.	
PPE/equipment may not fit the full user population	Specify inclusive anthropometric coverage, suitable size ranges and adjustability; undertake representative wearer/user trials and document changes.	Pete Skinner	Before product selection	Click to enter a date.	
Accessibility and human-factors barriers	Assess weight, grip, reach, dexterity, controls, displays, colour contrast, alarms, noise, cognitive load and compatibility; agree alternatives or reasonable adjustments.	Workstream lead with H&S / Occupational Health / EDI	Before award and issue	Click to enter a date.	
Unequal access to consultation and trials	Recruit participants across relevant roles, duty systems, body sizes and protected-characteristic needs; offer more than one session and confidential feedback routes.	Workstream lead	During requirements and trials	Click to enter a date.	

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Training and digital-access barriers	Provide accessible instructions and training in suitable formats, supported practice and catch-up sessions across duty systems; record reasonable adjustments.	Training lead / workstream lead	Before operational deployment	Click to enter a date.
Residual impact from safety-critical requirements	Document legitimate aim, alternatives considered, proportionality, controls and approval; complete individual assessment where required.	Pete Skinner	Before implementation	Click to enter a date.
Equality impacts emerge after deployment	Review fit issues, defects, injuries, near misses, complaints, feedback and adjustment requests; take corrective action and update the EIA.	Pete Skinner	Post- implementation and annual review	Click to enter a date.

Admin

Once finalised please send the first draft and any further amended versions to the EDI Lead to be held in the central register.

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