

# Equality Impact Assessment

## Section 1: Details of the policy/practice/project

Department/Team responsible:	National Parking			
Name of Policy, Practice or Project being assessed:	Introduction of car parking charging to previously free to park locations.			
Purpose and anticipated outcomes:	<p>At locations across England, we intend to bring in parking charges to locations that have previously been free to park.</p> <p>The decision to introduce parking charges isn't one we make easily. Forestry England manages more land and trees than any other organisation in England. We provide hundreds of car parks, maintain thousands of miles of trails, and plant millions of trees. This costs millions per year, and with less than 20% of our funding coming from government we cannot do this without financial support from our visitors.</p> <p>Our costs have risen considerably as the prices of materials and services have increased in recent years. To be able to keep offering these great places to visit, we have made the difficult decision to introduce a reasonable parking charge at a number of locations nationally.</p> <p>We do not intend to accept cash payments at these locations due to the security risk, plus the increasingly limited availability and rising costs associated of cash collection services.</p>			
Is this a new or existing policy, practice or project?	New		Existing	X
	New parking charges have been rolled out for a number of years.			
List of participants in Equality Impact Assessment Process:	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div>			

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<b>Date assessment started:</b>	August 2024	<b>Completion Date:</b>	September 2025
<b>Please indicate who is likely to be affected:</b> For example: Employees, visitors, contractors, women, men, young people, older people, people with disabilities etc.	Visitors. We acknowledge the cost-of-living crisis that began in 2021 continues to affect UK residents. The Parliamentary report 'The Acceptance of Cash' identified some minority groups that maybe disproportionately affected by a cashless society as 'people in poverty, people struggling to escape domestic		

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## Section 2: Collecting information

What evidence is available about the needs of relevant groups? Please consider demographic data, including census information, research, consultation and survey reports, feedback and complaints, case law, others knowledge and experience. Please refer to the list of evidence on the EqlA page of the intranet.

Details	Source of Evidence
In 2019 across Forestry England sites surveyed the visitors over 65 years old equated to 12%.	<a href="#">Rising cost of living in the UK - House of Commons Library</a>
We have limited demographics information.	<a href="#">Acceptance of cash</a> Parliament Publications Report 2024-25
It is noted in the Parliamentary report <b>The Acceptance of Cash</b> may have a disproportional impact on vulnerable minorities (including people in poverty, people struggling to escape domestic abusers and people with learning difficulties) and we endeavour to offer as many ways to pay as is practical to support minority groups.	
However, it was also acknowledged in the report that businesses are continuing to bear the costs of a lack of competition in the payments processing market.	

From your research above have you identified any gaps in evidence? If so what are the gaps?

Limited demographics information.

As appropriate please describe the consultation/engagement undertaken including details of the groups involved and the methods used.

Notices will be put up in the form of posters around sites, and also on the relevant local webpage, in advance of the charging and membership to forewarn people.

Are there any other groups to be consulted?

Forestry England operates within its rights to introduce parking charges within its boundaries, and no formal consultation is required.

However, local assessments will be completed to assess risk of displacement parking, impact on ecology, antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

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The tariff structure will be reviewed to ensure parity with similar provisions in the locality.

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## Section 3: Impacts

Has the research and consultation identified any potential for impacts on the following groups:

Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Please explain
Age (e.g. older people, children and young people)	X		Older people may not have a bank card and prefer to pay by cash.
Disability	X		Terminal design adheres to accessibility guidelines, however cashless operations may disproportionately affect people with learning difficulties
Gender Reassignment (where a person is living as the opposite gender to their birth)		X	
Pregnancy and Maternity		X	
Race, ethnicity, nationality or origins (including gypsies or travellers, refugees or asylum seekers)		X	
Religion or belief (including non-belief)		X	
Sex/Gender		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Marriage and civil partnership		X	

Is there any evidence that the policy may:

	Yes	No	No Evidence

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Result in less favourable treatment for particular groups?	X		
Give rise to direct or indirect discrimination?	X		
Give rise to unlawful harassment or victimisation?		X	

If yes to any of the above, please give details:

Cashless payment may have a disproportional impact on vulnerable minorities (including people in poverty, people struggling to escape domestic abusers, people with learning difficulties, or older people who may be less likely to have a bank card), making it harder for those affected to pay for their car parking.

How will the policy, practice or project be modified to mitigate this less favourable treatment?

Information will be provided by posters on site and the website.

Visitors can also buy a membership online or over the phone.

There are also multiple ways to contact the membership team for support as specified below.

- If someone is seeking information they can **visit: [forestryengland.uk/membership](https://forestryengland.uk/membership)**, including links to our membership FAQs page or **email: [membership@forestryengland.uk](mailto:membership@forestryengland.uk)**
- However, if someone is unable to go on-line for information, to join, or just needs help with their membership, then **they can call our Customer Relations Team on 0300 068 0400**. The team work Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, but due to supporting remote working for colleagues, it maybe that even within these times, the customer needs to follow the prompts for Membership and leave a message. One of the CR team will then call them back.

Visitors with learning disabilities or those who are in difficulty (for example, anyone struggling to escape domestic abusers) can contact our Customer Relations team for support with visiting our forests and paying for parking, where we can look for alternative with other methods of payment, i.e. paying at a local visitor centre who accept cash or issuing a temporary parking pass).

As part of this project, we have assessed the possibility of providing a Pay By Phone option, but this requires software development work, however we are considering this for the future in order to give visitors another way to pay.

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We are continuously assessing and investigating any complaints we receive, and we are pro-actively looking for ways to provide as many payment methods to visitors as possible.

## Section 4: Meeting our General Equality Duty

You must complete the following sections:

**Which aspects of the policy, practice or project seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?**

Providing prior information about the introduction of charges and multiple ways to join our membership scheme to get free parking.

**Which aspects of the policy, practice or project seek to advance equality of opportunity between people which share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?**

Offering multiple ways to pay - by card, contactless (including Google/Apple Pay) or via taking up membership.

**Which aspects of the policy, practice or project seek to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?**

## Section 5: Outcome of assessment

Please detail the outcome of the assessment:

No major change	X
Adjust the policy	
Continue the policy	
Stop and remove the policy	
Please detail recommendations, including any action required to address any negative impacts identified:	

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## Section 6: Monitoring

Describe how you will continue to monitor the equality impact of this policy, practice or project e.g. performance indicators used, other monitoring arrangements, who will monitor progress, criteria used to measure achievement of outcomes:

We will log any queries which we receive about the introduction of charging and in particular take note about if it is to do with not being able to pay by cash.

When and how is the policy, practice or project due to be reviewed?

It is a trial payment system so after 1 year.

## Section 7: Sign-off

Date sent to Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager:	13/8/25
Comments	
Date signed off	15/8/25

Please insert name and title of the Senior Manager who has signed off this Equality Impact Assessment:

Name	██████████
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<b>Title</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Date approved</b>	15/08/25

Please send draft Equality Impact Assessment to the Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager at [diversity@forestryengland.uk](mailto:diversity@forestryengland.uk)