

## Equality Impact Assessment

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out to assist the Town Council to ensure that its policies, practices, events and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation. The EIA was carried out because an existing event was reviewed and some changes made.

**Name of event being assessed: Christmas Eve Santa Tours event.**

**Reason for EIA: Changes made to the traditional format of the tours to mitigate health and safety and insurance concerns.**

**Summary of changes:**

### **Traditional Event 2024**

Twelve route tour of every residential road in Newton Aycliffe, School Aycliffe and Aycliffe Village, with a volunteer Santa standing on the back of a decorated flatbed vehicle and frequent stops, on demand, to engage with residents for a few minutes. Tours used combination of Town Council vehicles and hired vehicles.

### **New Event 2025**

Five routes, using four Town Council vehicles and one borrowed vehicle, with each route having a Town Council support vehicle, and a fixed start, end or mid-point, with suitable car parking available. Residents able to engage with Santa for a period of 15 to 60 minutes, depending on the location. Many locations linked to community centres or pubs, some providing hospitality and refreshments. Hybrid event in 2025 - Santa touring between the fixed meeting points, seated inside a decorated vehicle, without stopping, and covering roads where any reverse manoeuvres are not required.

Protected Characteristic	Potential for Positive/Negative Impact	Explanation and Evidence	Action to address negative impact
Age	Potentially positive and negative impact	<p>Anyone of any age may access the Santa tours.</p> <p>Children may be impacted in that they will have to be taken out of their home and walked or driven to see Santa by an adult, rather than being able to see him in their own street. This could be seen as a negative impact or a positive one, depending on the individual circumstances and viewpoint.</p> <p>There are several examples of children being taken by their parents to visit elderly grandparents in care homes in order to see Santa together.</p>	Scheduled stopping points arranged and advertised in order to give a much more accurate time for Santa to be present, allowing forward planning by parents and enabling a different stopping point to be accessed if the first is missed for any reason, avoiding disappointment.
Disability	Potentially positive and negative	<p>Positive Impact: The Council is working in partnership with All Disabilities Matter charity to provide a Santa's grotto in the Town Centre where children with or without a disability may visit and engage with Santa. This is designed to be particularly suitable for children with neurodivergence.</p> <p>Santa remaining at scheduled and advertised places for longer periods allows people to plan their visit. Parking is available if required. Some locations are naturally quieter than others.</p>	<p>Service Review to be held to consider how the event should be run in future. This will be open to the public for comments and questions.</p> <p>Santa Tours Sub-Committee to be set up following the service review. Volunteers and members of the community will be encouraged to put their names forward to participate.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Potential for Positive/Negative Impact	Explanation and Evidence	Action to address negative impact
		<p>Scheduled stops are generally in or near car parks, pubs, churches and community centres and most are wheelchair accessible, with adequate lighting.</p> <p>A support team and/or member of Council staff is present at each scheduled stop in advance of Santa arriving, to prepare the site and assist with any queries.</p> <p>Santa also visits some residential care establishments, enabling some children or adults with a disability to see him.</p> <p>An opportunity for rest and refreshments is provided at many of the scheduled stops – The Council is working with local businesses and organisations to increase this.</p> <p>Negative Impact: Anyone with a disability or condition which means they are unable to leave their home may not be able to see Santa.</p>	An online greeting from Santa may be accessed by anyone, including people who are unable to leave their home.
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact	The event is free and open to anyone who would like to attend.	None
Marriage and civil partnership	No known negative impact	The event is free and open to anyone who would like to attend.	None

Protected Characteristic	Potential for Positive/Negative Impact	Explanation and Evidence	Action to address negative impact
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative impact	Standing and waiting for Santa, potentially in inclement weather conditions.	<p>Santa's scheduled stops are timed to allow maximum engagement with children and adults and are advertised in advance, allowing a visit to be planned.</p> <p>Car parking is available at the scheduled stops, allowing a pregnant woman or new mum and baby to remain seated and sheltered if required.</p> <p>The opportunity for rest and refreshments indoors are provided at many of the scheduled stops – working with businesses and local organisations to increase this.</p>
Race	No known negative impact	The event is free and open to anyone who would like to attend.	None
Religion or belief	No known negative impact	<p>Although Christmas is a religious festival, the event is free and open to anyone of any faith or belief who would like to attend.</p> <p>The event focuses on Santa and there is no reference to the religious aspects of Christmas.</p>	
Sex	No known negative impact	The event is free and open to anyone who would like to attend.	None
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact	The event is free and open to anyone who would like to attend.	None