

## **Conference workshop: Doing impact assessments of government policy on gender and other inequalities**

Led by the Women's Budget Group

Reported by Helen Gee and attended by about 25 people.

The workshop opened with a briefing on Equality Impact Assessments (EIA): All public bodies are legally required to equality impact assess any policies and proposed changes and to publish these assessments. The EIAs are supposed to be used as well as recorded.

The group was invited to discuss the best methods for carrying out an EIA and how the completed EIAs can be used to bring about change in policy or practice.

The discussion was wide ranging but themes were:

- Who should do the EIA – the people responsible for the development or a ‘neutral’ outside body?
- How can EIAs be carried out?:
  - i. What should be measured and which equality areas are most relevant?
  - ii. Social economic inequality is easiest to measure but may be excluded as a valid area of interest by the government.
  - iii. Quantitative information is particularly valuable but the EIA measures change to ‘here and now’ so they are not necessarily comparable.
- How can the results of EIAs be used to bring about change – or resist unwelcome change:
  - i. The aggregated information can be used to publicise the impact of a given change to a wider public.
  - ii. To inform groups of people who might be particularly disadvantaged to help them fight against specific cuts.
  - iii. Information on big national changes is of more value for policy change.

Actions: The women’s budget group ([www.wbg.org.uk](http://www.wbg.org.uk)) would welcome more members to help with this work – particularly from people with numerical skills. It was agreed that people would share examples of EIAs which are good, or might have useful information, with the budget group.