

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Proforma

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An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and the **armed forces community**.

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.
- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Consultation on the proposal to extend the age range at Victoria Infant and Nursery School, Barrow. The amendment to the age range will see the school cater for children changed from 3 to 7 years to supporting 2 to 7 years with effect from 07 January 2025. This equality impact assessment has been developed by the School Organisation Team which is part of the functional area for Quality, Resources and Transformation.

As the school's admissions authority, the Local Authority is statutorily required to consult with all relevant stakeholders on the proposal and subject to the outcome of that consultation, take a final decision on whether to approve the proposal.

2) Background and Summary of Equality Advice

This document was developed to identify any negative impacts to protected groups from the proposal to extend the age range at the aforementioned school. In response to any negative impacts, the document will outline any mitigating actions to be implemented to ensure that Westmorland and Furness pays due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

There has been a recent government funded expansion to the Early Years entitlements commencing in April 2024. The government has staggered the implementation period. Currently as a result of the changes, two-year-old children whose parents are in work may be entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare. This will be extended further in September 2025 when settings will have the ability to provide up to 30 hours funded childcare for two-year-old children.

The age range expansion proposed for Victoria Infant and Nursery School would allow the school to provide more funded childcare places in line with the aforementioned government funded entitlement developments. The school have applied for an early years' capital grant to support with the costs of refurbishing the proposed nursery space and provide the initial resources that would be required to enable the school to begin to offer two-year-old provision. However, the school have confirmed that funding that has been raised by the School's Parent Teacher Association will be utilised in the event that the grant application is not successful. The Governing Body at Victoria Infant and Nursery School are supportive of the proposal and consider that the age range expansion will be beneficial to the school both educationally and financially. The school has previously engaged with a variety of local stakeholders to assess the possibility of the proposal being put forward.

The impacts for this proposal that have been identified are of a positive nature thus far. These have been listed in the screening exercise enumerated below. Responses to the consultation will be closely monitored and screened for any potential negative impacts that would require mitigation thus far unforeseen. Regular updates will be made to this document as a part of the monitoring process.

3) Consultation

List any relevant consultations and consultees (completed and pending):

Victoria Infant and Nursery School has engaged in an initial consultation phase with parents and other local schools.

Consultation: 5 July 2024 – 1 August 2024

Furness Locality Board Meeting: August 2024

Cabinet for Formal Notice: 10 September 2024

Representation Period: 16 September 2024 – 13 October 2024

Cabinet Final Decision: 17 December 2024

Implementation: 07 January 2025

4) Equality Screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	N			N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Disability	Y	<p>The proposed age range expansion will allow for identification of special educational needs or disabilities at a younger age ensuring that the children access support at an earlier opportunity.</p> <p>This will be beneficial because it ensures the children will have the appropriate support available earlier enabling them to better access the curriculum thereby, progressing their educational attainment more rapidly.</p>	This is a positive impact.	N
Gender reassignment	N			N
Marriage or civil partnership	N			N
Pregnancy or maternity	N			N
Race	N			N
Religion or belief	N			N
Sex	N			N
Sexual orientation	N			N
Care Experience	N			N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
People in rural areas	N	School has not been designated as a rural primary school by the Department for Education.		N
Socio-economic status	Y	<p>Creating additional funded childcare places in the area will lead to more parents being able to seek employment and/or for parents to extend the number of hours they work. Both of these opportunities will benefit local families financially.</p> <p>Using a school based early years' service will potentially mean that local families can avoid paying for childcare over the school holiday periods thereby saving families a considerable amount of money.</p> <p>Evidence from the school's consultation suggests that working patterns of parents are not currently being supported by alternative providers causing substantial childcare issues.</p>	These are positive impacts	N
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	N			N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
General (other considerations)	Y	<p>Specialist nursery teachers will be overseeing the two-year-old provision resulting in an improved educational experience for the children in the area i.e., development of language skills.</p> <p>Improvement to the continuity of the education for the children in the area – a smoother transition from Early Years education into Key Stage 1 at the setting.</p>	These are positive impacts brought about by the development of additional childcare places in the area.	N

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?

Yes

No