

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING TEMPLATE (IST)

Initial screening needs to take place for all new/revised Council policies. The word ‘policy’, in this context, includes the different things that the Council does. It includes any policy, procedure or practice - both in employment and service delivery. It also includes proposals for restructuring, redundancies and changes to service provision. This stage must be completed at the earliest opportunity to determine whether it is necessary to undertake an EIA for this activity.

Name of Policy:	Childcare Scheme
Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):	Nicole Pema, HR Manager
Department:	HR
Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):	
Date Initial Screening Completed:	January 2021

(a) **What is the policy trying to achieve?** i.e. What is the aim/purpose of the policy? Is it affected by external drivers for change? What outcomes do we want to achieve from the policy? How will the policy be put into practice?

Eligible employees can apply for a contribution towards the cost of childcare of ninety pence per hour, which can be claimed for each whole hour of childcare paid for by staff up to a maximum of £155 per month.

Eligible employees may claim the allowance for:

- a) pre-school children;
- b) children from 5-12 years old; or
- c) children over 12 years in special circumstances, subject to the approval of the HR Manager.

The allowance can only be claimed towards the cost of childcare incurred during contractual hours of work (including periods of authorised absence e.g. holidays, maternity leave and sickness).

(b) **Who are its main beneficiaries?** i.e. who will be affected by the policy?

The scheme is available to all employees of the Council, excluding casuals.

The employee must have responsibility as a parent or guardian for the upbringing of a child aged 12 years or under.

The allowance can be claimed towards the cost of childcare, subject to the provider being registered or approved by the relevant authorities.

(c) Is this assessment informed by any information or background data? i.e. consultations, complaints, applications received, allocations/take-up, satisfaction rates, performance indicators, access audits, census data, benchmarking, workforce profile etc.

The Policy is informed by:

- a) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021-2024.
- b) Family Friendly Guidance.
- c) Quantitative data in relation to the users of the scheme, collected by the monthly childcare claims.
- d) Equal opportunities monitoring data in relation to the staff who use the scheme.
- e) Data in relation to the financial support available for staff through the scheme.
- f) Data in relation to pregnant members of staff and those who are currently on maternity leave to determine the members of staff who are likely to be accessing the childcare scheme in the foreseeable future.
- g) HR records on staffing levels (Establishment List).
- h) Consultation with the Council's Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and Unison.

(d) Does this policy have the potential to cause a positive or negative impact on different groups in the community, on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics (please tick all that apply):

Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Please explain any impact identified: i.e. What do you already know about equality impact or need? Is there any evidence that there is a higher or lower take-up by particular groups? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally? Are there any barriers to accessing the policy or service?

Participation in the Childcare Scheme is open to every employee (except those employed on a Casual basis) and therefore the scheme has a positive impact on all staff. However, in terms of accessing the scheme, there is a possible gender bias towards women (working mothers). This is because the HR department are notified of the female members of staff who are pregnant and due to commence maternity leave, and are therefore more aware that this group of staff are likely to require support with childcare and can send them the necessary information and forms in preparation. However, it may be more difficult for the HR team to pinpoint men who are expectant fathers (or perhaps are already fathers) – in terms of trying to target this audience appropriately, unless they have applied for Maternity Support Leave or Paternity Leave. Details of the scheme are however promoted on the Council's Intranet site and during the recruitment process.

The Council employs considerably more female staff than male. This is evidenced by the Council's Establishment List which indicates that as at 31st December 2020, the gender workforce split is 68 % female and 32% male.

As at 31st December 2020, 15 females and 2 males were accessing the scheme, this equates to 9% of the total workforce.

With high childcare costs, and childcare responsibilities still being viewed as predominately a female role, women are more likely than their male partners, to either give up their jobs to care for their children resulting in a career break, or take on part time, perhaps lower paid work to fit around childcare responsibilities. The financial implications for women in these circumstances may include reduced pensions benefits and/or job advancement opportunities for the future. Providing assistance towards childcare may assist in retaining staff and adds another strand to the Council's Family Friendly guidance.

The scheme does not discriminate against staff claiming for financial assistance on grounds of any protected characteristic.

Disabled members of staff may require alternative formats or assistance with completing the form, but these services can be provided on request.

(e) Does the policy affect service users or the wider community?	NO
(f) Does the policy have a significant effect on how services are delivered?	NO
(g) Will it have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?	NO
(h) Does it involve a significant commitment of resources?	NO
(i) Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities, e.g. disabled people's access to public transport etc?	NO

If you have answered **YES** to any of the questions above, then it is necessary to proceed with a full equality impact assessment (EIA). If the answer is **NO**, then this judgement and your response to the above questions will need to be countersigned by your Service Lead Officer and then forwarded to the HR Manager.

Signatures:

Completing Officer: Nicole Pema **Date:** January 2021

Service Lead Officer: Nicole Pema **Date:** January 2021