

**Impact and Needs/Requirements Assessment (INRA)**  
**Initial Screening**

Initial screening needs to take place for all new policies, strategies, procedures and functions. This stage must be completed at the earliest opportunity to determine whether it is necessary to undertake an INRA for this activity.

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| <b>Name of Policy, Strategy or Function:</b>                                     | Financial Assistance Towards Childcare |
| <b>Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):</b>                                | Christina Ward, HR Support Officer     |
| <b>Department:</b>   | HR                                     |
| <b>Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):</b> | Nicole Pema, Principal HR Officer      |
| <b>Date Initial Screening Completed:</b>   | 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2010        |

**(a) What is the activity trying to achieve?** i.e. what are its aims and objectives? Is it affected by external drivers for change?

The Scheme is aimed at providing financial assistance for Council employees (except those employed on a Casual basis) towards the cost of childcare, subject to the provider being registered or approved by the relevant authorities.

Financial pressures upon the Childcare budget and the Council as a whole has led to the scheme being revised with a move from a flat rate monthly contribution being made to eligible staff (pro-rata sums paid to part time employees) to a scheme offering a contribution of 90 pence per whole hour of childcare. 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) and/or additional hours, with the prior approval of the Head of Human Resources & Facilities Management.

The Scheme is administered by Human Resources.

The Council's childcare scheme aims to promote a return to work for employees following a period of maternity or adoption leave; to attract and retain working parents; and to promote family friendly policies and practices.

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

Staff (other than Casual employees) who have a child/children up to and including age of 12 and can satisfy the criteria of the scheme. Employees with children over the age of 12, with special circumstances, may also be eligible for assistance, subject to the approval of the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with Unison.

The Council is also a beneficiary as the scheme is a helpful recruitment and retention tool (seen by employees as an additional staff benefit).

**(c) Does this activity have the potential to cause an impact (positive, negative or neutral) on different groups in the community, on the grounds of: (please tick all that apply):**

|                   |                                     |                            |                          |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Ethnicity</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>Age</b>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Gender</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>Religion and Belief</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Disability</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>Sexuality</b>           | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Please explain any impact identified:**

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 August 2010, the gender workforce split is male 37% and female 63%.

As at September 2010, 13 females regularly access the scheme as opposed to 8 males this equates to 10% of the total workforce who are accessing the scheme.

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 other work-life balance policies (such as Flexible Working).

The scheme does not discriminate against staff claiming for financial assistance on grounds of gender, age, religion & belief, race, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, marital or parental status, caring responsibilities or working hours.

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

**(d) If you have identified an adverse impact, does it disadvantage or discriminate unfairly against any of the groups in a way that is unlawful?**

Participation in the Childcare Scheme is open to every employee (except those employed on a Casual basis). The scheme does not disadvantage or discriminate against any of the groups in a way that is unlawful.

**NO**

Details of the new scheme and the relevant forms can be access from the Intranet.

Alternatively, hard copies are available from Human Resources.  
Need to raise awareness of the Childcare scheme and promote availability of formats and assistance for completion of forms.

**(e) What Information or background data is currently available to assist with making the judgements above?**

- Quantitative data in relation to the users of the scheme, collected by the monthly childcare claims.
- Equal opportunities monitoring data in relation to the staff who use the scheme.
- Data in relation to the financial support available for staff through the scheme.
- 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.
- Single Equality Scheme 2010-12.
- Consultation with Unison during review of Scheme, plus communication sent (via email) to all Council staff to notify them of the consultation exercise.
- HR records on staffing levels (Establishment List).
- Workforce Development Plan.

If the answer to question (d) is **YES**, then it is necessary to proceed with a full equality impact assessment. If the answer is **NO**, then this judgement and your response to the above questions will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service/Executive Director, and then referred to the Council's Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) for scrutiny and verification. Please forward completed and signed forms to Nicole Pema, Principal HR Officer.

**Signatures:**

**Completing Officer:** Christina Ward, HR Support Officer **Date:** 19/10/10

**Head of Service:** Kathy Batey, Head of HR & Facilities Management **Date:** 19/10/10