

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty which states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This document demonstrates how the Council is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty by setting out the findings of an equality analysis that has been undertaken in relation to a proposed change to assess whether it has a disproportionate impact on people who share a protected characteristic, together with care leavers / care experienced adults, as the Council treats this group like a protected characteristic.

1. Background

Directorate	Children & Young people
Service area	Early Years – Education
Title of the proposed change being assessed i.e., the policy, service or other development	Annual Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report
Describe the purpose of the proposed change and the intended outcomes	
<p>There are no changes proposed.</p> <p>This Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report was undertaken in accordance with the Childcare Act 2006, and the associated statutory guidance: Early Education and Childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities June 2018.</p> <p>The Act gives local authorities a duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, childcare provision for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). The provision should be sufficient to meet the requirements of parents/carers to enable them to work, or undertake education or training leading to work, and for their child to access their free entitlement childcare place.</p> <p>The Act requires local authorities to carry out an assessment of the childcare in their area and produce an annual report for Council Members on how the duty is being met, and to make it available to the public. The Act places a statutory duty upon local authorities to play a strategic role in facilitating the childcare market.</p>	

Along with primary, secondary, further and higher education, early years provision is an integral element of the local education system in Gloucestershire.

The sufficiency duty report gives local authorities the opportunity to work with local partners, filling gaps in the market and shaping childcare and services in their area to provide the best possible provision, which meets the needs of all local families.

The aim of this Childcare Sufficiency Duty report is to present an analysis of childcare supply and demand for childcare in Gloucestershire. This includes information about the supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, children with SEND and children from minoritized communities; affordability, accessibility, quality of provision and details of any gaps and emerging concerns, in childcare provision and how they will be addressed. This acknowledges the sufficiency of childcare /early education provision as a critical element within the wider network of arrangements giving the children of Gloucestershire the best start in life, interlinked with a range of support pre-birth to pre-school.

<p>Who is affected by the proposals?</p>	<p>Service users <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Wider community <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Workforce <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other, please specify:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <p>EY & Childcare providers</p> </div>
<p>Decision to be taken and decision maker</p>	<p>Cabinet to approve the 2023 Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report</p>
<p>Person(s) responsible for completing this assessment</p>	<p>Sarah Hylton – Head of Early Years</p>
<p>Date of this assessment</p>	<p>27th July 2023</p>

2. Information and Data Collection

Summarise how you have collected the information and data required to assess the potential or actual impact of the proposed change on those who share the protected characteristics and care leavers / care experienced adults (e.g., survey of services users, community focus groups, analysing service usage data, engaging with the council's staff networks etc.). The actual information and data that has been collected and analysed should be set out in Appendix 1 (Service Users) and Appendix 2 (GCC staff).

If there are any gaps, include an action in section 4 to fill these. This doesn't mean that you can't complete the equality impact assessment, but you need to follow-up the action and revisit as part of the monitoring and review arrangements set out in section 5.

Stakeholders	Engagement and Consultation	Other Methods / Sources
Service Users / Wider Community	online survey	
Workforce		
Partners	online survey EY provider self update portal	

Other		
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3. Equality Assessment

Indicate the impact on each group and explain how you have reached your conclusions (i.e., through analysis of the information and data that was collected through the engagement, consultation and other methods / sources that were set out in section 2).

Service Users					
Groups	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact	Not Sure	Summary of Impact
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010)	Age	x			<p>The childcare sufficiency report relates to the provision of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Education (EYFS) for children aged under statutory school age, should EY provision not be sufficient across the county for children aged 0-5 and their parents/carers would be impacted. Currently there is sufficient provision to match demand. <p>and to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childcare provision for children aged up to 16 yrs. (18 if disabled). Should childcare not be sufficient across the county for children aged up to 16 (18 if disabled) and their parents/carers would be impacted. Currently there is sufficient provision to match demand.

	Disability	x			<p>Providers of early years education, that is all early year's providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors that a local authority funds, are required to have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015)</p> <p>The Childcare Sufficiency Duty report sets out how childcare provision is meeting the needs of children with SEND. A consultation with parents of children with SEND was completed to understand any experience of barriers to childcare provision. A consultation with providers was also undertaken to understand barriers to them supporting children with additional needs and SEND.</p> <p>Whilst neither consultation raised any significant concerns regarding sufficiency of provision, we have been working with a national organisation, alongside other LAs, to ensure that we have systems in place to ensure sufficient and adequate provision for children with SEND.</p> <p>This has included a study and analysis of 310 children, attending school in reception class and Year one, supported through an EHCP. This evidenced that of the cohort of 310, 288 (93%) had accessed at least some level of their early years/childcare entitlement in their pre-school year. Of the 22 children that had not accessed childcare provision, 12 now attend a special school in the county. Further exploration is planned to understand the barriers to childcare provision for these children. As over 50% of the small number of children with SEND that had not accessed childcare are now accessing a special school provision, this may reflect a gap in childcare for children with the most complex needs, and/or a lack of parental confidence in the mainstream childcare sector.</p> <p>To address this, we continue to offer advice, training, support and additional funding to EY providers to enable them to support children with SEN and we have commissioned a specialist SEN EY centre for those children unable to access mainstream EY provision. All special schools in Glos are registered to take</p>
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					children from age 2 years, therefore EY children with an EHCP can request a place in a SS provision.
	Sex		x		The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment does not differentiate between males and females. All childcare providers offer provision for all children regardless of gender/sex. There are no concerns identified. EY practitioners are advised to access any available training to increase their awareness and confidence in supporting children of all sexual orientations
	Race		x		The sufficiency duty assessment and provision of childcare does not have an adverse impact on race equality considerations. Gloucestershire's Childcare Providers will ensure environments accessible to children and families reflect the community in which they live and the wider images of the diverse communities. It is difficult to fully understand if any barriers to access childcare provision for children from specific ethnic groups exist. Whilst we have not had concerns raised by parents about insufficient or inadequate provision, we cannot assume that these do not exist. We have faced challenges in obtaining data from the EY sector regarding demand and take up of childcare places for particular ethnic groups, despite introducing reporting systems. Available data does not indicate a barrier to childcare due to race, but to help us to identify any barriers to accessing childcare provision we have planned a consultation exercise with parents from a range of ethnic backgrounds.
	Gender reassignment		x		The Sufficiency report does not particularly impact on residents undergoing gender re-assignment in either a positive or negative way. All childcare is accessible to all children, no concerns have

					been identified, EY practitioners are advised to access any available training to increase their awareness and confidence to support children impacted by gender assignment
	Marriage & civil partnership		x		There is no bearing on marriage or civil partnership
	Pregnancy & maternity	x			<p>The mixed economy of childcare provision, domestic/nondomestic, along with the flexibility of opening hours and application of take up of funded hours is positive for expectant and new parents seeking childcare.</p> <p>The spring budget announcements includes the provision of an extended childcare offer for all working parents. This will potentially impact on the sufficiency of childcare provision in the county, risks and mitigation are included in the assessment, the extended childcare offer will have a positive impact for new parents who will have the opportunity to access funded childcare to enable them to return to work without high childcare costs</p>
	Religion and/or belief		x		<p>There is no bearing within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment on religion or belief. Childcare Providers will celebrate diverse events throughout a calendar year to build under 5's knowledge of the world around them.</p> <p>To help us to ensure that this practice is consistent across the county and that parents experience good practice in relation to meeting their child's religious beliefs and culture this is included consultation exercise with parents.</p>
	Sexual orientation		x		The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment does not differentiate between sexual orientation. The underlying principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is to give access to all learning

						activities based on a child's individual interests and preferences and not to lead or direct. No concerns have been raised or identified
Additional Groups	Care leavers / care experienced adults		x			There is no assessed impact for care leavers. All families have equal access to childcare.
Groups		Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact	Not Sure	Summary of Impact

Gloucestershire County Council Staff						
Groups		Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact	Not Sure	Summary of Impact
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010)	Age		x			The childcare sufficiency report sets out the assessment of childcare sufficiency for the county and the families that live within it. There is no impact for staff members, other than as members of the community and potential service users, assessment detailed in "service user" impact section above
	Disability		x			As above
	Sex		x			As above

	Race		x			As above
	Gender reassignment		x			As above
	Marriage & civil partnership		x			As above
	Pregnancy & maternity		x			As above
	Religion and/or belief		x			As above
	Sexual orientation		x			As above
Additional Groups	Care leavers / care experienced adults		x			As above
Groups	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact	Not Sure	Summary of Impact	

4. Action Plan

Set out the key actions that will be undertaken, following the equality assessment in section 3, to further maximise the positive impact or mitigate the negative impact of the proposal on those who share the protected characteristics and care leavers / care experienced adults (any negative consequences should be eliminated, minimised or counter-balanced by other measures):

Identified Potential or Actual Impact	Recommended Action(s)	Owner	Target Completion Date
Equality of access to childcare = positive impact	Continued engagement with parents/carers of children with SEND to ensure access to inclusive childcare provision for children with all levels of additional need.	Sarah Hylton	On going
Access to high quality childcare for all – positive impact	On-going monitoring of the quality of childcare delivery for cohorts of children where evidence reflects poorer outcomes	Sarah Hylton	On going
Equality of access to childcare = positive impact	Continued engagement with parents/carers of children from minority ethnic groups to ensure	Sarah Hylton	On going

	access to inclusive childcare provision that meets the cultural needs of the whole community		


5. Monitoring and Review


Public bodies must have regard to the aims of the duty not only when a policy, service or development is being created and decided upon, but also when it is implemented and at regular intervals afterwards. The Equality Duty is a continuing duty.

Lead officer(s):	Sarah Hylton – Head of Eys Sarah Spencer – EY Sufficiency and Business Support Manager
Frequency of the monitoring and review:	twice per year Full sufficiency assessment and report for cabinet annually Interim sufficiency assessment and report for CS senior leadership team
How the impact of the policy, service or development will be measured, including the data and information that will be used:	To ensure that childcare provision that meets the needs of all children and families, regardless of race or disability, is available and accessible across the county.

Stakeholders who will be involved:	Parents/carers, EY Providers, EY service

6. Approval

Signature of Senior Officer	
Name of Senior Officer	Ann James
Date	06.09.23

Signature of Decision Maker	
Name of Decision Maker	Cllr Stephen Davies
Date	6 th September 2023

Appendix 1 – Service User Data and Information

Details of service users affected by the proposed activity:

Groups	Service User Data and Information
Age	
Disability	
Sex	
Race	
Gender reassignment	
Marriage & civil partnership	
Pregnancy & maternity	
Religion and/or belief	
Sexual orientation	
Care leavers / care experienced adults	

Appendix 2 – Gloucestershire County Council Staff Data and Information

Details of Gloucestershire County Council staff affected by the proposed activity:

Groups	GCC Workforce Data and Information
Age	
Disability	
Sex	
Race	
Gender reassignment	
Marriage & civil partnership	
Pregnancy & maternity	
Religion and/or belief	
Sexual orientation	
Care leavers / care experienced adults	
