



Equality Impact Assessment

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) ("the Act"), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give 'due regard' to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid 'due regard' to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
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Title:	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund Extension to March 2024
Related EIAs:	EIA Number: 335

EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	Support provided to vulnerable households through the Connect4Communities programme
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	The Household Support Fund is a continuation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provision of funding to Local Authorities to provide financial support for food, water and energy bills. The Fund is intended to support those who are vulnerable or find themselves in financial hardship being impacted by the inflationary challenges and the cost of living. It covers a range of low-income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people. Hampshire County Council (HCC) will work with a wide variety of partners and other organisations and support the development and delivery of a range of initiatives to support those most vulnerable. The DWP provide grant guidance to Local Authorities.
New/changed service/policy/project	The DWP will provide a further £14.2m funding to HCC to support vulnerable households with costs of food, energy, water bills and housing costs between April 2023 and March 2024. The grant conditions do not ringfence proportions of the funding for specific cohorts, however there is a requirement for at least a part of local schemes to operate on an application basis, enabling residents the opportunity to come forward to request support. Working with schools, colleges, and early years providers the proposed programme will deliver financial support to a wide range of vulnerable families between April 2023 and March 2024. Through grant funding, the programme will also support the development and delivery of a range of community led projects to meet local needs across Hampshire. A variety of initiatives have been identified working with our local community partners, to ensure there is year round support available.

Engagement
A variety of stakeholders have been consulted so that existing local provision and need can be identified, risks in respect of duplication of funding can be addressed and emerging ideas validated or challenged. This has included engagement with Children's Services, Adult Health

and Care, Community Pantries, Citizens Advice Service and District and Borough Councils.

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Positive
Rationale	<p>Children, families, individuals and pensioners who are vulnerable or find themselves in financial hardship: this programme, with support from signposting agencies, will help to identify and support those people to ensure they have access to food and heating over the coming year, as well as other basics such as cooking facilities, bedding or other essentials to keep warm over the coming winter.</p> <p>Discretionary funding allocated to over 600 schools, colleges and early years settings is not means tested, so settings can support families they recognise as being in need.</p> <p>Food vouchers will be awarded to over 500 Hampshire Foster Carers supporting some of Hampshire's most vulnerable children, as well as vouchers for families with open Special Guardianship Orders, Connected Carers and who receive financial support from the council.</p>
Mitigation	

Disability

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral

Rationale	<p>According to the Office of National Statistics in October 2022, over half (55%) of disabled adults reported finding it difficult to afford their energy bills, and around a third (36%) found it difficult to afford their rent or mortgage payments compared with 40% and 27% of non-disabled people, respectively.</p> <p>Children, families, individuals and pensioners with disabilities who are vulnerable or find themselves in hardship can via this programme and with signposting from agencies, be identified and helped to ensure they have access to food and heating this winter, as well as other basics which may be identified such as cooking facilities, bedding or other essentials.</p> <p>There are currently 560 children open to the Council's Disabled Children's Team and 2,000 Gateway Card holders, who may receive support via our social care teams or from working with provider organisations to deliver direct support.</p> <p>Adults with disabilities who have met the threshold for support from Adult Health and Care social care teams may benefit from this grant. There are around 6,500 adults with disabilities open to social care that are not in residential accommodation and just over 500 who do not have any care provision in place.</p> <p>Any adults with disabilities struggling with fuel costs will be able to access support from Citizens Advice.</p>
Mitigation	

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There will be no change in benefits to this protected characteristic group, over and above the current circumstances and over other protected characteristics groups.</p>

Mitigation	
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Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There will be no change in benefits to this protected characteristic group, over and above the current circumstances and over other protected characteristics groups.
Mitigation	

Race

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>According to the Office of National Statistics in October 2022, around two-thirds (69%) of Black or Black British adults and (59%) Asian or Asian British adults reported finding it difficult to afford their energy bills, compared with around 4 in 10 (44%) white adults.</p> <p>Community grants will provide opportunities for organisations working within ethnic minority communities to apply for funds to provide support. Additionally, through delivery partners and the communications planned, we can raise awareness of the connect4communities programme and signpost ethnic minority households to the support being offered.</p>
Mitigation	

Mitigation

Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There will be no change in benefits to this protected characteristic group, over and above the current circumstances and over other protected characteristics groups.
Mitigation	

Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There will be no change in benefits to this protected characteristic group, over and above the current circumstances and over other protected characteristics groups.
Mitigation	

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral

Rationale	There will be no change in benefits to this protected characteristic group, over and above the current circumstances and over other protected characteristics groups.
Mitigation	

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There will be no change in benefits to this protected characteristic group, over and above the current circumstances and over other protected characteristics groups.
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The Office for National Statistics reported in October 2022 that the proportion of all adults finding it difficult to afford their energy bills, rent or mortgage payments has increased through the year: almost half of adults (45%) who paid energy bills (compared with 40% in March to June 2022) and 30% (compared with 26% March to June 2022) paying rent or mortgages reported these being difficult to afford. 7% of households in Hampshire are in fuel poverty according to the Public Health joint strategic needs assessment.

	<p>Children, families, individuals and pensioners who find themselves in financial hardship; with support from signposting agencies, via this programme will help to identify and support those people to ensure they have access to food and heating over the coming year, as well as other basics such as cooking facilities, bedding or other essentials to keep warm over the coming winter.</p> <p>Community grants funding will be notionally allocated across the district geographies to reflect poverty related inequalities and pressures. HCC recognises, from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment data for example, that although 7% of households in Hampshire can be consider to be in fuel poverty, this may range from 2.2% to over 20% in different areas.</p> <p>Exceptional housing support where existing schemes do not meet the need, may be available via District Councils.</p> <p>Community Pantries give those in need an opportunity to buy food at a lower rate on a weekly basis and are available across Hampshire.</p>
Mitigation	

Rurality

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There will be no change in benefits to this protected characteristic group, over and above the current circumstances and over other protected characteristics groups.</p> <p>Community grant funding will be notionally allocated across the district geographies to reflect poverty related inequalities and pressures. HCC recognises from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment data for example, that although 7% of households in Hampshire can be consider to be in fuel poverty, this may range from 2.2% to over 20% in different areas.</p> <p>It is the intention to work with community organisations in all Hampshire districts to ensure there is a means to apply for support. Additionally, community grants can be applied for by organisations across the county.</p>
Mitigation	

Geographical Impact:All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund extension is targeted towards members of the public. There is no specific delivery aimed at staff, or required changes to working practices for our staff, therefore the impact for staff has been assessed as neutral.

This EIA accompanies a report to the Executive Lead Member of Children's Services on 11th May 2023.

Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

EIA reference number: 00414

Date of production of EIA for publication: 27/04/2023