



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction

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| This EqIA is for: | COVID Winter Grant Scheme | |
| Details are set out: | Children's Centre Services CYP Committee Paper Nov 2020 and January 2021 | |
| Officers undertaking the assessment: | Irene Kakoullis – Group Manager Early Childhood Services Fiona Simpson – Project Manager | |
| Assessment approved by: | Laurence Jones, Service Director Commissioning and Resources | Date: Dec 2020 |

The Public Sector Equality Duty which is set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; 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.

The purpose of carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment is to assess the impact of a change to services or policy on people with protected characteristics and to demonstrate that the Council has considered the aims of the Equality Duty.

Part A: Impact, consultation and proposed mitigation

What are the potential impacts of proposal? Has any initial consultation informed the identification of impacts?

On 8th November 2020, the government announced a package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, available from December 2020, will see new funding issued to County Councils and Unitary Authorities to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs. Nottinghamshire County Council's allocation is £2,300,000.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will provide funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, who will administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This will include some families who normally have access to Free School Meals during term time. County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England will have the ability to deliver the scheme through vouchers or grants. The Scheme will operate from early December 2020 and covers the period until the end of March 2021.

The Local Authority is able to determine eligibility in their area and target their support within the scope of the conditions set out below:

- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support families with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other types of households, including individuals.
- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills (including sewerage), with up to 20% on other items.

Targeting this money effectively will help to ease the burden faced by a wide range of vulnerable households across the county worrying about paying the next utility bill or the next food shop due to the pandemic. It is up to each Local Authority to determine eligibility in our area and target support where we think it's needed – but it must be used to cover children at risk of going hungry in the first instance.

Families with Children (80% of Grant)

Due to increasing demand and free school meal eligibility in Nottinghamshire, indicative allocations have been reviewed and it is now proposed to spend

- approximately £1.2m of the grant on the provision of food to those families where children are in receipt of free school meals. This includes school aged pupils and those in 6th forms and Further Education (FE) Colleges. Households with 2 year olds from low income households and 3 and 4 year olds eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium will receive supermarket vouchers or food parcels through their early years setting.
- Approximately 500k will be spent through Social care professionals, where households with children who need assistance with an allocated lead professional such as a Social Worker, Family Service or Children's Centre Service key worker will receive a supermarket voucher and can access the Nottingham Energy Partnership to assist with fuel and water bills. Their priority will be focused in the main on children not eligible for Free School Meals but whose household is struggling financially because of Covid.

Households without children or Vulnerable Adults (20% of grant)

- It is proposed that through the Local Resilience Forum's Humanitarian Assistance Group, officers work with District and Borough Council partners to identify priority individuals for this portion of the grant and to issue vouchers and make appropriate payments. Approximately £35000 will be allocated to the 7 District and Borough Councils to provide supermarket vouchers to adults and households with no children who are struggling financially because of Covid. They will also use funds to support local food banks who are able to assist with food and other essentials.
- 85k will be allocated Nottingham Energy Partnership (NEP) who will provide fuel vouchers and support for households who require assistance to pay for their utility bills – namely energy/fuel vouchers and water bills (but not rent or other housing costs).
- Approximately 20k for Care Leavers aged 19-24 and young people with an Education Healthcare Plan aged 19-24 who are eligible for Free School Meals will receive supermarket vouchers through Children's Social Care or their FE College.
- It is proposed that £230,000 will initially be set aside for administration costs and for contingency for increasing demand or as yet unidentified need.
- The funding for this scheme is fixed by the government and is not expected to be extended. Therefore, the scheme may be terminated at any time prior to the end of March 2021 if the funding has been fully awarded.
- The proposed scheme for use of the Covid Winter Funding is predominately targeted towards children and young people under the age of 19. This is positive in terms of age (younger) and for people with young families (working age ranges) where women are most likely to be disproportionately impacted by the effects of poverty.

- In order for the scheme to be as inclusive as possible, to ensure children have access to food over the Christmas and February half term holiday periods, it is considered important that we cover as much as possible the full range of vulnerable households with children in the 0 to19 age range.

2 Protected Characteristics: Is there a potential positive or negative impact based on:

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|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |
| Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |
| Gender reassignment | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |
| Pregnancy & maternity | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |
| Race including origin, colour or nationality | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |
| Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |
| Gender | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |
| Sexual orientation including gay, lesbian or bisexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact |

3 Where there are potential negative impacts for protected characteristics these should be detailed including consideration of the equality duty, proposals for how they could be mitigated (where possible) and meaningfully consulted on:

| How do the potential impacts affect people with protected characteristics? <i>What is the scale of the impact?</i> | How might negative impact be mitigated or explain why it is not possible | How will we consult |
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| <p>Under the Equality Act 2010, all public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. For the purposes of this grant, the council will consider how any support that helps people facing severe financial hardship impacts those with characteristics protected under the Equality Act. The DWP has conducted its own Equality impact in respect of this grant.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that this decision will provide positive benefits to the people of Nottinghamshire and not adversely affect any specific group. In providing this additional funding to the groups identified by the grant conditions, the council is seeking to meet the criteria of the grant itself by providing positive financial support to those most adversely impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic or those who are facing hardship over this winter period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Grant will be used solely for residents who are struggling financially due to Covid • The Grant will be used for families with children up to the age of 19, • The Grant will be used for vulnerable households without children (including individuals) so that no vulnerable household is excluded. • Households without children and vulnerable individuals who are struggling to purchase food, utility bills and other essentials between December and the end of March 2021 can access support. | | |

Those seeking assistance from the council will be supported and where applicable be provided with access to food or fuel vouchers or other financial support as funded by this scheme.

If any adverse impact is identified, they will be addressed appropriately.

Part B: Feedback and further mitigation

4 Summary of consultation feedback and further amendments to proposal / mitigation

Due to the time limit of the grant no formal consultation has taken place with the exception of members of the Local Resilience Forum Humanitarian Assistance Group.

Completed EqlAs should be sent to equalities@nottscc.gov.uk and will be published on the Council's website.