

# North Ayrshire Council

## Equality & Children's Rights Impact Assessment (Full Form)

### Introduction

This form will assist in carrying out an **Equality Impact Assessment** and where appropriate, **Socio-Economic, Children's Rights, Island Communities and Consumer Duty Impacts** of new, revised and existing policies and practices. Guidance on how to complete assessments is given in the Council's **Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment Toolkit**.

The form is mandatory and must be published on the Council website once the policy or practice has been approved.

### Section 1 - General Details

1.1 Directorate/Service Education:  
Section: Education

1.2 Name of Policy, Practice or Proposal being assessed and determination of whether this is a new, existing or a budget proposal:

Realign the level of teaching resource across North Ayrshire

This is a budget proposal

Please insert Budget Reference number (if applicable) SP/ED/25/01

1.3 List of participants in the assessment

Andrew McClelland

1.4 Manager responsible for the impact assessment

Name: Andrew McClelland

Designation: Head of Service (Education)

1.5 Timetable (should be started during the development phase of the proposal)

Date Assessment Started: 5 September 2024

Interim Review Date: Not applicable

Final sign off by Head of Service at the end of the form.

## Section 2 – Aims and Relevance

### 2.1 What is the purpose of the policy practice or proposal?

The proposal is to reduce the number of unpromoted teacher posts by 28 FTE for academic session 25/26. This aligns with an ongoing reduction in funding received through the Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) as a result of a declining pupil roll.

## Section 3 – Equality and Diversity

3.1 What evidence were you able to access about the relevant needs of protected groups as outlined in section 3.3 below (Please include your sources – links to equality providers and evidence can be found in both the toolkit and the [Promoting Equality Page on Connects](#)).

Education service leadership team and establishment leadership team knowledge of the operational and strategic delivery of the education in North Ayrshire. 2) Direct engagement with relevant protected groups and wider stakeholders as part of the pre-budget engagement exercise.

3.2 Are there any gaps in your evidence or areas of uncertainty?

None.

3.3 From the list of protected characteristic groups identified in the table below please identify any potential positive and negative impacts on any of these protected characteristics?

Protected Characteristic	Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no)	Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral)
<b>Age</b> - Older people, children and young people – please identify which categories will be affected	Yes	Negative impact on children and young people through reduced school staffing. Reduced staffing decreases flexibility to utilise staff out with ratio to deliver targeted support to learners most in need.
<b>Disability</b> - Physical and Learning	Yes	Negative impact on learners with disabilities through reduced school staffing. Reduced staffing decreases flexibility to utilise staff out with ratio to deliver targeted support to learners most in need.
<b>Gender reassignment</b> - Where a person is living as the opposite gender to their birth	No	No comment

Protected Characteristic	Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no)	Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral)
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	No	No comment
<b>Race, ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins</b> (including gypsy/ travellers, refugees and asylum seekers)	No	No comment
<b>Religion or belief</b> (includes religious and philosophical beliefs, including no belief)	No	No comment
<b>Sex - Women and Men</b>	Yes	<p>90% of primary school teachers (748) and 68% of secondary school teachers (668) are female. This proposal could potentially result in a greater negative impact on women. National data on the equalityevidence.scot platform indicates the employment rate for women was 70.3%, lower than the employment rate for men (78%) in 2018. In addition, the gender employment gap (difference between the employment rates for men and women) was 7.6 percentage points, lower than the gap of 10.5 percentage points in 2008. 86.9% of men were in full time employment compared to 57.5% of women. This proposal could result in further widening of this gap. Scottish Government's Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 report analysis of single adult households (with</p>

Protected Characteristic	Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no)	Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral)
		or without dependents) highlights the poverty rate was highest for single mothers (single working-age women with dependent children). It is acknowledged this proposal has the potential to negatively impact single parents, including single mothers, within the teaching workforce.
<b>Sexual Orientation -</b> Lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	No comment
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership -</b> marriage between same sex couples is included	No	No comment
<b>Human Rights</b>	No	No comment
<b>Care Experienced -</b> This term refers to anyone who is currently in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age and includes <b>Kinship Care</b> (other family members); <b>Looked After at Home</b> (with support from social work); <b>Residential Care;</b> <b>Foster Care;</b> <b>Secure Care;</b> <b>Adoption.</b>	Yes	Negative impact on care experienced learners through reduced school staffing. Reduced staffing decreases flexibility to utilise staff out with ratio to deliver targeted support to learners most in need.

Protected Characteristic	Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no)	Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral)
<b>Other</b> - Poverty, homelessness, ex-offenders, isolated rural communities, carers, part-time workers, or people in a marriage/civil partnership	Yes	Negative impact on learners impacted by poverty. Reduced staffing decreases flexibility to utilise staff out with ratio to deliver targeted support to learners most in need.

3.4 Describe any consultation or engagement undertaken, including details of the groups involved and the methods used.

An online pre-budget engagement was undertaken by North Ayrshire Council in late 2024 that was completed by 714 respondents. This included engagement with a wide range of groups including children and young people; care experienced young people; young ambassadors; North Ayrshire Youth Executive; Joint Cabinet Café Conversation; Employee Disability Forum; ESOL learners Syrian / Afghan / Ukrainian / Russian speakers; NAFCO; Men's and she sheds; long covid group; parents and carers supported via employability services; Equal groups; New Scots groups; and North Ayrshire tenants. A summary of the key findings in relation to this proposal has been provided below: This will have a significant impact on staff. Many comments highlighted the pressure on teachers, with regard to class sizes, workloads. There is concern that reducing teacher numbers will worsen these issues, affecting their wellbeing, leading to increased absenteeism and higher turnover rates. This will have a significant effect on pupils, especially those with Additional Needs. A recurring comment was that reducing teacher numbers will particularly harm students with additional support needs (ASN). Respondents said these pupils require more one-to-one support, which will be harder to provide with fewer staff. They felt that this could further widen the attainment gap, particularly in areas of deprivation. This will have an impact on the quality of Education. Many comments said that any reduction in teaching staff will lead to larger class sizes, reduce subject offerings, and fewer extracurricular opportunities, such as school trips. In turn, they felt that a reduction in support and resources could compromise the quality of education and overall learning experiences for students. Further information responses mainly referred to children with additional needs. Many emphasised the importance of individual attention and care, particularly for neurodiverse children and those with behavioural or emotional difficulties. Many felt that children from deprived backgrounds or care-experienced would be largely affected saying that reduced staff and support would further hinder their learning and wellbeing. Responses in relation to the island communities suggested that islands already face an issue with attracting and retaining staff and not having the same range of subject as the mainland and these issues would be further exacerbated by reduced teacher numbers. A number of respondents felt that some schools already

struggling to meet the needs of students, especially those with additional support needs (ASN). They said a reduction in staff would limit educational opportunities, increase strain on existing staff, and further isolate these communities, as island students have fewer alternatives for support or education compared to mainland students. Additionally, an apparent lack of access to specialised services, such as child psychologists, is a particular concern. Feedback provided by North Ayrshire's local branch of Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) recognised the falling pupil role but highlighted significant increase in the level of needs of additional support needs learners. EIS raised concerns related to teacher workload and the use of the pupil teacher ratio as a metric driving decision making due to the potential for small provisions to skew this figure. EIS feedback emphasised the importance of considering pupil need and significant levels of deprivation in North Ayrshire. EIS feedback highlighted staff absence as having a major impact in schools and cover budgets and indicated this proposal could result in further pressure on the workforce.

Questions 3.5 – 3.7 refer to the 'Three Key needs (or aims) [of the Equality Duty](#)'.

3.5 Which aspects of the policy eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

Budget saving proposal will not unlawfully discriminate, cause harassment or result in victimisation to any specific group. HR policies and procedures will be followed to progress teacher reductions.

3.6 Which aspects of the policy advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

The budget saving proposal will potentially result in less equality of opportunities for children with relevant protected characteristics. As a result, this budget saving proposal is unlikely to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.7 Which aspects of the policy foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? (*Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues*).

Budget saving proposal will not detrimentally impact good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.8 If you have identified any negative impacts of your proposal how will you mitigate these?

Negative impact for protected characteristic groups will be mitigated through a greater focus on utilising existing resource and meeting needs through core staffing allocation. The proposed staffing reduction of 28 teachers will be carefully distributed across the 60 schools in North Ayrshire and will be aligned to and informed by school rolls. Within the overall staffing budget, the Service will also prioritise the allocation of teaching resources to support ASN, in response to the level of need across the Service. Key actions are outlined in the Education Service's annual improvement plan for 2024-25, which include enhanced training and resources for practitioners to meet the needs of ASN learners within mainstream settings, further

Version: 6.0

aligning Pupil Equity Fund and Strategic Equity Fund to prioritise supports that are most impactful and developing a Raising Attainment Strategy.

3.9 Is the policy or practice intended to promote equality by permitting positive action or lead to positive outcomes for people based on a protected characteristic?

The policy is not intended to promote equality by permitting positive action or lead to positive outcomes for people based on a protected characteristic.

## Section 4 – The Fairer Scotland Duty

**The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 places a legal responsibility on the Council to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making decisions.**

- 4.1 Does the proposal have the potential to have a significant impact on inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (consider low income; low wealth; material deprivation; area deprivation; communities of place or interest, socio-economic background).

Yes the proposal has the potential to have a significant impact on inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

Reduced staffing decreases flexibility to utilise staff outwith ratio to deliver targeted support to learners most in need. This could disproportionately impact learners impacted by poverty, with current data demonstrating a persistent poverty related attainment gap between learners living in North Ayrshire's areas of highest deprivation and all other learners.

The majority of North Ayrshire Council's teaching workforce are female. Consequently, this proposal could disproportionately affect women. In addition, single parents, including single mothers, are highlighted as a priority group who are identified as being at higher risk of child poverty. While the family circumstances of over 1,400 teachers are not known by the service, it is acknowledged this proposal could potentially impact and contribute to inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

If No, please go to Section 5.

If Yes please provide more information under any of the below headings which are relevant, highlighting any evidence and sources of evidence used to inform your information.

- 4.2 Low Income/Income Poverty: Cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food and clothing

As noted above, a reduction in school staffing could be detrimental to provision of targeted supports to help learners most in need, including those impacted by poverty. This could negatively impact on learning outcomes for this group in terms of attainment, achievement and post-school destinations.

- 4.3 Low/and or no wealth: Having enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to pay for any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.

As noted above, a reduction in school staffing could be detrimental to provision of targeted supports to help learners most in need, including those impacted by poverty. This could negatively impact on learning outcomes for this group in terms of attainment, achievement and post-school destinations.

- 4.4 Material Deprivation: Being unable to access basic goods and services, i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies

None directly related to this budget saving proposal.

- 4.5 Area Deprivation: Where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport).

None directly related to this budget saving proposal.

- 4.6 If impacts have been identified how will these be mitigated or explored in more detail? (please outline below)

The proposed reductions to the teacher workforce are aligned with an ongoing reduction in the funding NAC receives through the GAE as a result of a declining pupil roll. As a result, the intention of this proposal is to ensure that the size of the teacher workforce remains aligned with the number of learners within our schools. It is also of note that our pupil-teacher ratio (12.4) is significantly below the national average (13.3) and is also relatively low when compared across the last 10-15 years.

The Education Service is acutely aware of the impact poverty can have on learner outcomes. Consequently, this is a key focus in the Education Service Plan with work underway through the development of a Raising Attainment Strategy to mitigate impact where possible. School leaders continue to receive Pupil Equity Funding, which is bolstered by local authority Strategic Equity Funding, to ensure interventions and supports that are shown to be most impactful are prioritised to mitigate impact.

As noted above, this proposal has potential to disproportionately affect more women than men due to the high proportion of women in the teaching workforce. The service commits to engaging with North Ayrshire Council's HR service to explore opportunities to provide impacted post holders with support to access redeployment or alternative employment opportunities.

## Section 5 – Children’s Rights

When considering the Children’s Right’s Impact process, some of the key considerations include any evidence, research and consultation (specifically including any consultation or engagement with young people).

5.1 Are any Children’s Rights impacted by this proposal? ([The Children’s Rights Articles](#) have been matched against the GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicators – where relevant these are highlighted in 5.4 below)

Yes, Children’s Rights are impacted by this proposal.

5.2 Please indicate, if possible, how many children and young people (nearest estimate) are likely to be affected by the policy or measure?

17,400 children and young people (that is, those attending state schools in the area)

5.3 Are some children and young people more likely to be affected than others?

Yes, some children and young people are more likely to be affected than others.

If, Yes what groups? (consider protected characteristics – for example, disabled young people, LGBT etc)

Children with additional support needs, care experienced learners and pupils impacted by poverty may potentially be more affected.

5.4 The following [Children’s Rights](#) and Wellbeing Indicators are likely to be affected by the policy/proposal:-

Wellbeing indicator (for example, safe, healthy etc)	Children’s Right (for example 22 – refugee children)
<p><b>Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Responsible, Included</b></p>	<p>19: protection from violence, abuse and neglect ‘Children and Young People have the right to’ be kept safe from harm and protected against violence. They must be given proper care by those looking after them. 3 – best interests of the child ‘Children and Young People have the right to’ have their interests considered if a decision is being made by any person about them. What is best for them is what matters. 29 - goals of education ‘Children and Young People have the right to’ learn and develop their skills and personality fully, teach them about their own and other people’s rights and prepare them for adult life. 20 - children deprived of a family ‘Children and Young People have the right to’ special care if they can’t live with their parents. They may be looked after by other members of their family or by a different family. 12 - respect for the views of the child ‘Children and Young People have the right to’ speak up and have their opinions listened to and be taken seriously by adults on things that affect them. 23 - children with disabilities ‘Children and Young People have the right to’ if they have any kind of disability, have special help to make sure they can join in with things.</p>

5.5 What likely impact will the policy/proposal have on Children’s Rights and Wellbeing? Either Positive, Negative or Neutral.

**Children Rights -**

	<b>Positive (Explain)</b>	<b>Negative (Explain)</b>
<b>Wellbeing Indicators/ Children’s Rights -</b>	Not applicable	A reduction in school staffing may be detrimental to delivery of service and current approaches to meeting Children’s Rights that have been mapped to wellbeing indicators.
	<b>Positive (Explain)</b>	<b>Negative (Explain)</b>
<b>Other Protected Characteristics</b>	Not applicable	Reductions in school staffing may result in a decrease in flexibility available at establishment level to provide enhanced and targeted support to children with additional support needs, care experienced learners, and learners impacted by poverty.

**Other Protected Characteristics**

Not applicable

5.6 What consultation or engagement has taken place with young people?

None.

5.7 If Negative impacts are identified how will these be mitigated, or the effect reduced?

Negative impact for protected characteristic groups will be mitigated through a greater focus on utilising existing resource and meeting needs through core staffing allocation. The proposed staffing reduction of 28 teachers will be carefully distributed across the 60 schools in North Ayrshire and will be aligned to and informed by school rolls. Within the overall staffing budget, the Service will also prioritise the allocation of teaching resources to support ASN, in response to the level of need across the Service. Key actions are outlined in the Education Service’s annual improvement plan for 2024-25, which include enhanced training and resources for practitioners to meet the needs of ASN learners within mainstream settings, further aligning Pupil Equity Fund and Strategic Equity Fund to prioritise supports that are most impactful and developing a Raising Attainment Strategy.

## Section 6 – Island Communities Impact (or Island Proofing)

Island Proofing is about considering the particular needs and circumstances of island communities when public sector organisations exercise their functions and make decisions. This has been added to the process of assessing the Council Plan and includes a range of issues such as access to services, digital connectivity, employment and access to education, transport and access to goods and services.

6.1 Do the intended outcomes of the proposal potentially differ or have a different impact for our Island Communities?

No, the intended outcomes of the proposal do not potentially differ or have a different impact for our Island Communities.

## Section 7 – The Consumer Duty

The Consumer Duty is about the impact of Council proposals on consumers in Scotland. A Consumer is an individual or a small business that purchases, uses or receives goods or services in Scotland, that are supplied either by a business or a public body – please see [What is the Consumer Duty](#).

7.1 Will your proposal impact on consumers?

No, the proposal will not impact on consumers

If no, please complete the 'Assessment not required' template by emailing [northayrshireperforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:northayrshireperforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

## Section 8 – Crosscutting Impacts

8.1 Have any cross-cutting impacts been identified from other Council Services or Partner Agencies (multiple discrimination or accumulated effects of multiple proposals on a protected characteristic group)?

No other cross-cutting impacts been identified.

## Section 9 – Outcome of the Assessment

There are four potential outcomes for this assessment which are:

- No major alterations to the policy assessed
- Adjust the policy as potential problems or missed opportunities identified.
- Continue the policy - justification required as potential for adverse impact has been identified.
- Stop and remove the policy or proposal, as potential for discrimination or other harmful impact.

9.1 Please detail the outcome of the assessment:

Continue the policy: the Impact Assessment identifies the potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality.

9.2 Please outline the justifications for continuing the policy/procedure.

North Ayrshire Council's budget pressures in both the short- and long-term necessitate the need for action now to achieve a balanced budget within 2025/26 as well as an ongoing focus on achieving financial sustainability. Consequently, whilst this saving is anticipated to have a negative impact on learners, including those with protected characteristics, it is recommended for implementation to support the Council to reach a balanced budget position for 2025/26 financial year. The proposed staffing reduction of 28 teachers will be carefully distributed across the 60 schools in North Ayrshire and will be aligned to and informed by school rolls. Within the overall staffing budget, the Service will also prioritise the allocation of teaching resources to support ASN, in response to the level of need across the Service. In addition, action taken through the Education Service's improvement plan will seek to mitigate impact where possible. As highlighted above, the broader context is critical. Our pupil-teacher ratio (12.4) is currently below the national average (13.3). Excluding the island authorities, there are only two LAs with a PTR that is lower than ours. We estimate that this proposal to reduce 28 teachers from August 2025 across mainstream primary and secondary schools would still result in a pupil-teacher ratio in 2025/26 that is significantly lower than the national average of 13.3 and the NAC figure ten years ago of 13.7. In part, this reflects projections that our pupil roll will also continue to decline. In addition to the above, we also have a higher percentage (17.3%) of P1-P3 pupils in classes of size 18 or fewer or in two teacher classes with a pupil teacher ratio of 18 or fewer than the national average (12.9%).

9.3 Please state the key issues, recommendations and future actions arising from the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Not applicable.

## Section 10 – Monitoring

10.1 Describe how you will monitor the impact of this policy for example, performance indicators used, other monitoring arrangements, who will monitor progress, criteria used to measure if outcomes are achieved, timescales including any future reviews of the impact of the proposal?

Impact will be monitored throughout the implementation of this savings proposal through a range of qualitative and quantitative measures managed by the service. These include feedback from learners, parents / carers, staff, heads of establishment, senior leaders as well as measures such as attendance, attainment (ACEL / INSIGHT data), and post-school destinations. The Education Service's annual Standards and Quality Report, which is published in the Autumn following each academic session, provides an overview of service performance against ambitions within our Service Improvement Plan.

## Section 11 – Sign Off

11.1 Head of Service who has approved the impact assessment.

Name: Andrew McClelland

Title: Head of Service (Education)

Date: 29 January 2025

## Section 12 – Publication

12.1 Following approval by Head of Service, completed Impact Assessments need to be published on the Council's External Website.

Please email: [northayrshireperforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:northayrshireperforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)