

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

FM Cleaning – Reduction in Schools/Early Years

This is a budget proposal.

Please insert Budget Reference number (if applicable) SD/ED/25/09
- 1.3 List of participants in the assessment

Carolyn Hope
- 1.4 Manager responsible for the impact assessment

Name: Carolyn Hope

Designation: Senior Manager
- 1.5 Timetable (should be started during the development phase of the proposal)

Date Assessment Started: 9 September 2024

Interim Review Date: 27 January 2025

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

Version: 6.0

Section 2 – Aims and Relevance

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

To reduce the cost of cleaning across schools and early years establishments.

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).

Public Health Scotland sets out guidance on how to manage the health of children and young people in educational settings. This mainly focuses on the control of the spread of germs and infection by maintaining an effective cleaning schedule. Direct engagement with relevant protected groups and stakeholders was carried out as part of the pre-budget engagement exercise.

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

No

- 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)
Age - Older people, children and young people – please identify which categories will be affected	Yes	Negative – children & young people may be exposed to more germs and bacteria if cleaning standards fall
Disability - Physical and Learning	Yes	Negative – children & young people with compromised immune systems or disabilities may be more vulnerable
Gender reassignment - Where a person is living as the opposite gender to their birth	No	No comment
Pregnancy and Maternity	No	No comment

Protected Characteristic	Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no)	Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral)
Race, ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins (including gypsy/ travellers, refugees and asylum seekers)	No	No comment
Religion or belief (includes religious and philosophical beliefs, including no belief)	No	No comment
Sex - Women and Men	Yes	<p>The majority of school cleaners are female therefore any reductions in hours would negatively impact this group.</p> <p>Consultation feedback also highlights “workforce is predominantly female & more likely to be working around caring responsibilities” - The State of Caring report (2023), highlights that 59% of all unpaid carers in Scotland are women, with 29% struggling to make ends meet, and 55% of unpaid carers struggling with their physical health; this infers that female employees are statistically more likely than men to have caring responsibilities, and that any health issues resulting from the policy could therefore have a greater impact on female workers.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no)	Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral)
Sexual Orientation - Lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	No comment
Marriage and Civil Partnership - marriage between same sex couples is included	No	No comment
Human Rights	No	No comment
Care Experienced - This term refers to anyone who is currently in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age and includes Kinship Care (other family members); Looked After at Home (with support from social work); Residential Care ; Foster Care ; Secure Care ; Adoption .	No	No comment
Other - Poverty, homelessness, ex-offenders, isolated rural communities, carers, part-time workers, or people in a marriage/civil partnership	Yes	Negative – children and young people living in poverty are more likely to not be immunised or suffer pre-existing health issues. Leave no one behind The Health Foundation highlights that relative and absolute inequalities have widened for immunisation uptake. A reduction in cleaning could result in more serious illness as well as loss of school days where the impact can be more acute for this group.

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

This proposal was part of the public consultation process for the Council's budget process and included feedback from Trade Union representatives. 714 Online Responses to the 'Schools and related services for Children and Young People' section of the Budget Consultation, of these responses 353 commented further on the proposal with the majority of individuals perceiving this as a negative proposal, reflecting possible impacts identified throughout this assessment such as increased risk of the spread of germs and diseases. This was also reflected in comments from face-to-face engagement sessions with groups with 34 out of 39 groups commenting on this proposal as above.

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?

None

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

None

- 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).

None

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

Cleaning standards in establishments will be audited and monitored. Performance of existing staff will be monitored to ensure the time allocated is deployed effectively and the use of time saving equipment and practices are in place.

- 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?

No

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).

No, the proposal does not have the potential to have a significant impact on 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

Not applicable

- 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.

Not applicable

- 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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Changed behaviours in learning establishments by children, young people and staff will help to target contracted cleaning in the most efficient and effective way. Equipment will be explored to ensure the cleaning staff are working as efficiently as possible using the tools at their disposal.

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?

All children and young people in schools c10,000 plus early years children.

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

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

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

Yes – disabled children/young people who may be more vulnerable in areas which are not cleaned as often as required.

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)
Wellbeing	Article 6 – Life, Survival and Development (to be kept safe from harm)

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

Children Rights -

Reduced cleaning may result in an increase in viruses/bacteria spreading; Children/young people with compromised immune systems or a disability may be more susceptible to illness.

Other Protected Characteristics

Not applicable

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

A public consultation as part of the budget process was issued. Members of the public and groups representing communities responded to this as well as Trade Union representatives.

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

Cleaning would be targeted to priority areas and supervision as well as efficient work practices/equipment will ensure productivity is maximised.

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

6.2 What are the potential impacts for our Island Communities?

Impacts are not different to mainland.

6.3 Please explain if the impacts are different for communities on different islands?

Not applicable

6.4 What consultation or engagement has taken place with the Island Communities?

The public consultation was open to all North Ayrshire residents.

6.5 How will you address any potential barriers or wider impacts for Island Communities as identified through this assessment?

I do not foresee any barriers or different impacts for 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?

Yes, this proposal will impact on consumers.

If no, please complete the 'Assessment not required' template by emailing northayrshireperforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

7.2 What are the impacts, if any, on consumers in general? Is it likely that consumers will experience harm because of this proposal?

A reduction in cleaning services may result in lower standards in establishments or the frequency of cleaning reducing.

7.3 What are the impacts if any, on consumers in vulnerable circumstances? Is it likely that consumers in vulnerable circumstances will experience harm because of this proposal? (please include any relevant evidence or engagement with consumers)

*Vulnerable circumstances may be temporary in nature and may or may not arise as a result of a consumer's protected characteristics. For more information, please see [page 31 of Consumer Scotland's draft guidance on the consumer duty](#).

Unless managed effectively, reduced cleaning may result in an increase in viruses spreading; Children/young people with compromised immune systems or a disability may be more susceptible to illness.

7.4 What consultation and engagement has taken place with consumers around your proposal?

This proposal was included in the council's public budget consultation process.

7.5 What alternative proposals are there that could improve outcomes for consumers and/or reduce harm to consumers? How do these compare to the original proposal?

Alternative approaches to cleaning and increased efficiency/performance monitoring may mitigate the impact of reduced hours.

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 cross-cutting issues identified.

- 8.2 If Crosscutting issues identified with other Services, what discussion/interaction has taken place to mitigate any potential negative impacts of accumulated proposals?

Not applicable

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.

As a proposed budget saving, there are some mitigations which can be put in place as noted at 7.3 above. Monitoring of staff hours and effectiveness of the cleaning and the use of cleaning equipment would be ongoing.

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

The service should work with Education staff, children and young people to change behaviours to reduce the required cleaning in establishments. This will allow cleaning staff to concentrate on targeted and high risk areas. Equipment will be reviewed to ensure the most efficient equipment is being used to maximise cleaning time and areas.

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?

The service officers will monitor the impact of any reduction in cleaning hours. Cleaning audits are carried out to measure cleaning standards as well as feedback from service users.

Section 11 – Sign Off

11.1 Head of Service who has approved the impact assessment.

Name: Sam Anson

Title: Executive Director (Education)

Date: 12 February 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