

## 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:	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
Related EIAs:	EIA Number: 671
EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	The Childcare Development Team and Early Years Advisory Team who support the County Council in meeting its statutory obligations, ensuring there is accessible early years and childcare provision for eligible children.
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	The current universal and extended Early Years Education entitlement offers 15 hours to all 3 and 4 year olds, and some eligible 2 year olds that meet the criteria, this was extended to working families of children 9 months to 2 years in April and September 2024. Working families of 3 and 4 year olds can access an additional 15 extended hours, up to 30 hours funded childcare. The entitlement will be expanded again in September 2025 to include 30 hours for eligible children from 9 months. The Council has a duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents who meet eligibility criteria. Free Early Years Education in Hampshire is delivered through a mixed market of Ofsted registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings which include maintained nursery schools and nursery units of primary schools; private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) day

	nurseries; preschools; and registered childminders. The Childcare Development Service, Early Years Advisory Team and Early Years Inclusion service work together delivering a core offer of support to 1,293 early years providers (nurseries, preschools and childminders), and vulnerable children to ensure access to places and administer the free early years education funding.
New/changed service/policy/project	In the 2023 Spring Budget, the DfE announced the following extension to the childcare offer to support parents to return to work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From April 2024, working parents of 2 year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare per week.</li> <li>• From September 2024, working parents of 9 month to 2 year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare per week.</li> <li>• From September 2025, all eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years will be able to access thirty free hours per week.</li> <li>• From September 2025, wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm for children of primary school age</li> </ul> Work is underway to plan for these changes to ensure service and market readiness in accordance with guidance from the DfE.

Engagement
The expansion of childcare support is a positive measure, therefore no consultation has been undertaken.

## Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

### Age

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Positive
Rationale	<p>The new government policy expands the current 30 hours entitlement to eligible working families/carers of children aged 9 months to 2 year olds. Families and carers will benefit from the extended free childcare offer if they currently use childcare or are planning to return to work. The childcare market is a mixed economy and some provision is for vulnerable families. The universal entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds to receive 15 hours free entitlement and low income families with eligible 2 year olds remains. The new government funding is to support children from working families.</p> <p>The governments Wraparound Childcare Programme is aimed to provide childcare from 8am to 6pm for all primary school aged children during term time.</p>
Mitigation	

### Disability

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The new younger years funding supports all children from working families. The universal early years entitlements continues for certain eligible families with low income and all children aged 3 and 4 year

	<p>olds for 15 hours per week over 38 weeks. Provision is required to be inclusive and respond to children's emerging or identified disability and/or Special Education Needs. The current Disability Access Funds and Special Education Needs Inclusion funds are a requirement to be available to support children's learning outcomes in their chosen provider.</p> <p>Early Years Education and childcare provision should be accessible, flexible, inclusive, and provided through a range of settings to meet parental demand. Provision is required to meet statutory duties and responsibilities under the reforms in the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations in relation to children in their care and children who may have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).</p> <p>All schools catering for primary aged children will have the opportunity to apply for wraparound funding. Provision is required to be inclusive and respond to children's emerging or identified disability and/or Special Education Needs.</p>
Mitigation	

## Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on gender reassignment and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Funding supports all working parents and carers. The expansion of the offer to eligible children from the age of 9 months to 2 years old and wraparound childcare will support families who may be considering returning to work following pregnancy and maternity/paternity leave.
Mitigation	

## Race

Impact on public	Neutral

Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on race and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on religion or belief and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on sex and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on sexual orientation and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on marriage and civil partnership and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Poverty

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on marriage and civil partnership and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

Mitigation	
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## Rurality

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>It is anticipated that families in rural areas will have access to the entitlement but may involve a level of travel and/or through use of registered childminders approved for the early years funding. The younger years funding does not extend to parents/carers that use nannies in the home.</p> <p>The funding for wraparound childcare will enable rural schools to provide childcare from 8am to 6pm where it was previously not economically viable to do so. The programme aims to support schools to make this sustainable in the long term.</p>
Mitigation	

Geographical Impact: All Hampshire

## Equality Statement

Additional information:

Further information on the extended childcare offer can be found here: [Free childcare](#)

And wraparound childcare here: [Wraparound childcare](#)

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: 00972

Date of production of EIA for publication: 24/09/2025