

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.

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Title:	Supporting People at Risk of Choking Policy
Related EIAs:	None
EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	Adults' Health and Care
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	This policy applies to adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of choking across all care settings, including domiciliary care, residential and nursing care, day services, Extra Care, Shared Lives, and respite care. It promotes early identification, person-centred care, and safeguarding, with a focus on inclusive practice and equitable outcomes.
New/changed service/policy/project	This EIA accompanies the review of the Supporting People at Risk of Choking Policy. The policy has been updated to reflect current best practice and multi-agency guidance, but its core purpose and scope remain unchanged. The previous version was published in January 2016, making this review essential to ensure alignment with current standards.

Engagement

A working group was convened to consult with representatives from Commissioning, Learning and Development, Shared Lives, Social Work, Reablement, and Hampshire County Council Care and Support. Feedback from stakeholders led to clearer guidance on care planning, inclusion of Eating and Drinking with Acknowledged Risk (EDAR), and strengthened safeguarding examples.

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The policy applies to adults of all ages who may be at increased risk of choking. While older adults are statistically more vulnerable, younger individuals with learning disabilities, neurological conditions, mental health needs, or behaviours such as pica also face significant risks. Hampshire has an older population profile, with 17.2% aged 70+ compared to 13.7% nationally, and 1.5% aged 90+ compared to 0.9% nationally (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Demography).</p> <p>Whereas the policy ensures age is not a barrier to safe, person-centred care by requiring staff to recognise choking risks across all age groups and avoid assumptions that only older adults are affected. Training and guidance promote equitable care planning and risk assessment for younger adults with complex needs, supporting consistent practice across diverse age ranges.</p> <p>Although the policy applies to all ages, it disproportionately benefits older adults due to higher choking risk.</p>
Mitigation	

Disability

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>People with certain medical conditions—including dysphagia (swallowing difficulties), pica (persistent eating of non-food substances), and neurological impairments—are at higher risk of choking. Individuals with learning disabilities, autism, or mental health disorders may also be affected due to behavioural factors. The policy promotes early identification, person-centred care, and safeguarding, ensuring that these risks are addressed consistently. According to the Hampshire JSNA, approximately 19% of adults report a disability or long-term condition, making this policy likely to have a disproportionate benefit for this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Staff will be supported to assess choking risks effectively for individuals with a range of disabilities, applying inclusive practice</p>

	and ensuring equitable care planning.
Mitigation	

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no evidence to suggest that individuals will be impacted based on gender identity. Impact is therefore neutral. Monitoring will continue to ensure any emerging needs or barriers are addressed promptly.
Mitigation	

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Choking risk may increase slightly during pregnancy, but the number of pregnant women among adults' social care service users is very low. Therefore, the impact of this policy on this group is deemed neutral. No specific mitigation is required.
Mitigation	

Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Choking risk may vary based on cultural dietary practices and food preparation methods. Language barriers can also affect how choking risks are assessed and understood. Hampshire's JSNA identifies increasing ethnic diversity, particularly in areas like Rushmoor and Basingstoke.</p> <p>Staff will ensure risk assessments are communicated clearly, using accessible language and translation support where needed, and cultural practices will be considered in care planning. There is no evidence to suggest that this policy will have a disproportionate impact on people of different ethnicities.</p>
Mitigation	

Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Religious dietary practices will be respected and incorporated into care planning to ensure culturally appropriate support. JSNA data highlights the importance of inclusive care for diverse communities. There is no evidence to suggest that religious practices increase choking risk.</p> <p>Staff are expected to respect religious needs in care planning and ensure these are reflected in risk mitigation strategies.</p>
Mitigation	

Sex

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Hampshire's population is approximately 51% female and 49% male (Office for National Statistics ONS data), providing context for the policy's potential impact.</p> <p>ONS data (2018–2022) shows men are at higher risk of choking-related death than women (59% vs 41%). This means the policy offers proportionately greater benefit to men, although it applies equally to all individuals. Public impact is therefore positive. Staff impact remains neutral.</p>
Mitigation	

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that sexual orientation affects choking risk or the application of this policy. Impact is therefore neutral.</p>
Mitigation	

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that marital or civil partnership status affects choking risk or the application of this policy. Impact is</p>

	therefore neutral.
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that this policy will disproportionately impact individuals based on socioeconomic status. However, people experiencing poverty may face practical barriers to implementing recommended choking risk strategies, such as affording modified diets or equipment. JSNA data highlights that deprivation and low income can affect health outcomes and access to care.</p> <p>Staff are expected to apply the policy consistently but should consider financial constraints when supporting individuals. Support plans may include referrals to community resources, funding support, or equipment loan schemes.</p>
Mitigation	

Rurality

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that this policy will disproportionately impact individuals based on rural location. The policy applies equally across all geographic areas.</p> <p>Staff in rural areas may face challenges accessing training or resources. To address this, remote training and digital access to resources are provided to ensure consistent implementation of the policy.</p>
Mitigation	

Geographical Impact:All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

This policy supports Hampshire County Council's commitment to safeguarding and promoting wellbeing for adults with care and support needs. It aligns with multi-agency guidance from the Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board and national best practice on managing choking risks.

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: 00999

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