

Equality Impact Assessment Template – Policy, function or strategy

This document should be completed when a new policy, function or strategy is introduced or when a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy is recommended.

1. Policy, function or strategy		
a.	Name/description of the policy, function or strategy ¹	Implementation of the Early Years Admissions Policy
b.	Responsible organisation(s)/Lead Service	Education Services
c.	Lead Officer	Yvonne Gallacher, Quality Improvement Manager
d.	Date of Impact Assessment	27.09.2024
e.	Partners/other Services involved in the development of the policy, function or strategy	Heads/Managers of Early Year Establishments including Funded Providers and Childminders, Virtual Head Teacher (Education representative for “The Promise” and the Inclusion Officer Education.
f.	Is the policy, function or strategy?	<input type="checkbox"/> New
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviewed/Revised
g.	What is the purpose of the policy, function or strategy (include details of any new legislation which prompted the introduction of the policy, function or strategy or the substantive change to the policy, function or strategy)?	The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is a fair and equitable process for the allocation of Early Years places for children who are entitled to their funded hours and children who are identified ‘in need’. The review of the policy will also include a change to the timescale of Early Learning and Childcare Place allocation, from the current allocation of the month after their second/third birthday to the term after. This is in

¹ Please attach details of the policy, function or strategy to this Template

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		accordance with Children and Young People (Scotland Act) 2014 – Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance.
h.	What are the intended outcomes of the policy, function or strategy?	To ensure that all eligible children are allocated an Early Learning and Childcare place accordance section 34 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000 and under section 96(3) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) in relation to Part 6 of the Act on early learning and childcare and in accordance with the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.
i.	Geographical area (Inverclyde-wide or a specific location)	Across all areas in Inverclyde
j.	Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy impact on?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Foster good relations between people from different groups
k.	Will those who may be directly or indirectly affected by the policy, function or strategy be involved in its development?	Yes, Parents/Carers and Heads of establishments have been consulted regarding the Early Years Admissions Policy and Process, their views continue to be listened to as part of the Policy development.

2. Does the policy, function or strategy impact on:		
	Yes	No
a. Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010:	x	

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Age; Care experienced; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation (see Section 3)		
b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty ² (see Section 6)	x	
c. Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 ³ (see Section 7)	x	
d. Council Plan 2023/28 ⁴ (see Section 8)	x	
3. If 'Yes' is selected for any part of Section 2, please populate the other relevant Sections of this Template.		
4. If 'No' is selected for <u>every part</u> of Section 2, please state the reasons for this.		
<p>Please sign below and email a copy of this Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer:</p> <p><u>karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk</u></p>		
Signature:	Date:	

3. Impact – Protected Characteristics

² [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies](#)
³ [Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33](#)
⁴ [Council Plan 2023/28](#)

Which of the Protected Characteristics will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?						
Protected Characteristic	Impact					Reasons/Comments
	Positive		Neutral	Negative		
	High	Low			High	Low
Age				x		The review of Early years admissions affects children from birth to school age. Currently children receive an entitled place the month after their second/ third birthday, the review of this policy will propose a change to allocations to a place being provided to children the month after their second birthday in accordance with section 34 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 and under section 96(3) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) in relation to Part 6 of the Act on early learning and childcare.
Care experienced	x					The proposal will positively impact on children who are Care Experience including criteria within banding procedure, to consider prioritisation of an Early Learning and Childcare place which supports the family network.
Disability	x				X	<p>The proposed changes to the ELC Admissions Policy will positively impact on children who are not yet attending an ELC setting who have identified additional support needs as they will be considered for assessment prior to the allocation of an ELC place. This will ensure that places allocated to children have considered the needs of children and ensure that the allocation of the ELC establishment has considered the child's needs.</p> <p>There may be some disadvantage to parents who have a disability and thus on a lower income, because they may access 1140 hours later than previously, however this is in line with the national entitlement and the previous position</p>

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Gender Reassignment			=			
Marriage and Civil Partnership			=			
Pregnancy and Maternity			=			
Race			=			
Religion and Belief			=			
Sex				x		The potential impact of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) admissions being delayed until the term after a child's second or third birthday, rather than immediately after their birthday, could disproportionately affect women, who make up the majority of primary caregivers and the workforce within this group. This delay could lead to prolonged care responsibilities for mothers/carers who may need to extend their time out of the workforce or adjust their work hours to provide continued childcare. This could hinder their career progression, income potential, and financial independence.
Sexual Orientation			=			
Other groups to consider			=			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers 			=			

Classification : Official

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Armed Forces Covenant Duty 						
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4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster good relations between people from different groups

5. Impact – Groups	
From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.	
Positive impact + <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i>	Negative impact - <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i>
<u>Age</u>	Age

	<p>The review of Early years admissions affects children from birth to school age. Currently children receive an entitled place the month after their second or third birthday the review to this policy will allocate a place to children the term after their second birthday in accordance with The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 1) Order 2019 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Order 2019.</p> <p>Due to the change in the Early Years Admission Policy, where children will now receive a place only from the term after their second or third birthday, there may be a negative impact on some children who would have previously received a place earlier.</p>
<p>Care experienced</p> <p>The proposal will positively impact on children who are Care Experience including criteria within banding procedure, to consider prioritisation of an Early Learning and Childcare place which supports the family network.</p>	<p>Care experienced</p>
<p>Disability</p> <p>Children who are not yet attending an ELC setting who have identified additional support needs will be considered for assessment (where appropriate) prior to the allocation of an ELC place. This will ensure that places allocated to children have considered their individual needs.</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>Parents with a disability may have more economic and practical challenges. The delay to the start of their childcare may prove to be more expensive or cause greater practical challenges.</p>

Sex	Sex The potential impact of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) admissions being delayed until the term after a child's second or third birthday, rather than immediately after their birthday, could disproportionately affect women, who make up the majority of primary caregivers and the workforce within this group. This delay could lead to prolonged care responsibilities for mothers/carers who may need to extend their time out of the workforce or adjust their work hours to provide continued childcare. This could hinder their career progression, income potential, and financial independence.
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6. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will the policy, function or strategy have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage?

<p align="center">Positive impact +</p>	<p align="center">Neutral impact =</p>	<p align="center">Negative impact -</p>
<p>Consistency and Predictability: If children receive a place the term after their third birthday (as opposed to the month after), it provides a consistent and structured entry point for early education. This may allow families to plan ahead and reduces confusion about when their child can start.</p> <p>Improved Readiness and Socialisation: A term-based start date means children will enter the system alongside peers who are at a similar stage of development, promoting better social integration, learning, and emotional readiness.</p> <p>Potential for More Effective Use of Resources: The Local authority and early years providers can plan staffing, resources, and spaces more effectively with a term-based system. This could lead to more stable and higher-quality services.</p> <p>Prioritisation: Children who are Care Experienced will have an identified criteria to support the allocation of an Early Years Place.</p>	<p>Equity of Opportunity The review of Early years admissions affects children from birth to school age. Currently children receive an entitled place the month after their second or third birthday the review to this policy will allocate a place to children the month after their second birthday in accordance with section 34 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000 and under section 96(3) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) in relation to Part 6 of the Act on early learning and childcare. The introduction of expanded eligibility for deferred entry from 1 August 2023 will ensure that all eligible children have the option to defer their school start and automatically access an additional year of funded early learning and childcare. This will guarantee that children who begin in the term after their second or third birthday will still have the option to receive their full early learning and childcare entitlement.</p>	<p>Allocating early years places from the term after children’s second/third birthday could provide administrative and planning benefits but may hinder efforts to reduce socio-economic disparities by delaying access for some children. Allowing children to start sooner could better support "fairer Scotland" duties by ensuring timely access to early learning and reducing the risk of widening socio-economic gaps.</p>

Where required, children with identified Additional Support Needs, will be supported through the admissions process.		
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Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.

Ensuring Access to Quality Early Learning

The admissions process is a fair and transparent system for allocating places to early learning and childcare. By providing access to ELC in accordance with section 34 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000 and under section 96(3) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) in relation to Part 6 of the Act on early learning and childcare, children from disadvantaged backgrounds will benefit from high-quality early learning and childcare. This is crucial for supporting language, cognitive, and social development, which can help narrow the developmental gap between children from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Supporting Children with socio-economic disadvantage

The Early Years Admissions policy incorporates access for children who have been identified as requiring an earlier place, this is allocated through a multi-agency admissions panel.

Promoting Parental Employment and Education

For families in lower-income households, the availability of funded ELC can make it easier for parents or guardians to pursue employment, training, or education opportunities. This can help lift families out of poverty, thereby reducing socio-economic inequalities over time.

Enhancing Social Integration and Learning Opportunities

Access to ELC settings provides children with opportunities to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, promoting social skills, empathy, and understanding. Early exposure to a variety of experiences and learning opportunities helps to level the playing field, ensuring all children have a strong foundation before entering formal schooling.

Which Themes from the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 will the policy, function or strategy impact on?

x <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 1: Empowered people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities can have their voices heard, and influence the places and services that affect them • Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced
x <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 2: Working people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people will be in sustained employment, with fair pay and conditions • Poverty related gaps are addressed, so young people can have the skills for learning, life and work • Businesses are supported and encouraged to reduce their carbon footprint and develop green jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 3: Healthy people and places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People live longer and healthier lives • Supportive systems are in place to prevent alcohol and drug misuse • Our natural capital is looked after, and we are effectively adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change
x <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 4: A supportive place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable adults and children are protected and supported, ensuring they can live safely and independently • We recognise where people are affected by trauma, and respond in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery • Public protection and community safety are improved through targeting our resources to reduce the risk of offending and harm
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 5: A thriving place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in our working age population by encouraging people to stay here, and attracting new people to settle here • Development of strong community-based services that respond to local need • Homes are energy efficient and fuel poverty is reduced • Increased use of active travel and sustainable transport options • Easy access to attractive and safe public spaces, and high-quality arts and cultural opportunities

Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/22 Themes.

Theme 1

- Our children and young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education.
 - Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced
 - Our most vulnerable families are safeguarded and supported
 - Parents/carers voices are listened to and inform Policy and Process development
- Theme 2**
- All eligible children have access to Early Learning and Childcare which provides parents/carers opportunities for sustained employment through the provision of childcare.
 - Children and young people are developing skills for learning, life and work.
- Theme 4**
- Vulnerable children are prioritised for an ELC place through ELC Admissions Policy to ensure they are protected and safe
 - Children with an identified ASN need supported to ensure Early Learning and Childcare provision meets their needs.

8. Impact – Council Plan 2023/28

Which Themes from the Council Plan 2023/28 will the policy, function or strategy impact on?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 1: People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education • Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced • People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing • More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions • Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 2: Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our strategic housing function is robust• Our economy and skills base are developed• We have a sufficient supply of business premises• Our natural environment is protected
X <input type="checkbox"/>	Theme 3: Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money• Our employees are supported and developed

Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the Council Plan 2023/28 Themes.

Theme 1

- Our children and young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education.
- Children identified as the most vulnerable are prioritised for an ELC place through ELC Admissions Policy to ensure they are safe guarded and protected.
- Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are support through the provision of Early Learning and childcare.
- Children with an identified ASN need are supported to ensure Early Learning and Childcare provision meets their needs.

Theme 3

- Implementing Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) admissions the term after a child’s second or third birthday, rather than the month after, can provide better value for the Council by optimising resource allocation and ensuring more efficient use of staff and facilities. This approach allows the Council to plan for a smoother, more predictable intake of children, balancing class sizes and avoiding the administrative complexities of staggered individual admissions. Additionally, it reduces the need for frequent adjustments to staffing levels and infrastructure, improving operational efficiency. This could lead to cost savings while still delivering high-quality childcare services that meet the needs of families within the community.
- This may have an impact on our employees who may now have to pay for childcare until the term after their child’s third birthday.

9. Evidence

What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the policy, function or strategy?

Note: Evidence could include information from consultations, surveys, the Citizens’ Panel, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, Officers’ knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, and local and national groups.

Evidence	Details
<p>Consultation/engagement (including any carried out while developing the policy, function or strategy)</p>	<p>Feedback has been undertaken with stakeholders e.g. feedback from parents/carers regarding their experience of the Admission Policy and Process and the proposed implementation of the term after a child’s second//third birthday.</p> <p>Feedback has been undertaken with Heads of Early Years/ Managers and Childminders, regarding their experience of the Admission Policy and Process and the proposed implementation of the term after a child’s second/third birthday.</p> <p>Consultation with Education Services Inclusion Officer on banding criteria for children with Additional Support Needs.</p> <p>Consultation with Education representative for ‘The Promise’ (Head of Virtual Schools) on banding criteria for children who have been in Kinship Care/Adopted.</p>
<p>Research</p>	<p>early-learning-childcare-statutory-guidance.pdf</p>
<p>Officers’ knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)</p>	<p>Consultation with Heads of Establishment, Early Years/ Managers and Childminders on the Early Years Admissions Policy and Process.</p> <p>Consultation with Early Learning and Childcare Manager and Early Years team on the Admissions Procedures.</p>

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	<p>Consultation with Education Services Inclusion Officer on banding criteria for children with Additional Support Needs</p> <p>Consultation with Education representative for 'The Promise' (Head of Virtual Schools) on banding criteria for children who have been in Kinship Care/Adopted.</p> <p>Officers work as part of a network and other authorities have now adopted a similar approach.</p>
Equalities monitoring data	Approximately 47% of our young people and families live in SIMD quintile 1
User feedback (including complaints)	Consultation with Parents and Carers on the review of the Admission Policy and Process including the impact of the term after second/third birthday.
Stakeholders	N/A
Other	We are in ongoing dialogue with partner providers about this policy.
Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?	N/A

10. Consequences of Analysis

What steps will you take in response to the findings of your analysis? Please select at least one of the following and provide a brief explanation.

a.	Continue development with no changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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b.	Continue development with minor alterations	x <input type="checkbox"/>	Following consultation with Education colleagues and with Parents/Carers, changes have been made to the Admission Policy. Feedback from service users made several recommendations which are being considered to improve the current processes and communication systems. Following service user feedback, a change to the admissions of children and their termly start date is planned for implementation. The admission Policy and process will be developed taking account of this feedback. And will be incorporated for implementation from April 2025 in line with annual admissions.
c.	Continue development with major changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d.	Discontinue development and consider alternatives (where relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How will the effect of the policy, function or strategy be monitored following implementation?

The ELC Admissions policy will be reviewed biannually (every 2 Years) and any required changes will be brought to Education and Communities Committee for approval.

When is the policy, function or strategy due to be implemented?

April 2025

When will the policy, function or strategy be reviewed?

April 2027

What resources are available for the implementation of the policy, function or strategy? Have these resources changed?

The Early Years Central team have identified an action plan for implementation of changes based on consultation feedback. There are no resource implications for required changes and any costs will be contained within the existing ELC budget.

11. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of the policy, function or strategy.

Due to the change in the Early Years Admission Policy, where children will now receive a place only from the term after their second /third birthday, there may be a negative impact on children who would have previously received a place earlier. Actions that will be taken to mitigate this are:

- A continued commitment from Education Services to ensure that all parents of two year old children who are entitled to an Early Learning and Childcare place are contacted to ensure they are applying when their child is eligible. This will ensure that all eligible two-year-old children receive a place at the point of eligibility.
- The Early Years admissions process includes an admissions panel that supports children identified as 'in need.' This approach ensures early identification of the most vulnerable children and offers a pathway for them to be referred for an early placement if they meet the criteria. This process allows children to begin sooner, supporting the "Fairer Scotland" duties by ensuring timely access to early learning and childcare, and helps to minimise socio-economic disparities.
- All eligible children are allocated an Early Learning and Childcare place accordance section 34 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 and under section 96(3) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) in relation to Part 6 of the Act on early learning and childcare and in accordance with the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. The introduction of expanded eligibility for deferred entry from 1 August 2023, will ensure that all eligible children have the option to defer their school start and automatically access an additional year of funded early learning and childcare. This will guarantee that children who begin in the term after their second or third birthday will still have the option to receive their full early learning and childcare entitlement.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:	
Name:	Yvonne Gallacher
Position:	Quality Improvement Manager
Date:	27.09.2024
Authorised by:	
Name:	Ruth Binks
Position:	Corporate Director for Education Communities and Organisational Development
Date:	9.10.24

Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer at karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.