

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	Crisis Grant – one-off fuel component
b.	Responsible organisation(s)/Lead Service	Finance Services
c.	Lead Officer	Tracy Bunton, Revenues and Benefits Manager
d.	Date of Impact Assessment	20 th January 2025
e.	Partners/other Services involved in the development of the policy, function or strategy	Anti-Poverty Officer Group; Scottish Government Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF); Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman
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)?	To support eligible low-income working aged households in crisis, and who have pre-payment meters, with a one-off payment for fuel costs. The payment is an additional component to the standard SWF crisis grant.
h.	What are the intended outcomes of the policy, function or strategy?	The one-off payment will be made to those who are approved for a SWF crisis grant for fuel costs and who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Scottish Government Pension Age Winter Fuel Payment (PAWFP) or the Inverclyde Council Pension Age Fuel Payment.

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

i.	Geographical area (Inverclyde-wide or a specific location)	Inverclyde-wide	
j.	Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy impact on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
		X	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?	No	

2. Does the policy, function or strategy impact on:		
	Yes	No
a. Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Care experienced; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation (see Section 3)	X	
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	

² [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies](#)

³ [Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33](#)

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						
Which of the Protected Characteristics will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?						
	Impact					
Protected Characteristic	Positive		Neutral	Negative		Reasons/Comments
	High	Low		High	Low	
Age	X					There is no age threshold for SWF crisis grants therefore it will support working age people who have not received additional support for fuel costs.

⁴ [Council Plan 2023/28](#)

Classification: Official

Care experienced.			X			
Disability	X					The Scottish Social Security Agency makes a one-off payment each Winter (£58.75 in 2025) to working aged people in receipt of disability related benefits and to working aged families with disabled children. The one-off crisis grant additional fuel component will be a further support for these groups who apply and qualify for the SWF crisis grant.
Gender Reassignment			X			
Marriage and Civil Partnership			X			
Pregnancy and Maternity			X			
Race			X			
Religion and Belief			X			
Sex			X			
Sexual Orientation			X			

Classification: Official

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

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

<p><u>Age</u>: Working aged people in fuel crisis who qualify for SWF crisis grants for fuel costs and who do not meet the qualifying age threshold for the PAWFP or the Inverclyde Council Pension Age Fuel Payment will be supported.</p> <p><u>Disability</u>: Working aged people and working aged families with disabled children who receive disability related benefits in fuel crisis who qualify for SWF crisis grants for fuel costs will receive additional support on top of statutory support.</p>	
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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>Positive impact +</p>	<p>Neutral impact =</p>	<p>Negative impact -</p>
<p>X</p>		
<p>Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.</p> <p>Fuel costs have risen faster than welfare benefit increases. The Scottish Social Security Agency makes a one-off payment each Winter (of £58.75 in 2025) to working aged people in receipt of disability related benefits and to working aged families with disabled children. However, those who do not meet this criterion do not receive help towards fuel costs. A one-off crisis grant additional fuel component will assist the financial position of those who will qualify, which is recognised as being a driver to improve inequalities of outcome.</p>		

7. Impact – Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33

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

<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
<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
<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 4: The aim of the Policy is to free up or increase household income to meet the fuel bills of working age people during the Winter of 2024/25. The provision of the payment provides financial support to all eligible households at the qualifying date. Working age people who tend to require more fuel will therefore be supported.

Theme 5: The provision of the credit reduces fuel poverty and signals inclusivity, promoting Inverclyde as a good place to live.

8. Impact – Council Plan 2023/28

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

X	<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
□	<p>Theme 2: Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable • 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
□	<p>Theme 3: Performance</p> <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: The aim of the Policy is to increase income over Winter 2024/25, aiding working age people who do not qualify for the PAWFP or the Inverclyde Council Pension Age fuel payment.

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
Consultation/engagement (including any carried out while developing the policy, function or strategy)	The Policy was agreed following engagement with experienced Officers who administer the SWF and who are active members of the Financial Inclusion Partnership and the Child Poverty Action Group. The Anti-Poverty Officer Group was consulted. All those consulted indicated their support for the Policy.
Research	SWF grant payment records were examined to project the number of applicants who may be eligible for the payment.
Officers’ knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)	Officer experience of delivering the SWF will support the implementation of the Crisis Grant one-off fuel component.
Equalities monitoring data	200 SWF grant recipients for the period until 31 March 2025 and a further 1,100 if continued throughout 2025/26.

User feedback (including complaints)	
Stakeholders Other	
Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?	No

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	X	Working aged people in fuel crisis and who do not meet the age threshold for PAWFP or the Inverclyde Council Pension Age Fuel Payment may be disproportionately negatively affected by fuel costs and experience fuel poverty.
b.	Continue development with minor alterations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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?
Repeat Crisis Grant applications and expenditure will be monitored following the introduction of the payment of the one-off fuel component.

When is the policy, function or strategy due to be implemented?
In Winter 2024/25, following approval by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2025.

When will the policy, function or strategy be reviewed?
The Policy will be reviewed later in 2025 in conjunction with the development of proposals for the balance of the Anti-Poverty Heating Support Fund which was approved at the 19 November 2024 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

What resources are available for the implementation of the policy, function or strategy? Have these resources changed?
Delivery will be carried out by existing resources.

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.

Awareness of the additional provision may increase speculative SWF applications. The volume of SWF applications is closely monitored so if an increase in failed or withdrawn applications is experienced, consideration will be given to introducing additional messaging, which is already

lengthy on the telephone application line, to explain qualifying criteria. The Council's Customer Service Centre and the Advice First service can both provide support to understand the qualifying criteria.

This document should be cross-referenced with the Equality Impact Assessment entitled *Inverclyde Council Anti-Poverty Winter Fuel Payment*.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:	
Name:	Tracy Bunton
Position:	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Date:	20 th January 2025
Authorised by:	
Name:	Alan Puckrin
Position:	Chief Financial Officer
Date:	21 st January 2025

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