

# Helping to make an impact

## Equality Assessment (EA) Form

## INITIAL SCREENING – STAGE 1 (See Guidance information)

**As a public authority we need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity.**

**Please complete the following questions to determine whether a Full Equality Assessment is required.**

<b>Name of policy, strategy or function: Proposed reduction in early years budgets, 2013-14</b>	<b>Ref: CYPF-1113BU</b>
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<b>Responsible Officer: Richard King</b>	<b>Role: Children’s Centre Area Manager (East)</b>
<b>Directorate: Children Young People &amp; Families</b>	<b>Assessment Date: November 2013</b>

<b>Is this a:</b>	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Function <b>X</b>	Service <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is this:</b>	New or Proposed <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed <b>X</b>	Is Changing <input type="checkbox"/>	

### 1. What are the main aims, objectives of the policy, strategy, function or service and the intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it

**Aims:** The Early Years Service aim to ensure delivery of the statutory duty for sufficiency and sustainability of high quality affordable childcare and early education places for 0-5 year olds across the city for parents in work or training for work as far as is reasonably practicable. This function is focussed on the availability of and access to high quality, inclusive and affordable childcare and education places through the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) childcare sectors. With the introduction of “More Great Childcare” support for settings is concentrated only on settings judged “adequate” or “requiring improvement” by OFSTED. The Early Years and Childcare Service is required to manage the childcare market by providing support services and appropriate mandatory and targeted training to childcare providers to ensure that the function is maintained. This service is responsible for the duty that all 3/4 year olds have access to 15 free hours of high quality early education, by 2014 this will also include 10,500 places for vulnerable 2 year olds – current delivery is around 2800 places.

The savings proposal for £1,000,000 in 2014-15 affects the above services and are broken down as follows –

1. Workforce development - a reduction of £200,000
2. Support to settings regarding their financial sustainability - £250,000
3. First Steps Networks - a commissioned service that supports childminders including raising quality - £200,000
4. The Corporate Childcare places Family Support budgets providing childcare for the most vulnerable children - £350,000 in total

**Objectives:** The objective of the above proposal is to adapt to changing priorities and statutory responsibilities for the use of funding and to streamline the support that the Early Years Service provide so as to provide better value for money for City Council funding.

1. There is no longer a statutory requirement to support the development of early years practitioners to gain early years professional / graduate leader status. The City Council supported those part way through their training / courses but these have now ceased.
2. There are less applications for support from nursery settings for sustainability funding as settings have been provided with support from Early Years Consultants to achieve sustainability. The combination of this and more work by the local authority to achieve greater sustainability within their own settings means that there can be a reduction in this budget for 2014-15 with no negative impact. Settings that require support will receive it.
3. The First Steps Networks service has been re-commissioned and the proposed savings are as a result of the removal of a duplication of support services to childminders and a re-profiling of the service.
4. The Childcare and Family Support budgets are being reduced due to the increase in funding for Two year Old places with effect from 2013 and 2014. However funding will remain across the areas covered by these budgets: childcare support for children that are looked after or on child protection plans or those needing placements within nurseries or with childminders as part of an integrated support package. In many cases this support is now concentrated on children aged under two due to higher numbers of children aged two years and over receiving 15 hours early education entitlement and the universal entitlement for three / four year olds.

**Outcomes:** These proposals will result in the continuation of support to settings and families that are most in need. There will be no changes in how the support is operated or the decision making processes surrounding sustainability and childcare / family support in relation to City Council funding. The increase in two year old places means that children in vulnerable circumstances are being targeted using national criteria and is being implemented efficiently through the headcount process that is used for the universal entitlement for three and four year olds. Support systems have been developed for two year olds receiving their 15 hours entitlement to receive additional family support through the children's centres localities and related Team Around the Family meetings.

**Benefits:** Children, families and childcare settings including childminders will continue to receive targeted support as and when necessary and it is not expected that there will be a negative impact. These proposals generate cashable savings for Birmingham City Council that contribute to the Authority's savings plan.

## 2. Explain how the main aims of the policy, strategy, function or service will demonstrate due regard to the aims of the General Duty?

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation? **X**
2. Advance equality of opportunity? **X**
3. Foster good relations? **X**
4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? **X**
5. Encourage participation of disabled people? **X**
6. Consider more favourable treatment of disabled people? **X**

The proposed budget reductions will not have a negative effect with regards to the aims of the General Duty. The childcare budgets, and the Two Year old places are targetted towards children most in need and a large proportion of the funding aimed at supporting settings towards financial sustainability, and for supporting childminders, indirectly is benefitting families on state benefits and lower incomes who require targeted services from the Directorate.

**3. What does your current data tell you about who your policy, strategy, function or service may affect:**

Service users	Yes X	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Employees	Yes X	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Wider community	Yes X	No <input type="checkbox"/>

**Please provide an explanation for your 'Yes' or 'No' answer**

**Service Users**

These proposals should not affect the children and families supported by BCC childcare and family support funding. Whilst being reduced this is not being removed, additionally there are no proposals for reductions in the service and staffing from children's centres. These proposals coincide with an increase in funding for vulnerable two years who will also receive other support where necessary through integrated services at locality level.

**Employees**

There are no reductions in staffing linked to these proposals. The decision to cease support to early years practitioners to become graduate leaders was communicated to the early years sector earlier this year and those that were being supported in training have now completed.

**Wider community**

There will continue to be a process for settings to apply for sustainability funding and a budget of £1.2m will remain.

First Steps Network has already been remodelled and commissioned with incremental savings incorporated within this. Childminders and the vulnerable children with whom they are involved will have support available from the organisations commissioned to provide the service.

**4. Are there any aspects of the policy, strategy, function or service, including how it is delivered, or accessed, that could contribute to inequality? (including direct or indirect discrimination to service users or employees)**

Yes  No X

**Please provide an explanation for your 'Yes' or 'No' answer**

There are no changes in criteria eg for childcare places as a result of these changes. In fact, there will be more children receiving an Early Education Entitlement (EEE) during 2014-15 due to a Government decision and such support is being targeted. There are no reductions in funding that are affecting children's centres and family support teams so such children should not be adversely affected if support additional to EEE is required.

**5. Will the policy, strategy, function or service, have an adverse (negative) impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?**

Yes

No

**Please provide an explanation for your 'Yes' or 'No' answer**

These reductions in budget are a logical progression as a result of changes in Government policy (Graduate trainees and support for two year olds) and local authority processes and economic factors (sustainability and support to childminders). There should be no negative effects for employees nor service users. In the case of service users the consolidation of locality working for children's centres and the family support and safeguarding teams as the latter have joined the 14 hubs situated in children's centres will all contribute to a better service for families with children aged 0-5 years.

**6. Is an Equality Assessment required?**

If your answer to question 2 has identified potential adverse impact and you have answered '**yes**' to any of the following questions 3, 4, or 5, then you should carry out a Full Equality Assessment.

Does the Policy, Strategy, Function or Service require a Full Equality Assessment? **Yes**  **No**

If a Full Equality Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the assessment with service managers in your service area as well as the Directorate Contact Officer.

If a Full Equality Assessment is **Not** required, please sign the declaration and complete the Summary statement below, then forward a copy of the Initial Screening to your Directorate Contact Officer

If a Full Equality Assessment **Is** required, you will need to sign the declaration and complete the Summary statement below, detailing why the Policy, Strategy, Function or Service is moving to a Full Equality Assessment. Then continue with your Assessment

**DECLARATION**

**A Full Equality Assessment not required, the Initial Screening has demonstrated that the Policy, Strategy, Function or Service is robust; there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.**

Chairperson: Richard J King

Summary statement: The proposed budget reduction of £1,000,000 and the reasoning behind this will not create a negative impact in terms of service to users or for employees

Sign-off Date: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013

**Quality check: The screening document has been checked using the agreed audit arrangements in the Directorate:**

<p>Name: (Officer/Group carrying out the Quality Check)</p> <p>Veronika Quintyne</p> <p>Directorate: CYPF</p> <p>Contact number: 0121 464 3073</p>	<p>Date undertaken: 25/11/2013</p>	<p>Screening review statement:</p> <p>Although there is a proposal for a budget saving covering period 2013 /2014, the following mitigates against the need to complete a full stage 2 equality assessment:</p> <p>There is provision for the most vulnerable children including an: increase in two year old places using national criteria. . It is anticipated more children will receive an Early Education Entitlement following government policy on a targeted basis.</p> <p>There is provision for looked after children and children on child protection plans, or requiring integrated support packages.</p> <p>There are to be no reductions in staffing in this period.</p> <p>Childcare settings will still be able to apply for sustainability funding</p> <p>Locality working will continue to provide for a better provision of services through children centre hubs.</p>
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## Equality Assessment Task Group Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role on Task Group</u> (e.g. service user, manager or service specialist)	<u>Contact Number</u>
1. Chairperson Richard King	Children's Centres Area Manager	0121 464 4300
2. Karen Pearson	Head of Service - Safeguarding and Family Support North - Early Years Citywide	0121 675 7135