



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to [equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk). Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

## Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

**Proposal/Brief Title:** Buckinghamshire Education Strategy 2022-27

**OneDrive link to report/policy:** Copy of draft strategy attached.

### Related policies:

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inclusion Strategy 2021 - 2023

The Buckinghamshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Education Sufficiency Strategy 2022 - 2027

Early Help Partnership Strategy 2022 – 2025

Education Standards Report 2020-21

**Date:** April 2022 (updated Oct 2022)

**Type of strategy, policy, project or service:** strategy

Please tick one of the following:

- ☐ Existing
- ☐ New or proposed
- ☒ **Changing, update or revision**
- ☐ Other (please explain)

### This assessment was created by:

Name: Maria Edmonds

Job Title: Education Strategy Manager

Email address: maria.edmonds@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

### Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The Education Strategy is a revision of the Education and Skills Strategy that was ratified in 2018. Following further collaboration and engagement with wide range of partners, the Strategy has been refreshed to show the progress made and to highlight the priority areas that need focus on in the future, these being:

1. Access to and availability of high-quality educational places
2. Preparing our young learners to reach their potential as adults
3. Collaborative school improvement to raise standards
4. Embedding a climate of inclusion
5. Supporting the emotional health and well-being of children and young people



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

The proposal is to ratify the refreshed strategy as the Buckinghamshire Education Strategy for 2022-27.

## **What outcomes do we want to achieve?**

The vision of the Strategy is to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so they can realise their potential whatever their starting point, with the focus on addressing the differential of experience between the vulnerable children in Buckinghamshire and their peers. Children and young people are at the heart of the Education Strategy as well as that of the Council's Children's and Young People's Plan and Children's Services priorities.

The Strategy will sit alongside other key strategies that support our broader ambitions for children and young people in Buckinghamshire e.g. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy, The Early Help Partnership Strategy, as well as other key initiatives such as the Levelling up Agenda within Buckinghamshire and the County's approach to promoting Health and Wellbeing. The Strategy also takes into account the recently published Green paper regarding SEND and Alternative Education.

## **Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? No**

Please explain your answer:

The Strategy will focus on addressing 5 specific priority areas:

- 1) Access to and availability of high -quality educational places
- 2) Preparing our learners to reach their potential as adults
- 3) Collaborative school improvement to raise standards
- 4) Embedding a climate of inclusion
- 5) Supporting the emotional health and well- being of all children and young people

## **Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? No**

Please explain your answer:

The intention of the Strategy is to build on the progress made through the continuous improvement in educational provision in Buckinghamshire. The services that were in place in 2018 to support schools and early years settings with the previous strategy will remain.

## **Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure?**

Yes – the proposal seeks to review the current strategy.

Please explain your answer:

A strategy for Education and Skills was developed for Buckinghamshire in 2018 as a result of collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders. It was designed to act as a compass for implementing continuous improvement in educational provision in Buckinghamshire until 2022, which is when it needed to be reviewed and refreshed. This is timely given the



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

recent unprecedented period of uncertainty and disruption to education caused by the Pandemic.

## **Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community?**

No

Please explain your answer:

The Strategy sets out a direction of travel for educational provision within Buckinghamshire, with the principal aim of enabling all children and young people to achieve the best outcomes. No service is impacted and service users i.e., schools, settings and children and young people should benefit from the intentions set out within the Education Strategy.

## **Does this proposal affect employees?**

No

Please explain your answer:

Service areas within the Council and employees within maintained schools will not be impacted by the Strategy.

## **Will employees require training to deliver this proposal?**

No

Please explain your answer:

Service areas within the Council and school employees within maintained schools will not require training to deliver the Strategy specifically.

## **Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future?**

Yes

Please explain your answer:

A public consultation process was undertaken in order to secure feedback about the revised Strategy by seeking the views of all key stakeholders about the proposed changes to its key priorities. The consultation opened on Monday 14 February 2022, ran for 7 weeks, and closed at midnight on Sunday 3 April 2022, and generated 42 responses. In addition to this, two online public engagement events were held during the consultation period in March 2022, with further responses also being submitted by email. An online survey was made available to students in schools and ran from Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March until midnight on Friday 8



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

April. There were 106 responses from young people who were predominantly of secondary school age or in post-16 education. A further consultation process was run in September 2022 for members to add any additional commentary to that which was submitted in the spring.

The information gained from preliminary feedback in Autumn 2021 and the public consultation and engagement process during 2022 has helped to reframe the Education Strategy. The vision and aims of the Strategy will remain largely unchanged, that is; being ambitious, collaborative and inclusive and these aims will continue to be the strategic intentions as they were in the Education and Skills Strategy. The new Education Strategy will focus on the five priority areas outlined earlier in this EqIA, and against these, the implementation and its expected progression of the Strategy will be monitored and assessed.

## Section 2 - Impacts

Around 23% of the population of Buckinghamshire are children and young people. There were 126,804 children and young people aged under 18 years living in Buckinghamshire (2020 mid -year Population Estimate). Approximately 1% of children are aged 1 year and under, 21% aged between 1 and 4 years, 30% aged 5 to 9 years, 34% are aged between 10 and 15 years and 10% are aged 16 and 17 years. 38% of pupils recorded in the school census in January 2021 were BME, and just under 10,000 children were eligible for free school meals. In January 2021 9713 children were receiving SEN support through schools, with 5167 children had an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan – June 2021).

Age\*

Positive ✓

Negative

Unclear

None

Details: The Education Strategy aims to support the education of all children and young people aged up to 18 years old (up to 25 years for SEND pupils) so no age group should be impacted adversely.

Disability\*

Positive ✓

Negative

Unclear

None

Details: The Education Strategy is built on the key principle of being inclusive, with one of its key priorities being that of embedding a culture of inclusion. All children and young people with or without a disability should not be impacted adversely by the Strategy.

Pregnancy & maternity\*

Positive ✓

Negative

Unclear

None



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Details: The Education Strategy is built on the key principle of being inclusive, with one of its key priorities being that of embedding a culture of inclusion. Any young person who is pregnant or has given birth should be able to access education and should not be impacted adversely by the Strategy.

## Race & Ethnicity\*

Positive                      Negative                      Unclear                      **None ✓**

Details: The Education Strategy is built on the key principle of being inclusive, with one of its key priorities being that of embedding a culture of inclusion. All children and young people regardless of their race or ethnic background should not be impacted adversely by the Strategy. Exclusions are very low in Buckinghamshire and the intention of the Strategy is to continually improve and widen the scope of inclusive practice to further reduce exclusion and the potential for disproportionality.

## Marriage & Civil Partnership\*

Positive                      Negative                      Unclear                      **None ✓**

Details: The Education Strategy seeks to achieve the very best for children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they are happy, safe and able to achieve. The ambition of the Strategy is for children and young people in Buckinghamshire to realise their potential regardless of their family circumstances, and therefore there should not be any adverse impact on children and young people from a variety of family backgrounds and structures.

## Religion & Belief\*

Positive                      Negative                      Unclear                      **None ✓**

Details: The Education Strategy aims to give every child the best start so that they can realise their potential and is founded on the key principles of being ambitious, collaborative and inclusive. No child or young person should be adversely impacted by the Strategy with regards to their religion or beliefs.

## Sex\*

Positive                      Negative                      Unclear                      **None ✓**

Details: The Education Strategy is founded on the premise that education should provide our children and young people with the opportunity to achieve their very best through an inclusive learning environment that is characterised by excellent teaching within a system that celebrates diversity. No child or young person should be adversely impacted by the Strategy with regards to their sex.



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

## Sexual Orientation\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None ✓
Details: As above			

## Gender Reassignment\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None ✓
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Details: As above

## Gender identity

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None ✓
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Details: As above

## Carers

Positive ✓	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: The aim of the Strategy is to work with settings and schools to enable children and young people regardless of their family circumstances/background to reach their potential. There may be some positive impacts as children and young people as carers are regarded as vulnerable group that may receive targeted support through Young Carers forums or access to particular initiatives such as the Holiday Activity and Food Programme. Targeted support will be provided where needed in order to enable children from these backgrounds to better access educational opportunities so as to achieve the best outcomes.

## Rural isolation

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None ✓
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Details: It is the intention of the Strategy to enable all children and young people to achieve the best outcomes regardless of where they live within the County.

## Single parent families

Positive ✓	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: The aim of the Strategy is to work with settings and schools to enable children and young people regardless of their family circumstances to reach their potential. Targeted support will be provided where needed in order to enable children from these backgrounds to better access educational opportunities so as to achieve the best outcomes.

## Poverty (social & economic deprivation)

Positive ✓	Negative	Unclear	None
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# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Details: The vision of the Education Strategy is to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so they can realise their potential whatever their starting point, with the focus on addressing the differential of experience between the vulnerable children in Buckinghamshire and their peers. This vulnerability may stem from social or economic deprivation; the Strategy's ambition is to address potential barriers to educational achievement enabling children and young people from whatever their background to reach their potential. There may be some positive impacts as children and young people from low-income backgrounds may be considered a vulnerable group that may receive targeted support through the Family Support Service or access to particular initiatives such as the Holiday Activity and Food Programme.

Military families / veterans

Positive ✓

Negative

Unclear

None

Details: The aim of the Strategy is to work with settings and schools to enable children and young people regardless of their family circumstances/background or where they live in the County to be able reach their potential. Targeted support will be available where needed in order to enable children from these backgrounds to access appropriate educational opportunities so as to achieve the best outcomes.

## Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

**If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EqIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.**

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Not required at this time

Explain your answer:

The Buckinghamshire Education Strategy 2022-2027 is an umbrella strategy, and whilst impacts from its implementation are expected, a full EqIA is not required in this instance. For the purposes of avoiding duplication, the expectation is that EqIA's for the delivery Policies/Strategies/Action Plans are completed to cover the more specific details of potential impacts.

**Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? Yes/No ✓**



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact [dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk))

## Section 4 – Sign off (Only complete when NOT completing Part B)

Officer completing this assessment: (Maria Edmonds) Date: (16 October 2022)

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou Morley, Maria Damigo & Jeevan Viridi Date: 31/10/2022

Service Director sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

CMT sign off (*if deemed necessary by Service Director*) sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Next review Date: December 2023

**If required please complete part B (full assessment)**

## Part B (Full assessment) - Section 5 – Further information

Will there be an impact on any other functions, services or policies? If so, please provide more detail:

Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project?

## Section 6 - Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers and making a judgement about potential impacts on them?

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by protected characteristics\* and equality groups (non-statutory)?

*Guidance note (delete after completion)*

*This will be more important for negative or unclear impacts identified in Section 2 above.*

*National data and research can be useful in identifying barriers, issues and areas where equality is likely to be a priority. These include Research undertaken by the Equality & Human Rights Commission, research undertaken by trades unions, commissioned research and reports, census data, labour force surveys*

*Institutional data such as ethnic monitoring data, surveys, consultations, and complaints and grievances can be used to identify local data.*

*Please also consider 'missing data' as this may be indicative of discriminatory practice.*



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

*Once all available data has been gathered, it should be examined to check whether there is evidence of any of the following: lower take up/participation rates by disadvantaged groups generally, lower take up/participation by certain groups, eligibility criteria which disadvantages groups, access to services being reduced or denied to people, people facing increased difficulty as a result of a policy/practice, a policy/practice resulting in reduced benefits for equality groups.*

Age\*:

Disability\*:

Pregnancy and maternity\*:

Race\*:

Marriage & Civil Partnership\*:

Religion or belief\*:

Sex\*:

Sexual orientation\*:

Gender re-assignment\*:

Gender identity:

Carers:

Rural isolation:

Single parent families:

Poverty (social & economic deprivation):

Military families / veterans:

Do you need any further information broken down by protected characteristic or equality group to inform this EqIA?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, list here to help you gather data for the action plan in Section 11

## Section 7 – Negative effects, impacts or consequences

Is there any potential for or actual direct or indirect discrimination or a disproportionate effect on a protected group or equality group?



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

*Guidance note: Direct discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic, such as sex or race or an equalities group, such as being a carer. For example, someone is not offered a promotion because they're a woman and the job goes to a less qualified man. Indirect discrimination can happen when there are rules or arrangements that apply to a group of employees or job applicants, but in practice are less fair to a certain protected characteristic.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure at this time

What are the potential negative effects, impacts or consequences and how have, or may, they arise:

*Guidance note (delete after completion)*

*Please state what the potential negative impact (s) are – Section 8 allows you to set out any minimising/mitigating actions.*

*State what the negative impact(s) are for each group, identified in Section 2. In addition, you should also consider and state potential risks associated with your proposal.*

## **Section 8 – Proposals to remove or minimise negative effects, impacts or consequences**

How is it proposed to mitigate or minimise the negative effects, impacts or consequences identified in Section 7?

*Guidance Note (delete after completion)*

*Include details of steps proposed or taken to ensure that these measures will address and remove (or where not possible, minimise) any negative impacts identified above and by when. How severe are these impacts likely to be? Please also state how you will monitor the impact of your proposal once implemented.*

*What measures will be put in place to mitigate or minimise negative impact (provide details, including details of and additional consultation undertaken/to be carried out in the future). Please also identify actions you will take to assess whether these measures have addressed or will address and remove or minimise any negative impacts identified in your analysis? Please provide details. If you are unable to identify measures to mitigate/minimise impacts, please state so and provide a brief explanation.*

## **Section 9 - Other factors to take into consideration:**

*Guidance note (delete after completion)*

*This should include balancing or other factors for decision makers to take into consideration such as positive impacts (financial or otherwise), costs and resources*



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

## Section 10 - Conclusion:

### Section 11 - Action Planning

*Guidance note (delete after completion)*

*Where the policy or practice would result in unavoidable or potentially unlawful impacts changes should clearly be made where possible and specific actions should be identified and noted in the action plan. The objectives of the policy or practice should be re-examined to find out if there is an alternative way of meeting the desired objectives without the adverse impact, and potentially creating a positive one.*

*Where impacts are unavoidable the objective of completing the EqIA and the action plan is to demonstrate that impacts have been considered as part of the decision making process to ensure compliance with the PSED. An example to show how this works - where a council decides to close a care home, if they do so without considering the equalities implications (via an EqIA or otherwise) the decision is extremely likely to be quashed by the Courts on a challenge, as per previous case law. This would happen even if it is almost certain that examination of the equalities implications will have little or no impact on the final decision (e.g. due to a lack of resources to pay for the care home) - because the PSED was not part of the decision making process.*

*A properly completed EqIA should be a full and complete record to show that all equalities implications and the PSED were appropriately considered by the decision maker.*

*If the adverse impact is potentially unlawful and alternatives cannot be found, the policy or practice may need to be completely redesigned.*

Actions to be taken to address negative effects, impacts or consequences and maximise positive impacts	Potential Outcomes	Lead	Timescales

### Section 12 - Monitoring Arrangements

What are the plans to monitor the actual and/or final impact? (The EqIA will help anticipate likely effect but final impact may only be known after implementation)



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

What are the proposals for reviewing and reporting actual impact?

## **Section 13 - Part A and B Sign off – (If Part B has not been completed please complete Section 4)**

Officer completing Part A and B assessment: Maria Edmonds Date: 16 October 2022

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou Morley, Maria Damigo & Jeevan Viridi Date: 31/10/2022

Date: 31 October 2022

Service Director sign off: **SIMON JAMES**

Date: **7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

CMT sign off (if deemed necessary by Service Director) sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Next review date: December 2023