



Falkirk Council

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

2010

The Policies contained in this document are as follows:

- CORPORATE FUNDING REVIEW
- PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE
- REVENUE BUDGET 2010/2011
- COMMUNAL REFUGE PROVISION FOR WOMEN FLEEING DOMESTIC ABUSE
and OUT OF HOUR SERVICES PROVIDED BY FALKIRK AND DISTRICT
WOMEN'S AID
- NATIONAL RECRUITMENT PORTAL
- PROPOSAL ON RECRUITMENT OF RETIRED TEACHERS TO SUPPLY WORK
- RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY
- ASSESSMENT AND ELIGIBILITY FRAMEWORK SERVICES

POLICY NAME - CORPORATE FUNDING REVIEW

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?

- a. Make recommendations on the overall allocation of Council resources to external organisations;
- b. Ensure that resources allocated are being used effectively and work towards meeting the Council's priority outcomes;
- c. Ensure that there is a robust process in place to enable Officers to allocate resources in a consistent, efficient and joined up manner; and
- d. Ensure that the local Voluntary Sector is supported and able to adapt to the pressures of the current financial climate.

The review has been driven by the significant budgetary pressures which the Council is currently under. Recommendations made are for both short and long terms implementation. Short term recommendations will be implemented immediately (from April 2010) and will be consistent across all organisations in receipt of Council support.

Longer term recommendations will involve further involvement from all Services and will ensure that all future funding decisions are made in a way which is transparent and fair, in line with Service plans and achieve best value. These changes are likely to have a more targeted impact however will be underpinned by thorough assessment including EQIA.

Who implements the policy?

The Policy is lead by the Funding Team (Corporate & Neighbourhood Services), however, recommendations from Services and CMT will be considered and final decision will be taken by Elected Members. The decision will then be implemented by individual Services in conjunction with Corporate & Neighbourhood and Finance Services.

Person carrying out impact assessment

Lesley McArthur, Funding Officer

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the Policy and in what way (for example, staff, service users, visitors)?

- Falkirk Council - savings to budgets in line with current requirements resulting from current financial climate and pressures;
- Services - Further ability to ensure that all support allocated is working towards Council priorities;
- External Organisations - Development of a robust and transparent process of resource allocation; and
- Service Users - Long term, Council will be better placed to develop, target and deliver services across the Falkirk Council area achieving better outcomes to those most in need.

What data is available to facilitate the screening of the policy? *Note: Gathering of information/evidence can include community consultation, research (including websites), Officer knowledge/experience, Equalities monitoring data, service user feedback (including complaints) and partner agency feedback.*

- Collation of information from Services regarding support and funding made to external organisations;
- Report to CMT presenting options and recommendations;
- Report to Council Administration;

- Report to P&R;
- Small Grant Terms and Conditions; and
- Joint Working Agreements.

Is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion by any of the equality strands? *Note: A broad interpretation should be taken of the word 'evidence'. It should include anecdotal evidence and evidence derived from qualitative or quantitative analysis where available.*

Information will be gained through further investigation and assessment on a service specific basis.

Does evidence indicate access to services and benefits are reduced or denied for some groups?

Decision is consistent across all groups and organisations. No targeting or variance has been applied to any particular group.

Do particular groups face increased difficulty or indignity as a result of the Policy?

Decision is consistent across all groups and organisations. No targeting or variance has been applied to any particular group.

Are there any higher complaints or lower satisfaction rates from particular groups in connection with the policy?

Information will be gained through further investigation and assessment on a service specific basis.

Is there any evidence that the policy fails to respond to the needs of a particular group?

Services should base all decisions to support organisations on need and available resources. The decisions taken within this review have been made due to significant budgetary pressures placed on the Council. Decision is consistent across all groups and organisations. No targeting or variance has been applied to any particular group.

The funding cuts are proportionate to what organisations receive, with 3%* being cut from organisations' budgets for 2010. Services will be working with the organisations to discuss requirements and target resources and funding to appropriate areas of need.

Where are there gaps in data or non-availability of data which would need to be gathered in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

We will incorporate a recommendation that further EQIA's must be part of the ongoing decision making process within any allocation of support to external organisations. This will be a Service specific requirement that should be applied to all organisations and group at the point of establishing a funding agreement. This is particularly relevant to groups who receive funding over a period of more than 1 year where the Council may have to make budgetary decisions due to external pressures which may have a negative impact on the organisation, its ability to deliver services and therefore service users.

Considering all the information above, please indicate areas where a differential impact occurs or has the potential to occur. *Note: Include details on any potential or actual positive impacts as well as potential or actual negative impacts.*

This information will be identified through further EQIA's on a service specific basis.

Recommend for full impact assessment (Yes or No). *Note: The answers to Questions 6-10 should be considered to determine if a full impact assessment is required.*

YES - see below

If you have identified adverse impact, could this amount to unlawful discrimination? (If not, explain why not).

The decisions made within the Corporate funding review will be implemented consistently across all allocations of support to groups and organisations therefore there which there may be an overall negative impact, no one group have been targeted. It is therefore anticipated that the impact will be proportionately the same across all groups.

It has been recommended that the funding at Falkirk process is improved to ensure that a more robust risk based process be introduced at the point of allocating funding. This will include an Equalities Impact Assessment for each allocation. This will be the responsibility of the sponsor service.

If the policy intends to result in different outcomes for different groups by using positive action to redress disadvantages, is this lawful? (Confirm what positive action is being taken and why).

One of the recommendations of the review is that the small grants budgets are consolidated. This will result in a transparent and robust process, with criteria set in line with Council priorities. Clear guidance will be available to groups.

The consolidation of the small grants budgets should have no adverse impact on any particular organisation as these funding requests are on an as required basis by organisations in relation to particular projects they are involved in. There is no specific amount allocated to each organisation and decisions are based on the nature of the funding request. This process will continue.

Consultation/Involvement carried out (methods, target groups etc). (Identify who was involved in the process, what feedback was received and how this feedback was used).

Consistent information was gathered from Services using a template. Where gaps were identified in the completion of the template Services were given opportunity to provide further information.

There has not been consultation with groups or organisations as the final decision of the funding review is based on significant budgetary pressures which the Council is currently under. In addition, consistency has been applied in terms of the decision taken so no groups have been specifically targeted or will be proportionally more disadvantaged.

Proposed method to reduce or eliminate adverse impact (including reasons chosen). (Explain what action is being taken or planned to reduce adverse impact).

Consultation will take place during 2010 with groups and organisations in relation to the use of allocated funding and resources for the longer term. This information will be used to inform future decisions through a further EQIA process.

Priority - High/Medium/Low

Medium

For the following questions, tick areas of equality relevance (tick boxes will refer to equality strands - Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion/Belief, None)

Risk of adverse impact - data used including assessment of reliability/validity

None

Assessment of adverse impact

None

Conclusions and recommendations for amendments to the policy.

The funding decision has been made by CMT and approved by Elected Members for 2010 and will be implemented as part of the 2010/2011 budget process.

Further review of ongoing funding and resources for individual organisations will take place during 2010 and Services will work with external organisations in this respect.

Timescales for implementation

April 2010

POLICY NAME - PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE

Background

This replaces the repair and improvement grants scheme for private housing from 1 April 2010. It is required under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006. The relevant duties are:

- to comply with Adaptation grants regulations for disabled people and to publish:
- within the Local Housing Strategy, a strategy for improving housing conditions by providing or arranging for the provision of assistance - Section 10(c)
- a public Statement of Assistance - reflecting the principles of the strategy and informing the public of the availability of assistance and access criteria for Adaptations and help with repairs - Section 72.

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?

The Scheme of Assistance should address two aims:

- a. To improve private sector housing conditions.
- b. To increase the number of disabled people able to live more independently through the provision of major adaptations to private housing.

Who implements the policy?

- Private Sector Housing Staff (Corporate & Neighbourhood Services)
- Social Work Services Community Care and Children & Families staff (Social Work Services)

Person carrying out impact assessment

Lorna Fleming

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the Policy and in what way (for example, staff, service users, visitors)?

- Disabled people living in (or intending to live in) owner occupied and privately rented housing are intended to benefit by gaining financial and practical assistance, advice and information for the purpose of major adaptations to a home to meet their needs.
- Home Owners, Private Landlords and Private Tenants including disabled people, are intended to benefit by gaining information, advice, practical assistance or financial assistance with improving their housing conditions / reducing disrepair.
- Private Landlords may not generally benefit from financial assistance due to State Aid rules governing the type of financial assistance local authorities can give to private enterprises. They can benefit from other forms of assistance however.
- The Scottish Government and local groups or organisations representing disabled people, local traders, older people, home owners, and other groups are also considered stakeholders.

What data is available to facilitate the screening of the policy? *Note: Gathering of information/evidence can include community consultation, research (including websites), Officer knowledge/experience, Equalities monitoring data, service user feedback (including complaints) and partner agency feedback.*

The screening of the policy took into account the following:

1. All Tenure Local House Condition Survey of the Falkirk Area (2009) carried out on basis of a 3% sample.
2. Community Consultation Data which included a Focus Group, Survey of Disabled People/their carers and survey of private households and identified groups (Appendix 1). Further details of the consultation process and feedback are included through the EQIA.

Is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion by any of the equality strands? *Note: A broad interpretation should be taken of the word 'evidence'. It should include anecdotal evidence and evidence derived from qualitative or quantitative analysis where available.*

The current Grants application form (previously prescribed by ministers) for repair and adaptations, does not ask for equalities data.

Equalities data was collected for all three aspects of the consultation. The Scottish Government's recommended questions for disability gender and age, and the revised Census ethnicity classifications were used. The comparison between the 2001 Census data and respondents to the consultation were as follows:

Falkirk Area (2001 Census):

Ethnicity - 99.19% of the population were White Scottish, Other White British or White Irish.

Age - under 44 - 59.67%, 45-59 - 19.56%, 60-74 - 14.02%, 75+ - 6.76%

Disability - 21.19% had a limiting long term illness and 7.9% had an economic status of permanently sick or disabled.

Gender - Male - 48.2%, Female, 51.8%

Respondents to Adaptations Focus Group:

All participants considered themselves to have a limiting long term illness or disability. Whilst a variety of age ranges and ethnic groups were invited, no ethnic minorities or younger age groups were present. The average age of participants was 73, with 4 female and 2 male, 1 unrecorded. Participation was widened through the survey as follows:

Respondents to Adaptations Survey:

Those that supplied equalities information were comprised as follows:

Ethnicity - 32 classified themselves as white Scottish or white British. 3 respondents (representing around 9% of respondents) can be considered to be ethnic minorities (White Polish; Pakistani, and Other Ethnic Group (Scottish & North African)).

Age -

On behalf of								
child under 16	<24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+	
3	4	2	4	2	5	12	3	

Disability - 31 out of 34 considered themselves to have a limiting long term illness or disability

Gender - Male - 17, Female - 18

Tenure - Owner occupied - 34, Private Rented - 1, Other- 2

Respondents to Overall Scheme of Assistance Survey:

There were 73 respondents. Many did not answer equalities data as they were responding on behalf of community organisations representing specific groups.

Those that supplied equalities information were comprised as follows:

Ethnicity - there was one respondent from a non-white ethnic group.

Age	<24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
		0	16.4%	25.5%	12.7%	27.3%	18.2%
Disability - 31% considered themselves to have a limiting long term illness or disability							0%
Gender - male 60.7%, female 39.3%							

Evidence of differential uptake or exclusion:
Responses to questions about satisfaction and difficulty accessing various aspects of the Adaptations service did not provide any conclusive evidence of difficulties for specific groups. To check for differences between the 3 ethnic minority responses and the white Scottish / British majority, chi square tests were carried out as attached in **Appendix 2**. However, on receipt of advice from the Scottish Government Statistics division, the numbers are too low to draw firm conclusions.

As the consultation relates to private sector home owners and private renters, this may explain why older age groups are more highly represented in comparison to the overall population.

The level of participation of disabled people in the consultation was relatively good and efforts were made to ensure the focus group venue was accessible, to arrange accessible transport via Dial a Journey and to offer translation / interpretation and support services if needed. All survey documents included information about how to request alternative formats.

Does evidence indicate access to services and benefits are reduced or denied for some groups?

A question about whether the changes could cause any particular groups to be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged was asked in the consultation Survey for the Overall Scheme of Assistance. No particular issues were identified for any groups. The responses did highlight a need for transparency however, requiring continual monitoring of who is accessing practical assistance services or grants via customer satisfaction surveys. The change to access criteria below from 1 April 2010 will require monitoring via customer satisfaction surveys to ensure it is clear what groups are accessing the services.

Change to Access Criteria - Discretionary Grants:
Means Tested Discretionary Grants are currently available for extensions for additional living space (for disabled people) and for repairs. The new Scheme of Assistance involves a change to the access criteria for these discretionary grants. This will involve exhausting possible sources of private finance before carrying out a means test on the shortfall (rather than total cost of work). Private finance includes loans, equity and savings, as long as they are accessible on fair affordable terms, as determined by an Independent Financial Adviser in accordance with financial regulatory requirements.

The above change to discretionary grants will reduce access to subsidy for certain individuals who have low income but who can access equity/private finance on fair affordable terms.
This change is in keeping with the Scottish Government Statutory Guidance on the Scheme of Assistance (April 2009). This change in access criteria is also envisaged to free up funding for other forms of assistance which are not financially means tested, therefore which are likely to help more people than grants alone. No concerns about this particular proposal were raised during the consultation process.

Some survey respondents were of the opinion that disabled people should never have to pay for any aspect of housing adaptations. The Council must balance the demand for discretionary grants with its duty to provide mandatory grants and affordability constraints. As a result, discretionary grants for extensions for additional living space for disabled people, and priority repair work, will continue to be provided according to the revised criteria outlined above as long as finance permits.

Do particular groups face increased difficulty or indignity as a result of the Policy?

The Scheme of Assistance is likely to broaden the range of types of assistance available to help owners meet their responsibilities for repairs and maintenance; and it ensures disabled people can access proper advice on funding work not covered by mandatory grant. The duty to publish a Statement of Assistance will make access criteria for assistance more transparent.

Are there any higher complaints or lower satisfaction rates from particular groups in connection with the policy?

This information will require to be gathered once the Scheme of Assistance is implemented from 1 April 2010 via customer satisfaction surveys and reviewed prior to the 2011 Local Housing Strategy and regularly thereafter.

Is there any evidence that the policy fails to respond to the needs of a particular group?

No. The evidence from the surveys suggest the new Scheme of assistance will respond to the needs of more groups - those facing non financial barriers as well as financial barriers in tackling disrepair. The local all tenure house condition survey 2009 suggested that various non financial barriers were an issue for around a third of owners. This suggests that the Scheme of Assistance will better respond to the needs of the community in comparison with the existing repair and improvement grants scheme.

Where are there gaps in data or non-availability of data which would need to be gathered in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

Addressing the evidence gap in future:

Two changes can help address the lack of evidence about whether equalities groups are having difficulty / differential access, in future:

- Questions about access and satisfaction can be incorporated into revised customer satisfaction surveys at the end of the Adaptations process, to make sure that any differences in terms of equalities groups can be identified.
- Individuals accessing any practical assistance services or grants for repairs can be provided with a customer satisfaction survey to ensure continual monitoring in terms of differences between accessibility and satisfaction of equalities groups.

Revised customer satisfaction requires will be introduced to enable differences between equalities groups to be checked in terms of satisfaction / access to services for assistance with disabled adaptations and priority repair work.

Considering all the information above, please indicate areas where a differential impact occurs or has the potential to occur. *Note: Include details on any potential or actual positive impacts as well as potential or actual negative impacts.*

Negative impacts

Potentially reduced access for low income home owners for discretionary grants (ie those which the Council does not have a duty under the 2006 Act to provide) if they can access private finance on fair affordable terms. This change is in keeping with government guidance. It will free up resources for non-financial assistance and for using new powers, which is intended to assist more households than through grants alone.

Positive Impacts - Disabled People requiring Major Adaptations

- Further involvement - improvements to the layout and format of information leaflets were suggested at the focus group and just under three quarters of survey respondents have volunteered to assist with this process by giving feedback on new draft versions.

- Improving Information and Advice - the availability and accessibility of information and advice about finance sources and alternative housing options (from an all tenure perspective) can be improved by offering this service earlier in the process to all potential applicants. This approach will be further developed in the forthcoming 2011-16 Local Housing Strategy.
- New Service Standards - the consultation process generated a number of new Service Standards against which performance can be measured using service user satisfaction surveys, e.g. *"Individuals feel kept up to date at all stages of the process"*. Once implemented, the service standards will increase transparency about the quality of service being delivered.

Positive Impacts - Repairs and Maintenance

- Priority for assistance will now be on the basis of local priorities generated through the consultation process.
- More people will be assisted through information, advice and practical assistance than through grants alone.

Recommend for full impact assessment (Yes or No). Note: The answers to Questions 6-10 should be considered to determine if a full impact assessment is required.

A full impact assessment is not required.

If no, please outline reason for decision.

The justification for this decision includes:

- Steps will be taken as identified above to collect equalities data on an ongoing basis to monitor whether certain groups may have difficulty accessing assistance when the new Scheme is introduced from 1 April 2010.
- The consultation process about the change has already identified a number of service improvements that can be put in place to improve the service for disabled people.
- Respondents to the Scheme of Assistance consultation process did not identify any particular equalities groups that could be adversely affected by the changes.

If you have identified adverse impact, could this amount to unlawful discrimination? (*If not, explain why not*).

No, feedback from the relevant consultation and focus groups did not identify any particular equalities groups that could be adversely affected by the changes. All potential issues raised have been considered through the focus group feedback and taken into consideration for the Scheme.

If the policy intends to result in different outcomes for different groups by using positive action to redress disadvantages, is this lawful? (*Confirm what positive action is being taken and why*).

No positive action is intended to be taken.

Consultation/Involvement carried out (methods, target groups etc).

- a) Focus Group with disabled people and carers previously involved in adaptations process. (July 2009)
- b) Survey of disabled people / their carers about major adaptations - all former grant applicants invited to complete survey plus social work clients and via website, to widen participation after focus group. (October 2009)
- c) Survey about overall options for Scheme of Assistance - to 1000 randomly selected private households, and all groups listed in **Appendix 1**. Survey was placed on Council website and there were various public open sessions throughout the area.

**Proposed method to reduce or eliminate adverse impact (including reasons chosen).
(Explain what action is being taken or planned to reduce adverse impact).**

As per question 14 (Screening), the following steps are being taken:

- Equalities data will be collected on an ongoing basis to monitor whether certain groups may have difficulty accessing assistance when the new Scheme is introduced from 1 April 2010.
- Improvements to the service have been identified through the consultation process and will be implemented accordingly.

Priority High/Medium/Low

Medium

For the following questions, tick areas of equality relevance (tick boxes will refer to equality strands - Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion/Belief, None)

Risk of adverse impact - data used including assessment of reliability/validity

Race	- None
Gender	- None
Disability	- Medium
Age	- Medium
Sexual Orientation	- None
Religion/Belief	- None

Assessment of adverse impact

Race	- None
Gender	- None
Disability	- Medium
Age	- Medium
Sexual Orientation	- None
Religion/Belief	- None

Conclusions and recommendations for amendments to the policy.

The policy will take into account the positive impacts identified as per Q12 (Screening) in relation to improvements to the layout and format of information leaflets, improving information and advice and implementing new service standards.

Elected members agreed the Scheme of Assistance strategy (from a choice of 3 options reflecting the consultation) at Housing & Social Care Committee on 2 February 2009 and Policy & Resources Committee 9 February 2009. Agreement was on the basis that any amendments to the strategy identified by the impact assessment would be reported and agreed if necessary.

Timescales for implementation

1 April 2010.

Methods of publication

Falkirk Council Web Site
Printed for distribution in Council offices

Monitoring arrangements

Two monitoring arrangements will be introduced based on the outcomes of the consultation and screening process:

- Service User surveys at the end of the adaptations process
- Service user surveys after receipt of financial or practical assistance has been received for repairs

These arrangements will help identify any access issues affecting equalities groups; measure performance against service standards and highlight areas of services for improvement.

Date of next review (Month and Year)

1 April 2011

POLICY NAME - REVENUE BUDGET 2010/2011

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the budget?

To ensure appropriate allocation of Council funds to meet service delivery requirements based on the availability of resources and revenue.

Who implements the budget?

Council Services

Name of person(s) carrying out assessment?

Dougie McGregor (Accounting Manager)
Pauline McGrellis (HR Adviser - Policy)
Jackie McAuley (HR Adviser - Policy)
Service Directors

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the budget proposals and in what way (for example, staff, service users, visitors)?

Council employees, residents/service users within and visitors to the Falkirk area.

What data is available to facilitate the assessment of the budget proposals? *Note: Gathering of information/evidence can include community consultation, research (including websites), Officer knowledge/experience, Equalities monitoring data, service user feedback (including complaints) and partner agency feedback.*

The budget strategy has been formulated on the basis of the revised level of government grant and the continuing cost pressures facing the Council including:-

- Effects of the £3.6m reduction in revenue grant
- Single Status/Equal Pay
- Further 2% Efficiency Savings to be found
- Revenue implications of the capital programme
- New Schools (NPDO) project affordability gap
- Continuing significant rising costs as a consequence of an increasingly elderly population, looked after children and homelessness in particular
- General price changes particularly in pay awards, energy, rates (following revaluation) and Landfill Tax
- Reduction in Income e.g. Planning Fees due to the deteriorating economic climate
- Reduction in Council Tax income due to the slowing down in house building
- Concordat commitments

Other data available are the risks facing the Council which include outstanding Equal Pay claims and the ever increasing pressures on the Social Work and Education budgets, exacerbated by continuing real term reductions in grant support over the next three to four years at least. Taking all of these factors into account there is an estimated shortfall of c£10m which requires to be addressed

The Budget strategy has required all areas of expenditure and income to be subject to detailed scrutiny with the emphasis on protecting frontline services and included:-

- Directors identifying savings of c£2.5m (excl. Employee costs)
- Reducing Employee Costs through the scheme of voluntary severance being pro-actively considered as a means of reducing costs, together with other potential savings from restructuring, temporary staff, overtime etc. and also that conditions of service continue to be reviewed in the context of the Council's objective of protecting employees jobs (c£2m)
- Maximising income through reviewing existing fees and charges (c£1m) and examining the potential to generate more income through the introduction of new charges (c£1m)
- Reducing the provision for pay awards still to be negotiated to 1% (c£1.5m)
- Seeking a contribution of savings from Joint Boards (£0.75m)
- Increased savings in borrowing costs (£0.5m)
- Additional income from Council Tax collection (£0.3m)
- Reducing the c£7m funding provided to all external organisations by 3% (£0.2m)

Where are there gaps in data or non-availability of data which would need to be gathered in future to ensure effective monitoring?

Considering all the proposals, please indicate areas where a differential impact occurs or has the potential to occur. *Note: Include details on any potential or actual positive impacts as well as potential or actual negative impacts.*

- *Does evidence indicate access to services and benefits are reduced or denied for some groups?*
- *Do particular groups face increased difficulty or indignity as a result of the Policy?*

Proposals which may potentially have an adverse impact on particular groups/equality strands are noted below:

Grants to External Organisations

Each year the Council provides assistance by way of grants, funding and support in kind to a range of third party organisations. The positive contribution these organisations make to the lives of individuals and communities is considerable. However, the Council cannot continue to fund external organisations at current levels while taking difficult decisions about core services. Nationally there is also recognition by the voluntary sector that the reductions in public sector funding will necessitate these organisations being more efficient and effective in delivering their services. To this end it is proposed that the Council reduces its expenditure for payments to each third sector organisation by 3%. This will be applied to organisations that receive annual funding and also to the small grants budgets.

Education

Proposals for increases in Fees & Charges in respect of School Meals and Childcare have been reflected within the budget. It is proposed that charges are also introduced for lunches within Special Schools. Falkirk Council, however, still has one of the lowest School Meal charges of any local authority in the United Kingdom. The increase in meal charges equates to an additional (maximum) £0.15 per day.

Social Work

It is proposed that the Council factors into the 2010/11 budget considerations for the introduction of a charging policy for adult social care services which would partially offset the costs associated with providing these services. In 2006, Falkirk Council took the decision to withdraw charges from the majority of adult social care services. Since then the pressures on the Social Work budget arising from increased costs and increased demands for care have been substantial. Since 2006, the Social Work overspend has increased year on year, as outlined below.

<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>	<u>2008/09</u>	<u>2009/10</u>
£0.83m	£1.66m	£3.25m	£4.1m (estimated)

The budget proposal also includes £0.25m savings arising from the recommendation to the Housing and Social Care Committee of 2 February to discontinue funding for Barnardo's Matrix, Children First Family Group Conferencing Service and FDAMH Time Out Service.

Development Services

Changes to fees and charges are proposed including Transport Planning and Roads Permits. In particular, there are proposed charges for Blue Badges which may have an impact on individuals with a disability who are eligible to receive or apply for a Blue Badge.

Community Services

It is proposed that charges for sports and leisure facilities will increase by 15% (this equates to an increase of approx £0.40 per adult and £0.20 per child for example to use swimming facilities), however, this will still be below the Scottish average.

It is also recognised that many groups within Community Education Centres enjoy free access to the facilities. It is proposed that the existing charging policy be reviewed and an appropriate fee is charged in line with the fees and charges in similar facilities.

The Service currently provides two mobile libraries that cover routes around the district. With the opening of a new Library in the area, coupled with the continued provision of the Homebound Service, it is felt that the service can be reduced by one vehicle and the routes and lengths of stops adjusted accordingly. The requirement for only one mobile library will result in savings of £0.090m.

General

Despite the difficulties of having to find savings of this magnitude, it is also important to recognise that the budget continues to increase investment in a number of priority areas including:-

- Increasing the number of teachers to reduce class sizes
- Provision of a free nutritious meal to P1-P3 pupils in those schools with pupils experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Four new Secondary Schools with enhanced community facilities
- Increased investment in Social Work services including:- Care for the Elderly, Looked After Children, Carer Support & Kinship Care
- Additional investment in the three year Capital Programme towards schools; roads; economic development; culture & leisure strategy etc

If you have identified an adverse impact, could this amount to unlawful discrimination? *(If not, explain why not).*

- Outline the proposed method to reduce or eliminate adverse impact *(explain what action is being taken or planned to reduce adverse impact).*

There is no evidence to suggest that any of the potential adverse impact identified could amount to unlawful discrimination. Proposed methods to reduce or eliminate the potential adverse impact are noted below:

Grant/Funding decision

As part of this process, an equality impact assessment (EQIA) was undertaken in relation to this proposed decision which has been driven by the significant budgetary pressures which the Council is currently under. Longer term recommendations will involve further involvement from all Services and will ensure that all future funding decisions are made in a way which is transparent and fair, in line with Service plans and achieve best value. These changes are likely to have a more targeted impact however will be underpinned by thorough assessment including EQIA.

The decisions made within the Corporate funding review will be implemented consistently across all allocations of support to groups and organisations therefore whilst there may be an overall negative impact, no one group has been targeted. It is therefore anticipated that the impact will be proportionately the same across all groups.

The consolidation of the small grants budgets should have no adverse impact on any particular organisation as these funding requests are on an as required basis by organisations in relation to particular projects they are involved in. There is no specific amount allocated to each organisation and decisions are based on the nature of the funding request. This process will continue.

The review incorporated a recommendation that further EQIA's must be part of the ongoing decision making process within any allocation of support to external organisations. This will be a Service specific requirement that should be applied to all organisations and group at the point of establishing a funding agreement. This is particularly relevant to groups who receive funding over a period of more than 1 year where the Council may have to make budgetary decisions due to external pressures which may have a negative impact on the organisation, its ability to deliver services and therefore service users.

Education

However, it should also be noted that a provision of £0.08m has been made to extend entitlement to free school meals to all children in P1-P3 in those schools with pupils experiencing high levels of deprivation including those within Special Schools.

Social Work Service Charges

An equality impact assessment and consultation/involvement exercise will take place in respect of any proposed charges. Any charges made will be in line with the COSLA guidance which will ensure consistency in the application of fees as well as ensuring that any particular circumstances of vulnerable groups are taken into account.

Development Service Charges

Any proposals to implement charges in respect of Blue Badges will be subject to an equality impact assessment to determine the potential impact.

Community Service Charges

Budgets have been increased by £0.070m to provide for the full costs of community use at the four new secondary schools and the sports hall at the old Denny High School. In addition, provision of £0.075m has been made for the revenue funding for the new sports facility at Bankier. The budget has also been adjusted by £0.272m to reflect the transfer of the local regeneration budget from Scottish Enterprise to local authorities.

Concessions in relation to the use of the free leisure card for over 60s and those eligible through various benefits will still apply.

It is proposed that a phased approach is taken in implementation to allow groups time to adjust their own fee mechanisms to reflect the new charges. Any decision taken will be assessed and an equality impact assessment undertaken to determine any potential adverse impact on particular community groups.

In terms of the removal of 1 mobile library, the potential impact on elderly or disabled customers who use the mobile service will be offset by the continued provision of the homebound service and extended route of the remaining mobile library.

What evidence is used to support budget proposals?

Social Work Charges

Other Councils have experienced significant difficulties but have managed to offset these pressures by the adoption of a fair and equitable charging policy. COSLA produces annual guidance in relation to charging for non-residential adult social care services. Their most recent survey indicates that Falkirk Council is unusual in not charging for the majority of such services.

Discontinuation of services (Social Work)

The proposed discontinuation of 3 services by Social Work has been made in relation to the uptake of these services in addition to the opportunity for these to be provided by other options (internally and externally).

For instance, the Barnardo's Matrix service provided support to a maximum of 6 families in the current year at a cost of £93,450. Plans are now being developed for the introduction of a locality model for Children's Services in Falkirk and for the introduction of an Intensive Support Service which will represent Best Value.

The discontinuation of the Children's First Family Group Conferencing Service is based on the option to provide this internally via the Intensive Family Support Service also and it is no longer required as a stand-alone service.

The number of call received by FDAMH Time Out service are on average 4 to 5 calls per night, with the majority of callers are known to and supported by other services. Additional external support for the same service is now available through a number of other options such as Breathing Space, Saneline, Cruse, Samaritans and the Intensive Home Treatment Team.

Scottish Government Blue Badge Scheme guidance confirms that Local Authorities have the option to make a charge to cover the administration costs of issuing a Blue Badge. There is currently no charge made by Falkirk Council, however, proposed charges have been introduced to cover for

Consultation/Involvement carried out (methods, target groups etc). (*Identify who was involved in the process, what feedback was received and how this feedback was used*).

Internal consultation taken place with Trade Unions. During these difficult times of severe financial constraints it is even more important to ensure proper consultation with the recognised Trade Unions and they have acknowledged the effort made to keep them informed particularly in relation to matters directly involving their members, such as voluntary severance and conditions of service.

No external consultation has taken place in respect of the general budget, however, individual consultation and involvement processes will take place in respect of specific proposals (for example, introduction of charges within Social Work, Funding reviews and charges for Blue Badges).

If the budget proposals intend to result in different outcomes for different groups by using positive action to redress disadvantages, is this lawful? (*Confirm what positive action is being taken and why*).

No positive action is proposed as part of the assessment process.

Conclusions and recommendations for the implementation of the budget proposals (including any changes made).

The budget for 2010/11 has proved to be the most challenging for many years. The cost pressures highlighted, together with the requirement to find additional savings as a result of the economic downturn has resulted in the Council having to make difficult decisions on where to make savings.

Employee costs in particular represent the largest element of the Council's expenditure and the budget therefore inevitably reflects significant savings in this area. Continuing pressures, particularly in Social Work have been recognised through additional investment and the proposed generation of additional income. The ongoing potential cost of Equal Pay claims remains uncertain. Continuing to make progress on the Concordat, the Single Outcome Agreement and the goals set out in our corporate, community and service plans will also be a considerable challenge. Reserves continue to be stretched and the importance of controlling expenditure within budgets cannot be overemphasised. Of equal if not more concern is that future years will be even more difficult as resources are set to fall significantly in real terms which will require the Council to make difficult choices in prioritising the services it provides to the community. Nevertheless, for next year the Revenue Budget recommends for a third year running no increase in Council Tax, therefore Council Tax payers will continue to have one of the lowest Council Tax levels in Scotland.

It is recommended that Council gives consideration to:

- (a) Agreeing, in principle, that charges for adult social care services be introduced; and
- (b) Authorising the Acting Director of Social Work Services to develop a policy consistent with the COSLA Guidance on Charging for Non-Residential Adult Care Services, to consult with relevant stakeholders and report back to Council.
- (c) The recommendation of the Housing and Social Care Committee in relation to funding for Barnardo's Matrix, Children First and FDAMH Time Out Service.
- (d) Agreeing that grants to third sector bodies be reduced by 3% in accordance
- (e) Agreeing the fees, charges and changes to service provision set out in Section 7 of the Report and Appendix 5 thereto.
- (h) Levying the following Council Tax for the year 2010/11:
 - (i) A Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in Band D of £1,070, representing a nil increase in Council Tax.

It is proposed that, if the principle of charging for some Social Work services is approved by Council and the budget assumption figure endorsed, a policy is developed in accordance with COSLA guidance and that this is subject to consultation with key stakeholders before being presented to Members of Falkirk Council for consideration. Adherence to COSLA guidance will ensure that this policy is based on best practice and is equitable, affordable for service users and cost effective to administer.

Community Services have proposed savings of £0.540m. This includes £0.194m for ending the Big in Falkirk event. It is also intended to make general procurement savings of £0.235m.

As part of the Grant/Funding review, an equality impact assessment (EQIA) was undertaken in relation to the proposed decision of an initial 3% cut which has been driven by the significant budgetary pressures which the Council is currently under. As part of this EQIA process, recommendations have been made for future action to be taken by Services in relation to the review of funding organisations.

The Short term recommendation in relation to the 3% funding cut will be implemented immediately (from April 2010) and will be consistent across all organisations in receipt of Council support.

Timescales for implementation

April 2010 - March 2011

Methods of publication

Council website
Committee reports

Monitoring arrangements

Review of any EIAs - i.e. Social Work charges, Blue Badge charges, consultation feedback, funding arrangements.

Date of next review (Month and Year)

January 2011 (in preparation for April 2011-March 2012 budget)

**POLICY NAME - COMMUNAL REFUGE PROVISION FOR WOMEN FLEEING DOMESTIC ABUSE
and OUT OF HOUR SERVICES PROVIDED BY FALKIRK AND DISTRICT WOMEN'S AID**

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy or service?

To ensure that women can access good quality, supported, safe accommodation whilst they either secure or regain access to accommodation.

To provide an emergency contact service for access to emergency accommodation through an out of hours helpline manned by staff from FDWA.

Who implements the policy?

Falkirk and District Women's Aid in collaboration with Falkirk Council Corporate and Neighbourhood Services (Homeless Service).

Person carrying out impact assessment

Joanna Stewart

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the Policy and in what way (for example, staff, service users, visitors)?

Service users

What data is available to facilitate the screening of the policy?

Information from homeless system on number of applicants fleeing domestic abuse and requiring emergency accommodation.

Sex of applicant	2007-2008	2008-2009	Apr-Nov09	Total
Female	153	166	98	417
Male	47	72	37	156
Total	200	238	135	573

The following statistics show a decrease in access to refuge services over the past few years and at present there is no-one using the refuge (since November 2009).

2008/09 - 14

2007/08 - 23

2006/07 - 43

The refuge currently has 6 rooms and has a capacity for 14 persons. The accommodation has shared bathing facilities, shared kitchen and a communal area. Initial information from the Scottish Government is that the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation Order) (Scotland) Order 2004 will be extended to include refuge accommodation which therefore would involve major renovations within the refuge to meet the stipulations of the order. It was deemed that this should be an expensive and time consuming exercise and that the accommodation would be reduced from the initial 6 rooms to a possible 4 which would make the cost recovery of the accommodation unviable.

Information from Women's Aid on numbers calling the out-of-hours service.

In 2007-08 this service received 311 calls - in effect each call cost £58 to action or respond to. Unfortunately, information for 2008-09 is not available.

Is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion by any of the equality strands?

No, there is no difference to the service offered to women regardless of their age, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability status.

However, it is recognised that the within the communal refuge is only suitable for single females. The accommodation is not adapted for disabled clients whereas there are some temporary accommodation properties adapted for disabled clients.

Numbers of callers in relation to the on-call service are gathered, however, this is numbers only and is not broken down by any other information such as ethnicity, gender etc. The data includes where the caller is calling from as there is no standby service for the neighbouring Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils therefore the Falkirk out of hours service may have been servicing these areas as well despite the fact that there are two national helplines that offer duplicate services.

Does evidence indicate there is access to services and benefits reduced or denied for some groups?

No, there is no difference to the service offered to women regardless of their age, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability status.

However, at present access to the communal refuge is denied to males but this will not be the case with temporary accommodation which will replace the refuge. In addition the temporary accommodation will provide more suitable options for anyone with a disability which cannot be accommodated at the refuge.

There is a communal kitchen in the refuge where there could be an impact with the preparation and cooking of food between different ethnicities

In general there will be access to a more versatile accommodation and a far greater number of properties. Also time spent in the refuge can be quite lengthy and the new accommodation solutions offer women a more settled environment to deal with their situation.

Out of hours Service - The out of hour's service is still available but not manned by FDWA Support workers.

Do particular groups face increased difficulty or indignity as a result of the Policy?

No, there is no difference to the service offered to women regardless of their age, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability status.

Each client will be given their own furnished accommodation property so will not have to share any facilities and an effort will be made to ensure accommodation is close to children's school. By accessing accommodation through the Local Authorities pool of temporary accommodation it will increase the chance of women and their children being accommodated near any services that they require. Most people in the area know where the Women's refuge is at the moment but this should not be the case with temporary accommodation. The flats utilised for women fleeing domestic abuse will also be subject to the Councils review of accommodation ensuring that temporary accommodation is not stigmatised within the local community. There may be issues with affordability of temporary accommodation as the rents may be higher than the refuge. However, for those women on benefits, additional financial support could be available via the benefits process and the Council are working with to ensure that women have access to all benefits and services available.

Clients will still be able to access out of hours support via the Council's own out of hours service for emergency assistance in terms of accommodation. The National Women's Aid helpline and the Scottish Domestic Abuse helpline are both still available for Women for emotional support.

Are there any higher complaints or lower satisfaction rates from particular groups in connection with the policy?

No

Is there any evidence that the policy fails to respond to the needs of a particular group?

The change from refuge accommodation to temporary accommodation will mean that individual needs will be taken into consideration.

Out of hours service is available from the Local Authority to access accommodation and from the two National helplines.

Where are there gaps in data or non-availability of data which would need to be gathered in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

At present there is a lack of information on the satisfaction of temporary accommodation however there are plans to ensure that satisfaction of accommodation is sourced from FDWA and the Local Authority for any person fleeing domestic abuse who occupies temporary accommodation.

Consultation carried out (methods, target groups, consulted etc)

Discussions held with FDWA in respect of removing the on-call provision from workers and moving this to within Falkirk Council responsibility.

Awaiting information from FDWA from service user feedback.

Proposed method to reduce or eliminate adverse impact (including reasons chosen).

Use of temporary accommodation will extend the options to women fleeing due to domestic abuse and will provide a more versatile accommodation option.

Considering all the information above, please indicate areas where a differential impact occurs or has the potential to occur.

With the refuge is being closed and the communal part disbanded there won't be the emotional support available from other women through the shared communal areas in the refuge accommodation. However, accommodation given to the women will be more suited to their own personal/family needs. To ensure ongoing emotional support, there are plans to recruit an additional outreach worker to FDWA who will visit women in temporary accommodation and potential plans to set up a support group for women in temporary accommodation.

Recommend for full impact assessment (Yes or No) (*)

No

If no, please outline reason for decision.

Providing temporary accommodation will mean that accommodation can be tailored to the individuals needs and issues such as disabilities can be catered for. Women, and their children, can maintain their own independence.

The out of hour's service is still available from the Local Authority and other National Agencies. Access to accommodation will be more streamlined and of a far greater quantity.

Priority High/Medium/Low

High

Risk of adverse impact - data used including assessment of reliability/validity

Gender - Medium
All other strands - Low

Assessment of adverse impact

Gender - Medium
All other strands - Low

Conclusions and recommendations for amendments to the policy.

Decision to no longer utilise the refuge (which is owned by the Local Authority) was approved at Housing and Social Care Committee on the 17th November 2009.

Timescales for implementation

January 2010

Monitoring arrangements

The impact will be monitored for an initial three months by analysing the volume of approached to the service of households fleeing domestic violence and requiring accommodation. This will be followed by a service user questionnaire

Date of next review

April 2010

POLICY NAME - NATIONAL RECRUITMENT PORTAL

Policy Name

National Recruitment Portal

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?

Advertising vacancies and the online application process through the National Recruitment Portal

Person(s) carrying out Assessment

Liz McKnight and Jackie McAuley

Who implements the policy?

Recruiting managers, existing and potential employees and Human Resources

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the Policy and in what way (for example, staff, service users, visitors)?

All existing and potential employees - fair processes and procedures in place to ensure equality of opportunity when applying for jobs
Recruiting managers - ensures compliance with legislation and regulations and a clear process to follow when recruiting

What data is available to facilitate the screening of the policy?

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is available to gather information to monitor statistical information of different equality strands. This information is used for Performance Indicator reporting. This form is currently under review to standardise the information gathered from all Scottish Councils.

Is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion by any of the equality strands?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

There is no evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion however there are currently gaps in the information recorded. This is being addressed by a standardised equal opportunities monitoring form to ensure information on all strands is collected and analysed. This is being considered by COSLA and SCEN to ensure the form complies with legislation.

Does evidence indicate access to services and benefits are reduced or denied for some groups?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

Initial feedback suggests a few applicants experienced difficulty using the portal however after coaching from team this negativity has turned into positive feedback. These were not identified under any specific strands.

Are there any higher complaints or lower satisfaction rates from particular groups in connection with the policy?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

There is no evidence to suggest there are higher complaint rates from particular strands.

Is there any evidence that the policy fails to respond to the needs of a particular group?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

No - eg the Guaranteed Interview Scheme ensures that applicants with a disability and New Deal applicants meeting essential criteria are guaranteed an interview. This is part of both online and hard copy application processes.

Candidates are able to access local government vacancies across Scotland through one site. They are able to register an account which they can use for multiple applications across different local authorities.

Restricting advertising and applications to online may have a negative impact on some groups, particularly individuals with refugee status, homeless people and those on a low income where internet access may be an issue. Those living in rural locations may also have issues with internet/broadband access. There is further work required to gather evidence to determine the potential impact on other groups (e.g. access and use of the internet by age group).

Many councils offer advice on accessing online facilities (e.g. through libraries), however candidates must be able to regularly check email accounts and so access must be regular. Additionally it must be ensured that there are no equality issues in access to library facilities (e.g. some libraries stipulate that individuals must have a library card to access online facilities - this may have an impact on homeless people).

Falkirk Council continues to provide hard copy application packs on request to ensure equity of access to the recruitment process.

The site has recently been tested for accessibility and currently falls short of Level A Accessibility. Work is currently being done by the supplier to ensure that the site meets the Level AA standard. Hard copy application packs can be made available in different languages or formats on request. This should be reflected on the online system and has been raised with the national super-users group however this information will be added to the Falkirk Council micro site FAQs.

The site enables candidates to save sections of applications and return to complete at later dates or times which is beneficial for people requiring breaks from concentration due to particular disabilities.

Where are there gaps in data or non-availability of data which would need to be gathered in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form is currently being reviewed to include all equality strands. This will improve monitoring.

Considering all the information above, please indicate the level of differential impact that has occurred or has the potential to occur (High, Medium or Low). Highlight the details of the impact - *note, include details on any potential or actual positive impacts as well as potential or actual negative impacts.*

Medium

Recommend for full impact assessment (Yes or No).

No. If no full assessment is required, please outline your reason for this decision.

Whilst there is a potential adverse impact for disability & race interventions have been put in place (e.g. hard copy application process & information available in other languages and formats) to ensure equity of access to the recruitment process. Influence to change the national site is limited however information has been fed back to the national super-users group and amendments can be made to Falkirk Council's micro site to ensure equality of access.

Please highlight the strand(s) where there is risk of a potential or an actual adverse impact in relation to the policy (Yes/No)

Race	- Yes
Gender	- No
Disability	- Yes
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

Please highlight your assessment of this impact (High/Medium/Low/None)

Race	- Low
Gender	- None
Disability	- Low
Age	- None
Sexual Orientation	- None
Religion/Belief	- None

Consultation carried out (methods, target groups, consulted etc). (*Identify who was involved in the process, what feedback was received and how this feedback was used*).

A pilot exercise was initially carried out with a number of Local Authorities in relation to the development of the Portal. Once this pilot and development stage was underway, consultation and involvement took place with the remaining Local Authorities (Senior Management) in relation to the roll out of the Portal. Equality/Policy Officers within each Local Authority were also involved in respect of accessibility and equality monitoring data.

In addition, feedback was received from users in relation to the accessibility and navigation of the system. This feedback was used to make relevant development changes.

Conclusions and recommendations for amendments to the policy.

The Council had an online system already in place and the decision was taken to migrate to the new Portal. This allowed a consistent approach to the recruitment process in relation to other Local Authorities.

This decision to introduce the Portal was signed off by the Leader of the Council at a COSLA meeting.

Methods of publication

The Portal is available through the Council's website. Support is also available through the Recruitment Team.

Monitoring arrangements

The Portal is monitored on an ongoing basis in relation to usage and dealing with queries. The Super-User group meets on a quarterly basis also to review/monitor progress of the system.

PROPOSAL ON RECRUITMENT OF RETIRED TEACHERS TO SUPPLY WORK

Policy Name

Proposal on Recruitment of Retired Teachers (to supply work).

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?

To ensure that Education Services have a clear policy on the recruitment of retired teachers.

Person(s) carrying out Assessment

Gary Greenhorn

Who implements the policy?

Education Services.

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way (for example staff, service users, visitors)?

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are the main beneficiaries of this policy. This policy is designed to provide NQTs with more opportunities to gain employment and more importantly to gain teaching experience. This proposal enforces the aim of trying to maximise employment opportunities for NQTs in order to ensure the teaching profession continued to be refreshed and developed.

What data is available to facilitate the screening of the policy?

The policy ties into the Scottish Government's aims in relation to the teaching profession. Review of other local authority policies have also been considered, for example, Fife Council.

Is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion by any of the equality strands?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

No specific evidence is available in relation to the uptake in relation to the equality strands. The policy will cover all NQTs and ensure they gain the vital teaching experience necessary to demonstrate the skills needed to gain a permanent teaching post.

There is the question as to where there would be gender or age imbalance as anecdotal evidence would suggest that many NQTs are younger and predominately female and those retiring and therefore excluded would be within an older age bracket. Statistics of recent NQTs in 2008/09 within Falkirk Council have shown that the majority have been female (84%), however this is representative of the teaching population (which is 80% female and 20% male). However, in terms of age breakdown there is a more even split across age groups, 20-24 (43%); 25-44 (38%); 45-54 (18.5%); and 55-64 (0.5%).

Does evidence indicate access to services and benefits are reduced or denied for some groups?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- Yes
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

The policy will affect any teacher who has retired. However, some teachers to have retired before aged 60 may now be able to gain employment as supply teachers, where there is a specific need for experienced teachers.

The retirement policy is based on legislation and SPPA regulations. The excluded group, ie those who have chosen to retire is based on local retirement policies. The application of the retirement policy will have a direct impact on the excluded group. There is no evidence to suggest that the retirement policy is discriminatory on the basis of gender or age.

Falkirk Council's Flexible Retirement Policy provides all employees, including teachers, the opportunity to request to work beyond retirement age.

Do particular groups face increased difficulty or indignity as a result of the policy?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

Teachers who have already taken early retirement (before age 60) may find employment opportunities harder to access. However, the policy does allow for the Director of Education to approve the employment of retired teachers in exceptional circumstances. To ensure fairness, these decisions will be processed via the Quality Improvement Officer (QIO).

There are no changes made to existing teachers short-term or temporary contracts.

There is a difference in approach in relation to SJC employees and it should be considered whether this should be reviewed in order to ensure consistency of approach/ application in terms of the employment of retired teachers.

Are there any higher complaints or lower satisfaction rates from particular groups in connection with this policy?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

The policy has not yet been implemented so no feedback has been obtained as yet. However, as with all policies, trade unions will be involved in consultations in respect of this process and communications will be provided to teachers.

Is there any evidence that the policy fails to respond to the needs of a particular group?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

No. Whilst the policy is in place to ensure NQTs receive opportunities to gain teaching experience, opportunities are still in place for the recruitment of retired teachers.

Where are there gaps in data or non-availability of data which would need to be gathered in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

Data will be gathered to assess the numbers of NQTs who gain access to supply work.

Considering all the information above, please indicate areas where a differential impact occurs or has the potential to occur.

Experienced teachers (taking early retirement before aged 60) may find employment opportunities reduced. However, where schools have a specific need for an experienced teacher to the policy will enable the school's individual needs to be reviewed and necessary arrangement agreed.

Consultation carried out (methods, target groups, consulted etc).

These proposals have been discussed with: ESMT (including Trade Unions), Head Teachers meetings and Corporate HR.

These proposals will be therefore tabled at NGT for further discussion and acceptance to form part of our Early Retirement Policy.

Recommend for full impact assessment (yes or no)?

No, there is an overall low impact.

The policy ties into the Scottish Government aims of 'refreshing the profession' in relation to the teaching profession. Whilst focus may be in the NQTs gaining vital teaching experience, procedures will still be in place for the recruitment of retired/ experienced teachers where required.

POLICY NAME - RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Policy Name

Recruitment and Selection Policy

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?

To attract sufficient suitable applicants in a cost effective way, while ensuring potential applicants are not discriminated against.

Who implements the policy?

Recruiting managers, existing and potential employees and Human Resources

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the Policy and in what way (for example, staff, service users, visitors)?

All existing and potential employees - fair processes and procedures in place to ensure equality of opportunity when applying for jobs
Recruiting managers - ensures compliance with legislation and regulations and a clear process to follow when recruiting

What data is available to facilitate the screening of the policy?

Legislation re UK Border Agency pre-employment checks
Recruitment portal
Feedback from Services
Equal Opportunities monitoring data

Is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion by any of the equality strands?

No - the policy should ensure that applicants from all strands have equality of opportunity and prompts recruiting managers to consider any reasonable adjustments required to ensure that this is the case. Equal opportunities monitoring data is comparable to those of the local area.

Does evidence indicate there is access to services and benefits reduced or denied for some groups?

No - Equal Opportunities monitoring is separate to the information provided to recruiting managers for shortlisting, therefore decisions are made on ability to fulfil the requirements of the post and removing potential bias in relation to any equality strand. A range of advertising media are used and job adverts are non-discriminatory with generic wording to ensure that potential candidates are not excluded.

Do particular groups face increased difficulty or indignity as a result of the Policy?

No - the procedure and processes in the Policy should reduce difficulties in all stages of recruitment. Adjustments can be put in place as and when required eg for language or disability. Recruiting managers undertake recruitment and selection training, which includes equality obligations.

Are there any higher complaints or lower satisfaction rates from particular groups in connection with the policy?

Recruitment complaints monitoring includes collecting data by ethnic group, gender, disability and age. There is no evidence to suggest that are higher complaint rates from particular strands.

Is there any evidence that the policy fails to respond to the needs of a particular group?

No - eg the Guaranteed Interview Scheme ensures that applicants with a disability and New Deal applicants meeting essential criteria are guaranteed an interview.

Where are there gaps in data or non-availability of data which would need to be gathered in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

Equal opportunities monitoring is carried out for all applicants, including gender, age, caring responsibilities, ethnic origin and religion. There may be a requirement in future to monitor by sexual orientation.

Considering all the information above, please indicate areas where a differential impact occurs or has the potential to occur.

Low

Recommend for full impact assessment (Yes or No)

No

If no, please outline reason for decision

No adverse impact identified for any strand - the policy is in place to ensure equal opportunities for all strands.

FINAL REPORT DATA

Priority High/Medium/Low

Low

Person carrying out impact assessment

Jackie McAuley, HR Adviser (Policy)

Risk of adverse impact - data used including assessment of reliability/validity

None

Assessment of adverse impact

N/A

Consultation carried out (methods, target groups, consulted etc)

Formal consultation - draft policy sent to People & Equality Working Group, Trade Unions and Services.

Proposed method to reduce or eliminate adverse impact (including reasons chosen)

n/a

Conclusions and recommendations for amendments to the policy. Please state who/which group or committee considered the options and took the decision on what action would be taken. If a number of options were considered, summarise these and the reason for selecting one option over any others. If no further action is required as a result of the EQIA, please explain

Policy considered by JCC on 27th May 2009

Timescales for implementation

The revised policy will be implemented post-committee approval

Methods of publication

Paper copies circulated to be included in Manager's Policy and Procedure Handbook
Electronic copy added to the intranet

Monitoring arrangements

The policy will be reviewed in 3 years, unless further developments require this to be done sooner

Date of next review (Month and Year)

January 2012

ASSESSMENT AND ELIGIBILITY FRAMEWORK SERVICES

Policy Name

Assessment and Eligibility Framework Services

What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?

To provide equal and transparent access to social work services across Falkirk Council services

Who implements the policy within the Council?

Staff who have assessment and care management responsibilities within community care teams.

Who are the stakeholders or who is intended to benefit from the Policy and in what way (for example, staff, service users, visitors)?

A wide range of stakeholders will benefit from the policy. In particular service users will be given a clear priority and transparent understanding of services that can be offered. Service will be offered on a fair and consistent basis with limits set for the Falkirk council area. Staff in social work services and key stakeholders in health. Voluntary organisations and the private sector will have a consistent framework in which to deliver services. Elected members will have a definitive overview of the services provided by social work services.

Please highlight what data is/was available to facilitate the screening of the policy? *Note: Gathering of information/evidence can include risk and financial assessments, community consultation, research (including websites), Officer knowledge/experience, Equalities monitoring data, service user feedback (including complaints) and partner agency feedback.*

An extensive range of data was used and is available which facilitates the screening of this policy:

- Monthly budget reports for community care services
- Social work information system including reports on OT waiting lists, overall pending lists for community care service users and adult protection investigations.
- Same as you returns in relation to service users with learning disabilities.
- Information relating to community care service users in respect of the best value forum reporting system.
- Adult support and protection reports for the ASP committee.
- Research information on population trends in Falkirk council provided by Jenny Boag, research and information officer Falkirk council.
- Information from frontline managers and staff.

Based on any data gathered, is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake or exclusion by any of the equality strands? *Note: A broad interpretation should be taken of the word 'evidence'. It should include anecdotal evidence and evidence derived from qualitative or quantitative analysis where available.*

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	- No- A central reason for promoting eligibility criteria is to address this issue in providing a fair and consistent service.
Age	-No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

Please outline reason(s):

Does the data or any evidence indicate access to services and benefits are reduced or denied for some groups?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	-No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

Please outline reason(s):

Is there any evidence that the policy fails to respond to the needs of a particular group?

Race	- No
Gender	- No
Disability	-No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

Please outline reason(s):

Have there been any higher complaints or lower satisfaction rates from particular groups in connection with the policy?

Race	-No
Gender	- No
Disability	-No
Age	- No
Sexual Orientation	- No
Religion/Belief	- No

Please outline reason(s):

If there are gaps in the data or non-availability of data please highlight what would need to be gathered in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

There is one clear gap in the data and that is in relation to providing reliable performance information across the teams. The introduction of the eligibility criteria would allow us to monitor performance more effectively. Accurate recording of service provided across the teams and within teams by individuals would be available for the first time.

Considering all the information above, please indicate the level of differential impact that has occurred or has the potential to occur (High, Medium or Low). Highlight the details of the impact - *note, include details on any potential or actual positive impacts as well as potential or actual negative impacts.*

Moving from the current arrangements to implementing the new framework could lead to an increase in complaints as some provision may be stopped or reduced. The new eligibility framework will ensure a consistent approach based on assessment of need. It provides service users and carers with a clear guide in relation to what services social work will provide. It informs the staff of the range of services that can be offered and allows them to be transparent with service users and carers. It informs our key stakeholders in health, voluntary organisations and the private sector of the exact nature and extent of services provided.

Recommend for full impact assessment (Yes or No).

No

The impact of this eligibility criteria will be to provide equality and consistency across social work services in Falkirk. It will make thresholds transparent and give people a clear idea of their entitlement to service.

ASSESSING IMPACT

If you have identified adverse impact, could this amount to unlawful discrimination? (If not, explain why not).

No Adverse impact anticipated.

If the policy intends to result in different outcomes for different groups by using positive action to redress disadvantages, is this lawful? (Confirm what positive action is being taken and why).

The policy intends to provide a consistent approach to the delivery of services for all service user groups in Falkirk council. Outcomes for all groups in community care will be measured in the same ways using the eligibility criteria.

Consultation/Involvement carried out (methods, target groups etc). (Identify who was involved in the process, what feedback was received and how this feedback was used).

Community care staff, frontline workers, managers and the senior management team were involved in the consultation in relation to the development of the eligibility criteria. The policy was taken to committee by the Director of Social work and approved by elected members.

Proposed method to reduce or eliminate adverse impact (including reasons chosen). (Explain what action is being taken or planned to reduce adverse impact).

Briefings for all staff will be provided in relation to the eligibility criteria so that it is applied consistently across the teams. A performance framework will be put in place which includes new data being captured on the electronic SWIS system and regular audit of staff performance in using the criteria.

ORGANISATION SIGN OFF DATA

Person carrying out impact assessment

Paul Donnelly Service manager

For the following questions, tick areas of equality relevance (tick boxes will refer to equality strands - Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion/Belief, None)

Please highlight the strand(s) where there is risk of a potential or an actual adverse impact in relation to the policy (Yes/No)

Race	- /No
Gender	- /No
Disability	- /No
Age	- /No
Sexual Orientation	- /No
Religion/Belief	- /No

Please highlight your assessment of this impact (High/Medium/Low/None)

Race	- None
Gender	- None
Disability	- None
Age	- None
Sexual Orientation	- None
Religion/Belief	- None

Conclusions and recommendations for amendments to the policy.

- a. *Please state who/which group or committee considered the options and the decision on what action would be taken.*
- b. *If a number of options were considered, summarise these and the reason for selecting one option over any others.*
- c. *If no further action is required as a result of the EQIA please explain.*

a. This framework was considered by the Social work committee and agreement was reached to implement it.
b. Not applicable
c. No further action is required as a result of the EQIA as there is no adverse impact attached to this framework.

Timescales for implementation

The framework will be implemented in September 2010 to coincide with the introduction of a pilot Intake service within community care.
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Methods of publication (*identify how/where the policy will be made available and who to - i.e. employees, service users*)

The policy will be made available to the general public and all relevant groups. The policy will be available on Falkirk council's website. A leaflet has been produced which will be given to the general public and it will be available in all social work offices within the Falkirk council area.
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Monitoring arrangements (*identify any key outcomes, actions or timescales for monitoring of the policy*)

Key outcomes include:

A consistent approach to the delivery of service across community care.
Equity in service delivery regardless where a service user or care lives.
A more efficient and effective community care service that delivers quality services.

These outcomes will be monitored through the SWIS system and through an audit of community care teams.

Date of next review (Month and Year)

Review date 31st March 2011