

## Equalities Screening Record Form

<b>Date of Screening:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	<b>Directorate:</b> People		<b>Section:</b> Early Help & Communities
<b>1. Activity to be assessed</b>	Bracknell Forest <b>COVID Winter Grant / COVID Local Support Grant</b>		
<b>2. What is the activity?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change		
<b>3. Is it a new or existing activity?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Existing		
<b>4. Officer responsible for the screening</b>	Sarah Gee		
<b>5. Who are the members of the screening team?</b>	Sharon Warner, Harjit Hunjan, Samantha Wood, Katie Flint (reviewed and updated by Katie Flint and Harjit Hunjan)		
<b>6. What is the purpose of the activity?</b>	<p>Local authorities have been allocated funding, based on population size and deprivation, to support families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period (to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021) with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting) and other essentials. This has been extended multiple times to cover the same conditions but now up to the time period of 30 September 2021). At least 80% of the total funding is ring-fenced to support households with children and the remaining 20% to other households experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, hardship as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>Local authorities are responsible and have been given significant discretion for setting up the support and determining eligibility. The main restrictions are that at least 80% of the fund must be distributed to families with children, and at least 80% must be provided for food costs and essential heating and utility bills. Any funding not spent by the end of the period must be returned to the Department for Work and Pensions.</p>		
<b>7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?</b>	Vulnerable families with children and other households in hardship and adversely affected by the pandemic meeting the eligibility framework.		
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Please tick yes or no</b>	<b>Is there an impact?</b> What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact	<b>What evidence do you have to support this?</b> E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc

		positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.	Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
<b>8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.</b>	N	This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic	<p>The Councils Covid-19 Residents Survey (July 2020) highlights that the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of certain population groups may require more support than others to recover from the experience of the pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled residents are more likely than other residents to contact the Council for support (38% of disabled residents contacted the Council compared with 17% of non-disabled residents. (Bracknell Forest Council Covid-19 Residents' Survey July 2020)</li> <li>• 37% of clients accessing the Bracknell Citizens Advice for support (as of 02.11.20) had a disability or Long-term health condition.</li> </ul> <p>This evidence shows disabled residents are more likely to be in financial hardship due to COVID-19. This scheme seeks to alleviate some of this hardship.</p> <p>Disabled residents who are unable to work may be considered eligible linked to the benefits they receive or the wider vulnerability to financial hardship.</p> <p>Proactive communications will aim to reach the whole community, disabled residents are particularly likely to be reached through a leaflet drop to people who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) which includes an overview of the scheme. Council services and the VCS will also work with residents with disabilities and</p>

				<p>promote the information, such as through our adult social care teams for adults with learning disabilities, disabilities and mental health issues.</p> <p>The information about the scheme has been designed to be accessible through a number of methods; alternative formats for the information will be available. The main details of the scheme are on the website which offers a number of accessibility functions including reading text aloud. Partner organisations are also aware of the scheme and will be supporting those who may have difficulty in accessing services via the website.</p> <p>The Council's Covid-19 Residents Survey (July 2020) highlights that 73% of disabled residents are confident accessing services online, compared with 90% of non-disabled residents.</p> <p>Any resident with a disability wanting to make an application to the winter grant scheme can also call the Council and a member of staff can complete the application process for them over the phone. The process will also enable someone working with a vulnerable customer to submit an application on their behalf.</p> <p>The support can be provided through a number of different options, so for example if a disabled resident was not able to visit the foodbank for support, they may be issued a supermarket voucher, which can be used with some retailers online.</p>
<b>9. Racial equality</b>		N	This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic group	National and local data confirms that the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of people within this characteristic group require more support than others to recover from the experience of the pandemic.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longstanding inequalities (structural and societal environments, and socio-economic factors) indicate that the COVID-19 Pandemic has had a disproportionately negative effect on the BAME community's health and economic wellbeing. (Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups PHE June 2020)</li> <li>• During July to September 2020 the UK unemployment rate (ONS Data) was 4.4% for people from a white ethnic background and higher 8.5% when compared for people from minority ethnic backgrounds,</li> <li>• A Runnymede Trust survey found that 32% of BAME groups reported losing some income compared to 23% of people from a white background.</li> <li>• White British or Irish residents are more likely to contact the Council for support: 22% of White British or Irish residents contacted the Council compared with 12% of Non-White British or Irish residents. (Covid-19 Residents survey)</li> </ul> <p>This evidence shows some ethnicities are more likely to be in financial hardship due to COVID-19. This scheme seeks to alleviate some of this hardship.</p> <p>Residents who are unable to work or who have lost their job may be considered eligible linked to the benefits they receive.</p> <p>Proactive communications will aim to reach the whole community, a number of communication methods will be used including through social media, website</p>
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<b>10. Sex equality</b>		N	Neutral	<p>There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic. There may be some disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on women who are more often in lower wage jobs. Low income is considered as part of the eligibility for this scheme which seeks to address any inequality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-2018 population estimate shows the population in Bracknell Forest has:49.6% male to 50.4% female split and will have equitable access to the support</li> </ul>
<b>11. Sexual orientation equality</b>		N	Neutral	<p>There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the Annual Population Survey in 2015 1.8% of the population defined themselves as being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) and will have equitable access to the support</li> </ul>

<b>12. Gender re-assignment</b>		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.
<b>13. Age equality</b>		N	This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, however, up to 20% of the total funding is available to other eligible households experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, hardship as a result of the pandemic including older people.</li> <li>Households receiving other forms of assistance are not excluded from receiving support through this grant.</li> <li>On-going support for residents considered to particularly vulnerable is provided through Bracknell Forest Community Response</li> </ul> <p>This scheme seeks to alleviate some of this hardship for families with children who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Many families may have experience additional financial costs during the pandemic where children have been off school and home schooled.</p> <p>Children will be specifically identified for support via their schools, early years providers, the health visiting service and through current Bracknell Forest caseload information. Their families will be provided with support with food for the school holidays for the period covered by the grant (Dec 20 to Mar 21), for the additional mealtimes where children will be at home.</p> <p>Schools will also be provided with information about the wider support the scheme can offer, such as for</p>

				<p>utility bills to ensure that young people are warm over the winter.</p> <p>Proactive communications will aim to reach the whole community, a number of communication methods will be used including through social media, website content and the community information champions. Schools, early years providers and the health visiting team will be key communications channels to contact families with children. A booklet is also being sent to clinically extremely vulnerable residents in the borough who are predominantly older residents.</p> <p>The results of the Councils Covid-19 Residents Survey (July 2020) highlights perhaps not surprisingly, confidence to access services online is related to age, with younger residents more confident than older residents. For example, 99% of residents aged 18-34 are confident compared with 75% of residents aged 55 and over and 67% of retired residents confident.</p> <p>Older residents who do not have access to or are not confident in accessing services online will be able to call the Council and can be supported through the application with a member of staff completing the online form for them.</p>
<b>14. Religion and belief equality</b>		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.
<b>15. Pregnancy and maternity equality</b>		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.
<b>16. Marriage and civil partnership equality</b>		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.

<p><b>17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.</b></p>	<p>Residents that look after family members, friends, neighbours or others for 35-49 hours a week are more likely to remain unemployed and less likely to have accessed or received support (Covid-19 Residents survey). They may potentially benefit from this scheme. The scheme will be proactively promoted to carers through the council's carers team and The Ark voluntary organisation who run the 'Signal for Carers' support contract.</p> <p>When accessing services online 88% of residents said they are confident to access services online (Bracknell Forest Council COVID-19 Residents' Survey July 2020). Additional measures will be in place to support those vulnerable residents who may be digitally excluded to access elements of the service that require an online application form to be completed. For example, the form can be completed on behalf of the household by a family member or close friend, alternatively a professional can make a referral for this. The voucher codes that will be issued to schools can be redeemed online or printed for parents directly by the school if they are not able to access this online. Similarly, residents receiving a utility top up for their meter key can receive this in several ways including via text, email or a hard copy.</p>		
<p><b>18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?</b></p>	<p>No adverse or negative impacts have been identified.</p>		
<p><b>19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?</b></p>	<p>There are disparities in impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on certain characteristic groups ( detailed above) who require more support than others to recover from their experience of the pandemic) . This support will help to ensure that there is more equity across service users through a consistent eligibility and application process.</p> <p>The scheme is likely to positively impact hundreds of households across the borough who are in financial hardship. It is estimated that around 2,400 pupils and under 5s will receive support for food during the holidays.</p>		
<p><b>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</b></p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>N</p>	



<b>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</b>	The council is required to monitor and report to the DWP how the funding is allocated and spent, this is to ensure that children are reached. Given the disparities in the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on particular groups of residents, targeted equality data will be collected to ensure that the funding delivers a fair, equitable and accessible service to those eligible households having the greatest need.		
<b>22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?</b>	Y	N	A full impact assessment is not required as it has been evidenced above that there is no negative impacts to particular groups within the community and actions have been identified to proactively promote the scheme and ensure that the food voucher distribution and online application process is accessible to all residents.
<b>23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data?</b> Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Milestone/Success Criteria</b>
<b>24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?</b>	Project overseen by the Financial Hardship Subgroup		
<b>25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?</b>			

**26. Assistant director's signature.**

Signature: Sarah Gee

Date: 01/07/21

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sarah Gee', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.