

Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: 2 nd December	Directorate: People	Section: Early Help & Communities	
1. Activity to be assessed	Bracknell Forest COVID Winter Grant / COVID Local Support Grant / Household Support Grant		
2. What is the activity?	<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		
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Existing		
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Mark Barrett		
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Sharon Warner, Harjit Hunjan, Samantha Wood, Katie Flint (reviewed and updated by Katie Flint, Harjit Hunjan and Claudia Trott)		
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	<p>Local authorities were allocated funding, based on population size and deprivation, to support vulnerable residents particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period (to 31st 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. It has been announced that the council will receive more funding from the 01 October 2021. Previously at least 80% of the total funding was 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. The focus has now shifted to the impacts of the cost of living crisis and a minimum of one third of the funding must be spent on families with children, one third on pensioners and the remaining on other vulnerable households.</p> <p>Local authorities are responsible and have been given significant discretion for setting up the support and determining eligibility. Any funding not spent by the end of the period must be returned to the Department for Work and Pensions.</p>		
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	Vulnerable families with children, pensioners and other households in hardship and adversely affected by the cost of living crisis.		
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc

		<p>positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic</p>	<p>The Councils Covid-19 Residents Survey (April 2021) 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"> • Residents with a disability are more likely than other residents to have contacted the council, 46% did so since the start of November 2020, compared with 30% of non-disabled residents • 51% of clients accessing the Bracknell Citizens Advice for support (as of 20/09/2021) had a disability or Long-term health condition. <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 promote the information, such as through our adult</p>

				<p>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 (April 2021) highlights that 77% of disabled residents are confident accessing services online, compared with 89% 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>
<p>9. Racial equality</p>		<p>N</p>	<p>This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic group</p>	<p>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.</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)• 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,• A Runnymede Trust survey found that 32% of BAME groups reported losing some income compared to 23% of people from a white background.• White British or Irish residents are more likely to contact the council: For example, 35% of White British or Irish residents contacted the council compared with 23% of Black, Asian or residents of other ethnic backgrounds. (April 2021 residents survey) <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</p>
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				<p>be used including through social media, website content and the community information champions. But specially in relation to race equality, the Council will contact BAME community organisations and faith groups to proactively promote the scheme and can make translated materials available. Communications about the scheme will be led by Council staff, the voluntary and community sector and other professionals who are working with BAME communities.</p> <p>The information has been designed to be accessible through a number of methods. The main details of the scheme are on the website which can be translated into to other languages.</p>
10. Sex equality		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"> • 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
11. Sexual orientation equality		N	Neutral	<p>There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

12. Gender re-assignment		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.
13. Age equality		N	This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households receiving other forms of assistance are not excluded from receiving support through this grant. <p>This scheme seeks to alleviate some of this hardship for families with children who have been disproportionately impacted by the cost of living rises.</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, 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 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 (April 2021) highlights perhaps not</p>

			<p>surprisingly, confidence to access services online is related to age, with younger residents more confident than older residents.</p> <p>Older residents will also be targeted with a minimum of one third of the funding being ringfenced for pension age households. Those 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 redemption with a member of staff completing the online form for them.</p>	
14. Religion and belief equality		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated impact to this characteristic.
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.	<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 89% of residents said they are confident to access services online (Bracknell Forest Council COVID-19 Residents' Survey April 2021). 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</p>			

	<p>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>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?</p>	<p>No adverse or negative impacts have been identified.</p>		
<p>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?</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 2,500 pupils and under 5s will receiving support for food during the holidays.</p>		
<p>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>N</p>	
<p>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</p>	<p>The council is required to monitor and report to the DWP how the funding is allocated and spent. 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.</p>		

22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?	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.
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? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	Project overseen by the Financial Hardship Subgroup and Members Welfare Steering Group		
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?			
26. Assistant director's signature.	Signature: Date:		