


Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening:	Directorate: People	Section: Early Help and Communities									
1. Activity to be assessed	Household Support Fund Phase 4										
2. What is the activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input 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	Claudia Trott										
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Claudia Trott, Sharon Warner, Katie Flint, Mark Barratt, Harjit Hunjan										
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	<p>Local authorities have been allocated funding by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), to support vulnerable residents. This follows several previous similar funds, however the focus of the funds purpose has moved towards reducing the impact of the rising cost of living. It must be used to cover costs associated with of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting) and other essentials. The current phase of funding must be used between 01 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.</p> <p>Local authorities are responsible for how the funding is distributed 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 households in financial hardship and those 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 positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc 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								
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.	Y	This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic group.	The financial hardship needs analysis identified that households with disabilities are at far higher risk of poverty than non-disabled households particularly in the working age where poverty rates are double for those that are disabled. <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Poverty Rates</th> <th>Child</th> <th>Working age</th> <th>Pension age</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Disabled</td> <td style="text-align: center;">32%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">38%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">24%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Poverty Rates	Child	Working age	Pension age	Disabled	32%	38%	24%
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				<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Not Disabled</td> <td>30%</td> <td>17%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> </table> <p>In Q1 of the 2022/2023 year, 51% of individuals accessing citizens advice for support had a disability or long-term health condition.</p> <p>The Household Support Fund seeks to alleviate some of this hardship.</p> <p>Disabled residents in receipt of low income may be considered eligible for both the targeted support and application based support linked to the benefits they receive or the wider vulnerability to financial hardship.</p> <p>Children with SEND will also be eligible to apply for support from this funding if the family qualify as low income.</p>	Not Disabled	30%	17%	17%
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9. Racial equality	Y		This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic group.	<p>The financial hardship needs analysis identified that residents from ethnic minority groups are at higher risk of experiencing poverty compared to white individuals. The poverty rate for ethnic minority groups is 38% compared with white individuals at 19%. Specific groups are more affected, for example poverty rates are over 50% in Pakistani and Bangladeshi households.</p> <p>Minority ethnic groups saw a greater impact during the pandemic. 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.</p> <p>Resident from ethnic minority groups in receipt of low income may be considered eligible linked to the benefits they receive or the wider vulnerability to financial hardship.</p>				
10. Gender equality		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated direct impact to this characteristic.				
11. Sexual orientation equality		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated direct impact to this characteristic.				

12. Gender re-assignment		N	Neutral	There is no anticipated direct impact to this characteristic.								
13. Age equality	Y		This support will have a positive impact to this characteristic group.	<p>The Joseph Rowntree Foundation published statistics on poverty rates across age groups. Poverty rates are highest in families with children aged 0-4 and lowest in pensioners.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1525 416 2096 528"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Child</th> <th>Working age</th> <th>Pension age</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Poverty Rates</td> <td>31%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Aspects of the distribution of the funding will directly support families with children where poverty rates are highest. Including through the distribution of supermarket vouchers to eligible school children. Other households will be able to apply for support if in receipt of eligible benefits.</p> <p>Low income families with children under 5 in an education setting can specifically apply for additional support via a fast track process. Alternatively those not in an education setting can access the wider Local Welfare Scheme to apply for support through this funding.</p> <p>It is also recognised that pension age households can experience greater levels of poverty. There are already a number of national initiatives to support this, but the current recommendations also propose proactive support for this cohort.</p>		Child	Working age	Pension age	Poverty Rates	31%	20%	18%
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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.								

<p>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>	<p>This scheme is primarily targeted at cohorts with low or no income including those who are not receiving additional support from the cost-of-living payment. The needs analysis identified that those with caring responsibilities are more likely to be in receipt of low income, so this group are also likely to benefit. The VCFS grants will also support the funding to reach minority groups that the council may not directly work with or be aware of.</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. Even if a household does not automatically qualify for the target support, they can apply through the local welfare scheme, with their eligibility assessed. This ensures no group is excluded.</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>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 will receive support for food during the holidays. It is estimated that a further 1,500 households across the borough will receive direct financial support through the scheme.</p>		
<p>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</p>		<p>No</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, including the split to households with children and households with a disability. The distribution mechanisms for the previous iterations of this fund have also been reviewed as part of the phase three plans, to better understand the vulnerable cohorts.</p>		
<p>22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?</p>		<p>No</p>	<p>A full impact assessment is not required as it has been evidenced above that there are no negative impacts to particular groups within the community.</p>
<p>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.</p>			
<p>Action</p>	<p>Timescale</p>	<p>Person Responsible</p>	<p>Milestone/Success Criteria</p>
<p>Promotion of the application route through the community engagement team and wider networks to increase awareness amongst seldom heard communities to apply if relevant.</p>	<p>Apr 23 – Mar 24</p>	<p>Harjit Hunjan / Claudia Trott</p>	
<p>Continue to review the uptake of targeted support and application base routes, to adapt processes as needed.</p>	<p>Apr 23 – Mar 24</p>	<p>Sharon Warner</p>	<p>Review application demographics/uptake quarterly.</p>
<p>24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?</p>	<p>Financial hardship Action Plan. Financial Hardship Officer Group and Members Welfare Steering Group</p>		

25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	<p>Considered previous distribution of funding and other recent government funding.</p> <p>Local needs analysis information to identify a range of cohorts.</p> <p>Mapped other support/funding currently available to cohorts including through the Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme.</p> <p>Gathered information on how other authorities have previously spent the funding and plans for the current phase.</p> <p>Attended DWP information sessions to understand purpose and scope of funding.</p>
26. Assistant Director/Director signature.	<p>Signature: </p> <p>Date: 20.02.2023</p>