Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal
Removal of Positive Start Budget as a Saving

Intended outcome of proposal
To offer a saving of approx. £100k

Description of proposal
To remove the positive Start Budget Line that funds non statutory childcare support to children 0-3. Referrals for this non statutory support are made by only Health and Social Work but the budget line sits within Early Years, Education and referrals from Health and Social Work are placed by the Early Years Team.

Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes
Outcome 3 - Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all Outcome 4 - In Argyll and Bute children and young people have the best possible start

Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	**Wendy Brownlie**
Job title	**Head of Service**
Department	**Education**
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	**Ailsa Dominick**
Job title	**Development Officer**
Department	**Early Years, Education**
Sign off of EqSEIA	
Date of sign off	

Who will deliver the proposal?
Ailsa Dominick

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement
Education approached HSCP as all referrals come from them and an audit shows the demands for this support has been reduced as a result of more children being eligible for 1140hrs. Child Minders and partner nurseries have been advised that this saving may be taken. They could then increase private clients.

Data

The financial spend against this budget since the introduction of 1140hrs has reduced greatly. In 2022/23 it was £61,537 and commitment for the first 3 financial quarters this year is £32,355.

The average length of placement for a child has fallen from 110 days in 2020/21 to 22 days in the current year.

To date this session Positive Start placements have totalled: 80 days in Bute and Cowal 218 days in Helensburgh and Lomond 117 days in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay 0 days in Oban Lorn and the Isles

Other information
Scottish Government has plans to further increase eligibility of 1 and 2 year olds for funded childcare. This would see referrals for this service reduce further. Under current guidance the early years service can and does offer discretionary placements for 2 year olds who would benefit from early access to childcare but whose parents do not meet the criteria. There are no plans to end this practice.

Gaps in evidence

Section 3: Impact of proposal

Impact on service users:

	Negative	**No impact**	**Positive**	**Don't know**
Protected characteristics:				
Age	✓			
Disability		✓		
Ethnicity		✓		
Sex		✓		
Gender reassignment		✓		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		✓		
Pregnancy and Maternity		✓		
Religion		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		✓		
Island populations		✓		
Low income		✓		
Low wealth		✓		
Material deprivation		✓		
Area deprivation		✓		
Socio-economic background		✓		
Communities of place		✓		
Communities of interest		✓		

If you have identified any impacts on service users, explain what these will be.

Referrals come from situations that arise from Child Protection Issues or concerns about failure to thrive or wellbeing for children birth to 3, the removal of this funding means that these children could not in future be placed with a childminder for a short and fixed period of time and instead would require to be supported by the referring agency- Social work and or Health. There is a risk that removing this funding and service will be seen as reducing early intervention approaches, although this is a non statutory provision for Education.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):

	Negative	**No impact**	**Positive**	**Don't know**
Protected characteristics:				
Age		✓		
Disability		✓		
Ethnicity		✓		
Sex	✓			
Gender reassignment		✓		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		✓		
Pregnancy and Maternity		✓		
Religion		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		✓		
Island populations		✓		
Low income		✓		
Low wealth		✓		
Material deprivation		✓		
Area deprivation		✓		
Socio-economic background		✓		
Communities of place		✓		
Communities of interest		✓		

If you have identified any impacts on service deliverers, explain what these will be.
Almost all our child minders are female and most staff working in the early years sectotr are female

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

Child Minders are a private business who agree at times to these placements and they can take on private clients. Partner providers would be able to sell spaces to private clients and or accommodate discretionary 2 year old placements

Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?	No

Details of knock-on effects identified

Section 5: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?
Liaise with HSCP regarding families who may have been offered this support and agree what alternative multi agency support can be given to families