

# Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment (FEIA)

Version 1 – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

The purpose of this assessment is to provide balanced information to support decision making and to promote better ways of working in line with equalities (Equalities Act 2010), Welsh language promotion (The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), sustainable development (Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015), and the four parameters of debate about fairness identified by the Newport Fairness Commission (NFC Full Report to Council 2013).

**Completed by:** Deborah Weston      **Role:** Service Manager

**Head of Service:** Sarah Morgan      **Date:** 02/12/2020

**I confirm that the above Head of Service has agreed the content of this assessment**

Yes

**When you complete this FEIA, it is your responsibility to submit it to**  
impact.assessment@newport.gov.uk

## **1. Name and description of the policy / proposal being assessed. Outline the policy's purpose.**

This proposal sets out the intention to revise the staffing structure of the School Admission Team to achieve savings for realisation in the 2021/22 financial year. This involves reducing the staff compliment within the team from 7.66 full time equivalent (fte) to 6.66 fte through the reduction of 1.0 fte grade 4 School Admission Officer post. All of these posts are currently filled and there are no vacant posts that can be deleted.

## **2. Outline how you have/ will involve stakeholders who will be affected by the policy/proposal**

Formal consultation will take place as part of the Council's budget setting process for 2021/22.

This proposal will be subject to standard consultation processes as part of the Council's budget setting arrangements for 2021/22 before a decision is taken by Cabinet as to whether or not to proceed with the proposal. All stakeholders will be encouraged to participate in the consultation.

## **3. What information/evidence do you have on stakeholders? e.g. views, needs, service usage etc. Please include all the evidence you consider relevant.**

There are currently 4 School Admission Officer posts, collectively employed under 3.15 fte. These officers support the 3 Senior School Admission Officers in processing the phase transfer admission rounds and the Education Business and Development Officer in preparing for School Admission Appeals. However, their primary function is to process in-year transfer requests for admission to all primary schools across the city. Last year the team received 1,572 in-year transfer applications and these were processed wholly by these School Admission Officers.

Stakeholders will include:

- All staff within the School Admissions Team;
- Other staff across the wider Central Education Service;
- Headteachers and School Support staff;
- Children and families making applications for admission to Newport schools;
- Wider partners who are impacted by the work undertaken by the School Admissions Team.

#### 4. Equalities and Welsh language impact

Protected characteristic	Impact:			Provide further details about the nature of the impact in the section below. Does it: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote equal opportunity</li> <li>2. Promote community cohesion</li> <li>3. Help eliminate unlawful discrimination/ harassment/ victimisation?</li> </ol>
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Whilst the School Admission Officers support the phase transfer processes and the administration required around School Admission Appeals, their primary function is to process in-year transfer requests. Last year, 1,572 in-year transfer applications were received and processed in accordance with the statutory School Admissions Code, and the Council's agreed and published School Admissions Policy.</p> <p>In-year applications can take significant time to process given the lack of available places in certain parts of the City. As a result, officers often have to identify the nearest available schools (frequently for two or more siblings) and negotiate these with families on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Due to current contracted working arrangements, a reduction in the current staffing complement from 3.15 FTE to 2.15 FTE could affect more than one post. This will undoubtedly increase the amount of time taken to process applications and the probability of the Council not meeting the timescales outlined in the statutory code. This will lead to children being out of school for longer than necessary. Approximately 50% of in-year transfer requests relate to moves within the city for a variety of reasons. Where these reasons are cited as bullying, delays in processing the application could have an additional adverse impact on pupils who share protected characteristics.</p> <p>With regard to affected staff, all four (100%) of the School Admission Officers are below 50 years old and will be treated equally regardless of their age.</p>

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	Positive	Negative	Neither	
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>This proposal will affect children making applications for places in mainstream schools only. In addition, the SEN Team rather than the School Admissions Team facilitate the admission of children with statements of special educational needs.</p> <p>Approximately 50% of in-year transfer requests relate to moves within the city for a variety of reasons. Where these reasons are cited as bullying related to disability, delays in processing the application could have an additional adverse impact on pupils who share protected characteristics.</p>
<b>Gender reassignment/transgender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Approximately 50% of in-year transfer requests relate to moves within the city for a variety of reasons. Where these reasons are cited as bullying related to gender identity, delays in processing the application could have an additional adverse impact on pupils who share protected characteristics.</p>
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will have an impact on staff or family members/carers who share this protected characteristic.</p>
<b>Pregnancy or maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will have an impact on staff or family members/carers who share this protected characteristic. Any affected staff will be treated equally regardless of their status under this protected characteristic in line with current redundancy and maternity/paternity and other relevant HR policies</p>
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Approximately 50% of in-year transfer requests relate to moves within the city for a variety of reasons. Where these reasons are cited as bullying related to race, delays in processing the application could have an additional adverse impact on pupils who share protected characteristics.</p>
<b>Religion or Belief or non-belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The School Admissions Team is not responsible for processing applications to voluntary aided faith based schools. Applications are received in relation to the one voluntary controlled school in Newport, but in all cases, they are processed in accordance with the agreed and published over-subscription criteria.</p> <p>Approximately 50% of in-year transfer requests relate to moves within the city for a variety of reasons. Where these</p>

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				reasons are cited as bullying related to religion/belief, delays in processing the application could have an additional adverse impact on pupils who share protected characteristics.
<b>Sex/ Gender Identity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Both male and female pupils will be equally affected by this proposal.</p> <p>Overall, four members of staff will be directly affected by this proposal, and five members of the wider team will be indirectly affected. All members of the team are female. The proposed cuts would therefore have an adverse impact on the female workforce.</p> <p>Approximately 50% of in-year transfer requests relate to moves within the city for a variety of reasons. Where these reasons are cited as bullying related to gender identity, delays in processing the application could have an additional adverse impact on pupils who share protected characteristics.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Approximately 50% of in-year transfer requests relate to moves within the city for a variety of reasons. Where these reasons are cited as bullying related to sexual orientation, delays in processing the application could have an additional adverse impact on pupils who share protected characteristics.</p>
<b>Welsh Language</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Of the 57 schools in Newport, 4 are Welsh medium with 1 of these being a secondary school and 3 being primary schools. A fourth Welsh-medium primary school will open in September 2021. The Autumn 2020 School census records 1241 pupil as attending these schools. These schools, their pupils and families will be affected equally by any reductions to the School Admissions Team.</p> <p>From employee surveys that have been undertaken, most of potentially affected employees state they have no or little Welsh language skills.</p> <p>The decision will not affect current service levels and processes for delivering those services in Welsh</p> <p>The Local Authority has duties under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the proposed reduction in staffing</p>

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				levels will have an impact on the ability to deliver services bilingually.

## How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The Council must achieve a balanced budget and maintain the best service for its customers. Customers are wider than those in schools alone. This budget proposal prevents a further, disproportionate funding reduction to wider Council services.</p> <p>There are no options available within the School Admissions Team other than to make savings linked to staff reductions. Without the School Admissions Team making a significant saving, there will be an exacerbated pressure on other services within Central Education. The School Admissions Team is however in a position where any reduction in staffing will affect the success criteria in this area. There are nine members of staff within the team, although the full-time equivalent (FTE) make-up is only 7.66. A reduction in 1 FTE post could therefore potentially affect a number of individual officers and would not necessarily equate to the loss of one single post.</p> <p>This would increase the probability of the Council not meeting the stipulated and published offer deadlines, causing uncertainty for pupils and their families and ultimately affecting transition arrangements. This would undoubtedly lead to significant complaints from schools and families directed at officers and elected members.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>This proposal does not aid collaboration. A reduction in the staffing compliment will affect relationships with colleagues in schools, other service areas and other admission authorities.</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>All budget proposals will be consulted upon appropriately with key stakeholders including Newport City Council staff, Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, and Trade Unions, parents, pupils and Schools Forum.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.
 <p data-bbox="233 456 333 479">Prevention</p> <p data-bbox="145 490 421 629">Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p data-bbox="459 304 1406 434">The Council must achieve a balanced budget and maintain the best service for its customers. Customers are wider than those in schools alone. This budget proposal prevents a further, disproportionate funding reduction to wider Council services.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b> Despite reductions, the School Admissions Team will continue to process applications for admission to school in accordance with the Welsh Government statutory code and the Council's agreed Admissions Policy. This will support children and young people to attend school, and in turn support their progress into employment, education, or training on leaving school.</p> <p><b>A resilient Wales</b> This proposal demonstrates the flexibility of the Education Service in developing changes in ways of working based on need, context and environment. However, failing to adhere to any aspect of the Council's agreed school admission policy, including timescales for determining applications, could lead to the Council being deemed as acting inappropriately in exercising this statutory function.</p> <p><b>A healthier Wales</b> Effective systems to support admission to school will maximise school attendance and learner wellbeing, which in turn will lead to improved examination outcomes and life chances.</p> <p><b>A more equal Wales</b> Failing to adhere to any aspect of the Council's agreed school admission policy, including timescales for determining applications, could lead to the Council being deemed as acting inappropriately in exercising this statutory function. This ultimately could influence the future success of School Admission Appeals as the independent panel could take a view that the Council failed to act as it should have, and thus uphold the parent's case. An increase in the number of upheld appeals would have an impact on schools, in terms of increased class sizes and the ability to accommodate additional pupils beyond their agreed published admission number and the overall capacity of the school.</p> <p><b>A Wales of more cohesive communities</b> Despite the proposal to reduce the staffing compliment, applications for admission to school will continue to be received and processed in accordance with the Council's policy, although the probability of the Council not meeting the stipulated and published offer deadlines could cause uncertainty for pupils and their families and ultimately affect transition arrangements.</p> <p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture an thriving Welsh Language</b> This proposal will still ensure that pupils are supported to attend schools and access opportunities to develop the Welsh language.</p> <p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b> A reduction in staffing will require a more agile approach to work by the School Admissions Team, and will hopefully contribute to the work of the modernised council.</p>

## **5 What will the impact be on the wellbeing goals (under Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015)?**

The proposal will likely have a negative impact on the processes for school admission. Reduced staffing will increase the probability of the Council not meeting the stipulated and published offer deadlines. This will cause uncertainty for pupils and their families, ultimately affecting transition arrangements, and lead to children being out of school for longer than necessary. This could also lead to the Council being deemed as acting inappropriately in exercising this statutory function ultimately influencing the future success of School Admission Appeals. This could increase the number of upheld appeals, having a direct impact on schools, in terms of increased class sizes and the ability to accommodate additional pupils beyond their agreed published admission number and the overall capacity of the school.

## **6 Will the proposal/policy have a disproportionate impact on a specific geographical area of Newport?**

Whilst in general terms there should be no disproportionate impact on specific areas, applications for the most popular and over-subscribed schools will undoubtedly take longer time to be concluded resulting in children in these areas being unable to attend school for longer periods than necessary.

## **7 How does the proposal/policy relate to the parameters of debate about Fairness identified by the Newport Fairness Commission**

The budget process considers where the Council's reducing financial resources should be spent. These services affect children. The proposal should be seen collectively alongside other proposals.

## **8 Taking this assessment as a whole, what could be done to mitigate any negative impacts of your policy and better contribute to positive impacts?**

Due to current contracted working arrangements, the proposed reduction could potentially affect more than one post. This will undoubtedly increase the amount of time taken to process applications and the probability of the Council not meeting the timescales outlined in the statutory code. This will lead to children being out of school for longer than necessary, likely resulting in complaints from families directed at officers and elected members and longer-term will affect attainment, and teaching and learning.

## **9 Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing**

Regular internal performance management is undertaken to monitor adherence to statutory deadline dates and timescales for dealing with applications. This will be reported termly via the Admission Forum and through the required annual reporting function to Welsh Government. Failing to adhere to any aspect of the Council's agreed school admission policy, including timescales for determining applications, could lead to the Council being deemed as acting inappropriately in exercising this statutory function. This ultimately could influence the future success of School Admission Appeals as the independent panel could take a view that the Council failed to act as it should have, and thus uphold the parent's case. An increase in the number of upheld appeals would have an impact on schools, in terms of increased class sizes and the ability to accommodate additional pupils beyond their agreed published admission number and the overall capacity of the school.

## 10 Involvement

This proposal is being made as part of the Council's 2021/22 budget process which will include consultation and engagement with relevant key stakeholders.

## 11 Summary of Impact (for inclusion in any report)

### **Equality Act 2010 AND Welsh Language**

The proposal will have an impact on services for children and young people. The impact will negatively affect children transitioning from primary to secondary school and those transferring from one school to another. The proposal will have an impact on services for children and young people as there will be reduced capacity for direct services which specifically affect them.