

CARDIFF COUNCIL

**Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template**



Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function Title: Cardiff Council's Schools Admissions Policy 2023-24
New/Existing/Updating/Amending

Who is responsible for developing and implementing the Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function?	
Name: Richard Portas	Job Title: Programme Director
Service Team: School Organisation Programme	Service Area: Education & Lifelong Learning
Assessment Date: 19/11/2021	

1. What are the objectives of the Policy/Strategy/Project/ Procedure/ Service/Function?

To equitably administer the admission of eligible children to nursery, primary and secondary classes/schools based on parent/guardian preference in accordance with the admissions criteria detailed in Cardiff Council's School Admissions Policy 2023-24.

The Council has started consulting on the draft School Admission Arrangements 2022-2023. The consultation period is from 22 November 2021 until 17 January 2022.

The consultation is an opportunity for people to learn about proposed changes to the Cardiff Council School Admission Arrangements for the 2023/24 academic year.

The changes to the policy include:

- Reference to the 'Fresh Start' panel in place of the 'Hard to Place' panel.
- Clarification of the Childcare Offer.
- Increased Published Admission Numbers for Pentyrch Primary School, Ysgol Y Wern, Cantonian High School and Radyr Comprehensive School.

In conjunction with the consultation on the School Admission Arrangements 2023/24, a public consultation is taking place on the proposed introduction of co-ordinated admission arrangements for the Reception age group for intake in September 2023.

The Council is also consulting on expanding the co-ordinated arrangements for secondary schools to include The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School in the process from September 2023.

Details of the consultation are available to view on the Council website via the link below:

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www.cardiff.gov.uk/admissionarrangements

- 2. Please provide background information on the Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function and any research done [e.g., service users data against demographic statistics, similar EIAs done etc.]**

The City of Cardiff Council is committed to equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. In respect of admissions to community schools, all pupils and prospective pupils are treated equitably, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, language, ability/disability, or religious belief.

The Council is the Admissions Authority for the following:

- Community Nursery Schools/Nursery Classes in Community Schools
- Community Primary Schools
- Community Secondary Schools

In order to facilitate the admissions process, the Local Authority has to consider:

- Children are entitled to a part-time nursery place from the start of the term following their third birthday and must attend for five half days.
- Children are admitted to reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday.
- Children transfer to secondary education in the September following their eleventh birthday.
- All maintained schools must admit pupils up to their published Admission Number.

Parents have the right to express a preference for their preferred schools; these will be considered individually and complied with wherever possible. Some schools have more requests for places than there are places available. Where a school is oversubscribed preferences will still be considered but the oversubscription criteria set by the Council will be applied. In deciding which children to admit to a school, the Council applies the criteria set out in its Schools Admissions Policy Document and examines the merits to support each case by considering any reasons put forward supporting any expressed preference.

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If parents are dissatisfied with the result of an application for a particular School, an appeal may be submitted to the Independent Statutory Appeal Panel, any decision made by the Panel being binding on the Council, school and the appellant. If the appeal is not successful, further requests to appeal for a place at the same school will not be considered for the same academic year unless the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning determines there are significant and material changes in the circumstances of pupil/parents or school. There is no right of appeal for admission to a Community Nursery School/ Nursery Classes in Community Schools.

This proposal has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

"An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil."

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3 Assess Impact on the Protected Characteristics

3.1 Age

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative/]** on younger/older people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Up to 18 years	✓		
18 - 65 years		✓	
Over 65 years		✓	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The nature of the policy is such that it will inherently apply to the 3 - 16 years age group as it targets school and nursery aged children and young adults.

Whilst implementation of this policy would therefore have a differential impact, it would not be regarded as prejudicial to older age groups as they are not part of this educational place provision process.

The Equality Act states that the discrimination provisions on age do not extend to anything an LA does in relation to school admissions, so approaches in which admissions and transition between schools are determined by a child's age will not be open to challenge.

A co-ordinated primary school admission arrangements process would provide more parents with a single school place offer for their child, which would be a fairer, more equitable system of allocating school places in Cardiff, and therefore be unbiased across the protected characteristic groups to which it applies.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

A clear communication strategy would be developed to ensure that parents fully understood the process and the need to use all available preferences.

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3.2 Disability

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on disabled people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Hearing Impairment	✓		
Physical Impairment	✓		
Visual Impairment	✓		
Learning Disability	✓		
Long-Standing Illness or Health Condition	✓		
Mental Health	✓		
Substance Misuse	✓		
Other	✓		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

"An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of **disability**; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil."

Differential impact could occur as the implementation of the School Admissions Policy would allow for priority to be given to applicants where the legislation and protection prescribe the inclusion of specific criteria in relation to Special Educational needs which support pupils with disabilities that are also learning difficulties.

Similarly differential impact could occur as the implementation of the School Admissions Policy would allow for priority to be given to applicants for whom compelling medical and/or compelling social grounds could be evidenced indicating particular needs. This would be a positive impact if the degree of need was such that preferential placement were to apply.

The LA are required under the Public Sector Requirements to make reasonable adjustments to try and ensure that disabled pupils can play as full a part as possible in school life.

No differential impact would occur as the implementation of co-ordinated primary school admissions arrangements would not affect this protected characteristic. The Education Act 1996 already gives preferential admission to pupils who have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the Council's admission

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arrangements which give a priority within the oversubscription criteria for pupils with compelling medical grounds would remain unchanged by this proposal. All schools have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make provisions for pupils with both physical, mental and learning disabilities within their SEN provision. The Council devolves funding to schools to enable them to comply with this obligation 11 and provides additional county-wide provision in other areas.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

Make reasonable adjustments to try and ensure that disabled pupils can play as full a part as possible in school life.

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3.3 Gender Reassignment

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on transgender people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Transgender People (People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process [or part of a process] to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex)			✓

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

“An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of disability; **gender reassignment**; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.”

No differential impact would occur as the implementation of the Schools Admissions Policy would not affect this protected characteristic.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

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3.4. Marriage and Civil Partnership

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on marriage and civil partnership?

	Yes	No	N/A
Marriage			✓
Civil Partnership			✓

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

No differential impact would occur as the implementation of the Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal would not affect this protected characteristic.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

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3.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on pregnancy and maternity?

	Yes	No	N/A
Pregnancy			✓
Maternity			✓

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

“An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; **pregnancy and maternity**; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.”

No differential impact would occur as the implementation of the Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal would not affect this protected characteristic.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

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3.6 Race

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project//Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the following groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
White			✓
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups			✓
Asian / Asian British			✓
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British			✓
Other Ethnic Groups			✓

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

“An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; **race**; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.”

No differential impact would occur as the implementation of the Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal would not affect this protected characteristic.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

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3.7 Religion, Belief or Non-Belief

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs?

	Yes	No	N/A
Buddhist		✓	
Christian	✓		
Hindu		✓	
Humanist		✓	
Jewish		✓	
Muslim		✓	
Sikh		✓	
Other		✓	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

“An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; **religion or belief**; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.”

The Equality Act allows for exceptions in certain cases. Schools with a religious character may give priority in admissions to members of their own religion. The Admissions Code provides that this may only be done when a school is oversubscribed – schools subject to the Code are not permitted to refuse admission to pupils not of their faith if they have unfilled places

Faith Schools are their own admissions authority and will not be impacted by implementation of the Local Authority’s Schools Admission Policy.

The Schools Admission Policy does not differentiate between applicants of differing belief systems who apply to attend Community funded Schools and hence no differential impact would occur.

The current system allows for parents to apply to multiple Admission Authorities with the potential of their child to be offered multiple school places. Within the Cardiff County area there are nine primary school Admission Authorities which are Church in Wales Schools and thirteen primary school Admission Authorities which are Roman Catholic Schools, these are all Voluntary Aided Schools.

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Applicants who meet the higher admissions criterion for Voluntary Aided Schools i.e., baptised and/or dedicated/contributor to the life and work of either the Church in Wales or Roman Catholic Church are allocated above other applicants within their oversubscription criteria in accordance with the School Admissions Code. Pupils of these faiths are therefore more likely to be currently offered a place at more than one school, only one of which they could take up from the beginning of term.

Where a child has received a multi school offer, consequently this means another child has not been allocated the school place. Where this multi school offer relates to a Voluntary Aided School, unsuccessful applicants for this school are disadvantaged and where this relates to a Community School, unsuccessful applicants for this school are also disadvantaged.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

The Council will remain sensitive to the needs of religious communities seeking faith place provision.

The communication strategy would be emphasised in Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Nursery Schools to ensure that applicants to Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Primary Schools are not disadvantaged.

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3.8 Sex

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on men and/or women?

	Yes	No	N/A
Men			✓
Women			✓

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The Admissions Policy and the co-ordinated admissions arrangements proposal have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

“An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; **sex**; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.”

All schools to which the Schools Admission Policy applies are non-gender specific in relation to their admissions criteria.

All schools to which their Admissions Authority is proposing to co-ordinate primary school admission arrangements are non-sex specific in relation to the admissions criteria.

No differential impact would occur as implementation of the Schools Admissions Policy or co-ordinated primary school admission arrangements would not affect this protected characteristic.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

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3.9 Sexual Orientation

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the following groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
Bisexual			✓
Gay Men			✓
Gay Women/Lesbians			✓
Heterosexual/Straight			✓

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

This proposal has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 throughout and in compliance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code E.3 which states:

“An admission authority **must not** discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or **sexual orientation**, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.”

No differential impact would occur as the implementation of the Schools Admission Policy or co-ordinated primary school admission arrangements would not affect this protected characteristic.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

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3.10 Socio-economic Duty

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the Socio-economic Duty?

	Yes	No	N/A
	✓		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The proposed changes are expected to have a positive impact on the Socioeconomic Duty.

Where a child has received a multiple school offer, consequently this means another child has not been allocated the school place. A co-ordinated primary school admission arrangements process would provide more parents with a single school place offer for their child, which would be a fairer, more equitable system of allocating school places in Cardiff.

This would allow parental provision such as transport, wrap around care etc to be identified earlier than through a non-coordinated admissions system for some families. It is likely that families suffering financial deprivation would have less options available to them in making suitable arrangements and having more time to do so may be beneficial.

The admissions policy is predicated on endeavouring to make provision for pupils in their local community when possible, and hence preference is given to catchment applications over non-catchment applications. Schools which are more popular attract inward migration to their catchment areas which can affect housing costs. This can result in families who would choose a particular school, not being able to afford to move into the area and hence one can view this as a differential impact on choice between different socioeconomic groups. The Council feels that all school places inherently constitute a suitable offer and seeks to support all schools in providing an effective nurturing and learning environment.

The School Admissions Code states that Authorities must ensure oversubscription criteria are reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with current legislation. Furthermore, The Code also states catchment based oversubscription criteria are a lawful means of place allocation differentiation, and that distance between home and school is a clear and objective oversubscription criterion and is useful as a tie-breaker.

The Council regards catchment and distance oversubscription criteria a legitimate and

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the fairest practicable means of achieving the desired outcome of equitable place allocation in community schools

The Council does not expect the proposal to have any negative impact on the quality of standards of education for primary age pupils in Cardiff.

Some of the funding that a school receives is based on the number of pupils in the school who receive Free School Meals.

All schools in Cardiff would receive funding for these pupils. There is no information available that suggests that the proposed changes would have a negative effect on pupils who receive Free School Meals.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

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3.11 Welsh Language

Will this Policy/ Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact (positive/negative)** on the Welsh Language?

	Yes	No	N/A
Welsh language		✓	

Please give details/ consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The Council will continue to implement its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and will ensure that there are schools to meet the demand for Welsh medium education.

As all Voluntary Aided Schools operate through the medium of English, the impact of the proposal co-ordinated primary school admission arrangements is unlikely to have a substantial impact upon the Welsh-medium sector.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

N/A

4. Consultation and Engagement

What arrangements have been made to consult/engage with the various Equalities Groups?

The consultation re: School Admission Policy includes engagement with the following stakeholders:

- All Community; Foundation; Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided School Governing Bodies in Cardiff.
- Cardiff's Diocesan Directors of Education.
- Neighbouring Local Authorities.
- Cardiff Admissions Forum.
- Local Assembly Members.
- Local Members of Parliament.
- Any other interested parties who wish to respond

Consultation on the 2023/24 Cardiff Council's School Admission Policy is proposed from 22/12/21 to 17/01/2022. The Council welcomes all

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views.

Details of the Schools Admission Policy will be made available on the Council's website:

www.cardiff.gov.uk/admissionarrangements

The Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements consultation process will run from 22/11/2021 to 17/01/2022 and involves:

- Publication of a Consultation Document on the Council website (a copy of the consultation document can be seen at Appendix 2).
- Distribution of a letter to parents of all pupils due to start in the Reception year in September 2023, outlining the proposal and giving details of how to access the Consultation Document online. (a copy of the letter can be seen at Appendix 3).
- A communication campaign via social media.
- Online drop-in sessions where officers were available to answer questions.
- A consultation response slip for return by post or e-mail, attached to the consultation document.
- An online response form at www.cardiff.gov.uk/admissionarrangements.

The views expressed at Council organised drop-in sessions and on paper or electronically through the appropriate channels, will be recorded.

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5. Summary of Actions [Listed in the Sections above]

Groups	Actions
Age	A clear communication strategy.
Disability	Make reasonable adjustments.
Gender Reassignment	None
Marriage & Civil Partnership	None
Pregnancy & Maternity	None
Race	None
Religion/Belief	A clear communication strategy.
Sex	None
Sexual Orientation	None
Socio-economic Duty	None
Welsh Language	None
Generic Over-Arching [applicable to all the above groups]	None

6. Further Action

Any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this Equality Impact Assessment (listed in Summary of Actions) should be included as part of your Service Area's Business Plan to be monitored on a regular basis.

7. Authorisation

The Template should be completed by the Lead Officer of the identified Policy/Strategy/Project/Function and approved by the appropriate Manager in each Service Area.

Completed By : Joanna Phillips	Date: 19/11/2021
Designation: Project Officer	
Approved By: Brett Andrewartha	
Designation: School Organisation Programme Planning Manager	
Service Area: Education & Lifelong Learning	

- 7.1 On completion of this Assessment, please ensure that the Form is posted on your Directorate's Page on CIS - *Council Wide/Management Systems/Equality Impact Assessments* - so that there is a record of all assessments undertaken in the Council.

For further information or assistance, please contact the Citizen Focus Team on 029 2087 2536 / 3262 or email equalityteam@cardiff.gov.uk