

**Equality Impact Assessment**

**Name of policy:** Expansion of childcare for 9 months to starting school

**Department:** Children & Family Service

**Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment:**

Jo Fisher & Sue Wilson, Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service

**Relevant contact information for those involved:**

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**Who is completing the EIA:**

Sue Wilson

**What is the proposal?:**

In the spring budget of 2023, the Chancellor announced that funded childcare hours would be extended to children of eligible working parents in England from nine months old to support increased parental engagement in the labour market. The measures announced will expand the existing system by offering up to 30 funded hours of childcare per week over 38 weeks of the year to children aged nine months and over whose parents meet the same income eligibility criteria as applied to the existing 30 hours entitlement for three and four-year-olds. The policy has a phased rollout, with 15 hours per week for 38 weeks a year offered to eligible two-year-olds from April 2024 and to eligible children under two from September 2024. The new entitlement will be offered in full from September 2025.

**What change and impact is intended by the proposal?:**

The service is implementing government policy to ensure working parents have access to funded childcare

**What is the rationale for this proposal?:**

To support parents back into the labour market by making childcare more affordable

**What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?:**

Parents and providers were asked to complete information about their requirements for childcare to help prepare the market for inclusive childcare provision. Parents responded regarding their child's age and disability.

**What does it show?:**

The data showed that there was a need for additional places for children under five , but necessarily affordable. Providers did struggle to support children with SEND due to the additional costs and training.

**What engagement has been undertaken so far?:**

Questionnaires have been sent to all Early Years providers and a survey has been promoted through health visitors, and through providers and Family help to receive responses from parents

**What does it show?:**

In April and September the county will have sufficient places for all children however as the 30 hours eligibility is implement in September 2025 there is likely to be less places available and this may impact on the existing offer for disadvantaged 2 year olds as places will be allocated to working parents.

**Evidence documents upload (optional):**

**Age:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>                    | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> | <b>What are the identified risks or concerns and how they will be mitigated?</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| children from 9 months to school age will be funded to access childcare if they have working parents | Yes   | Places that have been created for the newly funded childcare may then restrict the funded places available for the disadvantaged two year olds. Providers operating in disadvantaged areas need to be supported to offer places for the disadvantaged children |

**Disability:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b> | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> | <b>What are the identified risks or concerns and how they will be mitigated?</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to                      | Yes   | Places that have been created for the newly funded childcare may then restrict the funded places available for children with SEND due to additional |

| What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups? | Is there any specific risks or concerns? | What are the identified risks or concerns and how they will be mitigated?   |
|--|--|---|
| the support of childcare costs   |  | costs and staffing. Not all staff are well qualified to support children. Therefore we will look to support staff to offer highly qualified inclusive provision |

**Race:**

| What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?  | Is there any specific risks or concerns? |
|---|--|
| children of all races are able to access childcare. working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to the support of childcare costs | No                                       |

**Sex:**

| What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?  | Is there any specific risks or concerns? |
|---|--|
| children of all genders are able to access childcare. working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to the support of childcare costs | No                                       |

**Gender Reassignment:**

| What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?  | Is there any specific risks or concerns? |
|---|--|
| children of all gender reassignment are able to access childcare. working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to the support of childcare costs | No                                       |

**Marriage and Civil Partnership:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b> | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> |
|---|---|
| N/A   | No  |

**Sexual Orientation:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>                | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> |
|--|---|
| N/A. working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to the support of childcare costs | No  |

**Pregnancy and Maternity:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>                | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> |
|--|---|
| N/A. working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to the support of childcare costs | No  |

**Religion or Belief:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>   | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> |
|---|---|
| all children of different religions and beliefs are able to access childcare. . working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to the support of childcare costs | No  |

**Armed Forces:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>  | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> |
|--|---|
| children from the armed forces are able to access childcare. working parents may choose to go back to work earlier due to the support of childcare costs | No  |

**Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived, armed forced, or disadvantaged communities:**

| <b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b>   | <b>Is there any specific risks or concerns?</b> |
|---|---|
| children in rural areas are able to access childcare at a variety of settings including childminders, preschools and day nurseries. thus minimalizing rural isolation and giving parental choice supporting them to return to work. Children known to social care are supported to access their free early education entitlements | No  |

**Action Plan:**

| <b>What concerns were identified?</b>   | <b>What action is planned?</b>  | <b>Who is responsible for the action?</b>          | <b>Timescale</b>  |
|---|---|--|---|
| Support pre schools to offer places to disadvantaged two year olds to ensure high quality training for the Early years workforce to offer inclusive provision | training plan for SEND<br>Mapping provision and open and closures track take up of FEEE places and where this is in the county work with social care to ensure children who are known to those services access their entitlements | Jo Fisher Ruth<br>Melluish<br>Jennie<br>Bainbridge | September 2025<br>reviewed each quarter to see if children are accessing their entitlements |

**Action plan document (optional):**

**How will the action plan and recommendations of this assessment be built into decision making and implementation of this proposal?:**

Decision making is reported to the DfE

Reviewed as part of the services monitoring and evaluation

Take up of provision is reviewed at Education and SEND SMT

**How would you monitor the impact of your proposal and keep the EIA refreshed?:** This will be reviewed termly through the termly FEEE data

**Date of completion:** 22/04/2024