

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00083 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Children's Services Social Work	Lead Officer Name:	Sara Lacey
		Team:	Social Work
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Proposal:	Review of Children & Families Social Work Staff	Reference No:	CS10

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	No
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

07/01/2019	This option reduces staff across all areas of Children & Families Social Work service by 5%. This proposal is being considered as part of budget saving options. The service delivers statutory services to children, young people and their families across Falkirk. Due to registration requirements of the Care Inspectorate, 5% reduction in staffing cannot be attributed to residential staff. Due to Falkirk's low numbers of qualified Social Work staff in Children & Families, the 5% cut should not be attributed to this group of staff.
14/01/2019	This proposal does not relate to the current work under the Closer to Home Strategy as it is a legacy staffing reduction proposal. This reduction in staff would be managed in a strategic, planned manner which did not place all the risk in one area – the staff groups affected would be qualified, unqualified and management posts.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	21m	Falkirk ranks 22nd out of all Scottish Local Authorities (per 100,000 0-17 population) for qualified Social Work staff.
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	270k	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	01/04/2019	
	End Date (if any):	31/03/2020	

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

The Council employs 176 FTE staff in the Children & Families section of Social Work Services. These figures do not include administrative staff. Many of our staff are reaching their 25 or 40 years' service, thus we have the benefit of well experienced and skilled staff. The Children & Families workforce deliver services across the Council from various locations - they include family support staff, Social Workers, and Social Work Assistants, leaving care staff, residential workers and managers. The grades range from E to CO on the Council scale. The majority of staff are I grade (85) staff which relates to a Social Worker post.

This reduction of 7 FTE would be managed in a strategic, planned manner – the staff groups affected would be qualified, unqualified and management posts.

B - Qualitative Evidence This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

It is incumbent on Councils to ensure that staffing and caseloads are at appropriate levels to manage risk to local children and that staff who undertake complex, challenging and stressful work are well supported. Children & Families staff work with people with complex problems and with vulnerable people who need support at different times or sometimes throughout their lives.

In recent years there has been an increase in the volume of legislation related to social work. In addition to changes in legislation, there have been a number of significant policy developments that require considerable change to the way that social work services are provided. Implementing legislation and policy increases staff workload in the medium term.

Increased focus on prevention. The report from the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, the Christie Commission highlighted the need to transform the way public services are planned and delivered. The report identified prevention, early intervention and providing better outcomes for people and communities as key to this transformation.

Balance of care for Looked After Away From Home children. Out of area placements tend to involve young people with troubled histories and challenging behaviour and children with significant learning disabilities. Some out of area placements will be the most suitable for a child, such as where the child has complex treatment needs that the Council cannot meet or to ensure they can be effectively safeguarded. However, such placements are very expensive and can have negative consequences. Falkirk Council is currently developing strategies that keep children local to their communities, for example at home or within supported kinship care or foster placements which achieve better outcomes for children and achieve considerable financial savings for the council.

The Closer to Home strategy is being implemented to ensure Falkirk Council stops increasing numbers of children Looked after Away From Home and reduces costs.

Antisocial hours are a regular feature for Social Work staff. The work is not limited within core hours, keeping children safe often runs on beyond 5pm and managers rely heavily on willingness of staff to undertake their professional duties to keep children safe, regardless of time.

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	Yes
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	Chief Social Work Officer, based on experience and learning from elsewhere.
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	Yes
If NO, please state why.	

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	Engagement with staff including managers and the public.	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	Yes	Group discussions with staff including managers. The results were high level concerns about cuts to workforce, the impact on service users was of primary concerns and the impact on staff capacity was second.
Survey	Yes	Responses to the proposal on the Council internet were negative re cuts to Social Work staffing. Concerns about reducing services to the most vulnerable in society were expressed.
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	Yes	Foster Carer Consultative Committee concerned about Social Workers having less time and capacity and fewer managers to support staff and new duties.
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify		
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	No	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes	
Is further engagement recommended?	Yes	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, public protection etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age			✓	Children & Families Social Work staff work with children and young people and parents and carers of all ages. Workers need to spend time with families, supporting them with their needs, undertaking assessment and monitoring care and measuring risk. The Children & Young People Act 2014 legislates that care experienced young people have the right to remain in their care placement until they reach 21. The right to aftercare provision has extended from 21 to 26. This puts additional pressure on current resources, the proposal to reduce staffing contributes to these pressures.
Disability			✓	Children and young people with additional support needs are supported by Social Work staff - they are assessed and supported accordingly. Many parents are affected by disability and require intensive support. Children with disabilities are regarded as a very vulnerable group and any reduction in service could impact on quality and availability of the service.
Sex				
Ethnicity			✓	There is an increase in the need to offer care and protection to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. These young people have so far arrived spontaneously in Falkirk; in the future there is likely to be arrivals as part of a Home Office supported scheme. These young people require considerable levels of support due to their early life experiences and are regarded as Looked After children.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief				
Sexual Orientation				
Transgender				
Pregnancy / Maternity			✓	Social Work staff work with care experienced young mothers amongst other vulnerable groups of mothers and their babies. Due to the vulnerability of the unborn children or infants, the need for good levels of support and accessibility to workers or services is imperative.

Marriage / Civil Partnership				
Poverty			✓	Although the evidence is limited in a number of important respects, it is clear that there is a strong association between family poverty and a child's chance of suffering child abuse or neglect. Adverse events in childhood, including abuse and neglect, are associated with a negative effect on adult economic circumstances. Social Work staff support families to maximise their income, whether this is about maximising benefits or finding childcare to allow them to return to work or education.
Other, health, community justice, public protection etc.			✓	Other will include Looked After children and young people and those who are not on any statutory order but who require early intervention. Care experienced young people require considerable support as they age out of care placements and enter the world of work and increased independence. Long lasting relationships between young people and staff are to be further encouraged as the benefits of these are well evidenced. Reduction to services and loss of staff impacts on staff time and ability to do this work, thus impacting on poorer outcomes and costs pressures in later years.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)	Risks to the Council's ability to respond to changes which are required to improve outcomes and reduce costs as per the Closer to Home strategy. There are risks that reduction in managers will lead to staff not being adequately supported.			

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	No	
Councils	No	
Education Sector	Yes	Reduction in staff/management will impact on joint working and responsiveness of Social Work to school concerns.
Fire	Yes	Reduction in staff/management will impact on joint working.
NHS	Yes	Reduction in staff/management will impact on joint working and responsiveness of Social Work to NHS concerns.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	Reduction in staff/management will impact on joint working.
Police	Yes	Reduction in staff/management will impact on joint working, joint investigations and responsiveness of Social Work to Police concerns.
Third Sector	Yes	Reduction in staff/management will impact on joint working.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.		

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
Impact on service delivery	Children, young people, families.	Identify posts where it is likely to cause less negative impact on service users, partners and other agencies if possible. Prioritise those most at risk.	Sara Lacey		SOLD Integrated CS Plan Children's Services Inspection Improvement Plan
Reduced ability to respond to the actions of the Closer to Home strategy, meaning poorer outcomes and higher future costs for the Council.	Children, young people, families and financial risk to the Council.	Target the aims of Closer to Home, with reduced focus on early intervention.	Sara Lacey		SOLD Integrated CS Plan Children's Services Inspection Improvement Plan Closer to Home, 5 year strategy
Loss of management posts and staff not being adequately supported. Additional pressure on staff, increasing levels of stress and burn out.	Workforce	Support staff with stress management via supervision and support systems.	Sara Lacey		SOLD Integrated CS Plan Children's Services Inspection Improvement Plan
Risk of harm.	Vulnerable children and families. Impact on other agencies.	Target services to the most vulnerable children. Consider various ways of delivering services differently.	Sara Lacey		
Increase in complaints	Families, individuals, other agencies	Manage the changes and inform communities and partners of reduced service.	Sara Lacey		

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

Are actions being reported to Members?

No

If yes when and how ?

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	No	
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	Yes	The reduction in staff would be managed in a strategic, planned manner which did not place all the risk in one area – the staff groups affected would be qualified, unqualified and management posts.
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Kirsty Wilsdon</i>	Date:	17/01/2019
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:	Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes
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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS	Data has been used to inform the impact of this reduction.	
If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA		
If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA		

Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes	If YES, please describe: Assurance has been provided that this reduction can be achieved in a planned way that will lessen any impact.
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LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	unknown
MEDIUM	Yes / No	unknown
LOW	Yes	unknown

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:		
Signature:	<i>Robert Naylor</i>	Date: 06/02/2019