



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of Budget Proposals

Name of Budget Saving	Reduce Learning Assistants
Department and service area	Education
Completion Date	01/02/2018
Lead officer	Grace Vickers

Aims and Objectives

Reduce learning assistants by 10% overall (total learning assistant budget is £3.3m and included in DSM budgets).

1. Does the proposed budget saving affect people?

Yes ☒

No ☐

2. What is/are the reason(s) for your proposed budget saving?

Learning assistants provide predominantly 1:1 support for pupils with additional support needs.

The 10%/£330,000 reduction equates to approximately 20 learning assistant posts based on 27.5 hours per week over 39 weeks.

3. Impact

Which of the protected characteristics* will the proposed budget saving have an impact upon?

Equality Target Group*	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Relevant evidence/ information
Age		Unless other provisions or efficiencies are made, a reduction in support provided to children with additional support needs will have a negative impact upon their outcomes. A 10% reduction based on a 27.5 hour week equates to 2 hours and 45 minutes. Ensuring the quality of learning assistant support is consistently excellent would help to mitigate the impact of the reduction.	This reduction will affect children with additional support needs. It will also affect staff employed as learning assistants.
Disability			Additional support needs includes, but is not limited to, children with a disability. See discussion at age.
Gender Reassignment			No disproportionate affect identified.
Marriage & Civil Partnership			No disproportionate affect identified.
Pregnancy and			No disproportionate

maternity			affect identified.
Race			<p>The number of teachers in special schools in Midlothian is too small for use as a proxy however the proportion of teachers at primary who are white Scottish or white British is 96% and 94% at secondary, approximately in line with the population of Midlothian.</p> <p>No disproportionate affect identified.</p>
Religion or Belief			No disproportionate affect identified.
Sex		A reduction in learning assistant hours/posts is likely to have a greater impact upon female staff than male staff.	It is likely that learning assistants are predominantly female but no data is available at this time. A proxy would be teachers at special schools, 75% of whom in Midlothian are female.
Sexual Orientation			No disproportionate affect identified.

4. How will the implementation of the proposed budget saving be communicated to those affected by any changes?

Appropriate HR policies would be followed with staff affected. It is recommended that if a substantial reduction in learning assistants is implemented that parents and carers are advised of this and the measures that will be put in place to offset the potential negative impact upon children.

Information published by Midlothian Council can be provided on request in many of the community

languages and also in large print, Braille, audio tape or BSL. For more information, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Officer on 0131 271 3658 or equalities@midlothian.gov.uk

5. How will you monitor the impact of the changes proposed? When is the budget due to be reviewed?

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels is assessed at each stage of a pupil's education.

6. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process.

A reduction in learning assistant hours/posts is likely to have a greater impact upon female staff than male staff.

Pupil Equity Funding is provided by the Scottish Government to schools to target closing the poverty related attainment gap. Some schools will utilise the PEF to provide learning assistants and family support, however this should not be used to offset a reduction in core learning assistant support.

The impact upon pupils in need of additional support through learning assistants would be lessened should the proposed saving be reduced, e.g. to 5% or 2%, however any saving has the potential to adversely impact upon these children unless the quality of support provided is consistently excellent.