

# Midlothian



**Midlothian Council**

## **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of Budget Proposals**

**2016**

Name of Budget Saving	Curators' Fees
Department and service area	Resources, Legal Services
Completion Date	10 October 2016
Lead officer	Alan Turpie

### **Aims and Objectives**

1. Does the proposed budget saving affect people?

Yes

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

The Council does not currently operate a framework panel of solicitors and social workers who can be appointed to provide reports in social work cases (curators). At present, such curators are appointed by the court with no input from the Council. Midlothian Council, in a joint working initiative with East Lothian and

Edinburgh Councils, has agreed to draw up a panel of curators to be appointed on new terms and conditions with set fee levels. The introduction of set fee for work of curators appointed by sheriff court for social work cases but paid for through legal/social work budgets will reduce the cost of court actions. There are currently no fee limits (although these may be audited by the court), Set fees would reduce these costs.

There is currently a recruitment campaign for curators to join the framework panel. This will widen the pool of available curators and open the role to social workers and family lawyers as well as more experienced court solicitors.

### 3. Impact

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

<b>Equality Target Group*</b>	<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact</b>	<b>Relevant evidence/ information</b>
Age	N/a	N/a	The work of the curators will extend only to children who require to be placed permanently out with the family unit and adults with incapacity. All curators reports should be prepared in terms of equality legislation
Disability	Yes	None	The introduction of a larger and more broadly based pool of curators will allow reports to be prepared more quickly for use by the courts in determining the correct outcome for an adult with incapacity
Gender Reassignment	n/a	n/a	The work of the curators will extend only to children who require to be placed permanently out with the family unit and adults with incapacity. All curators reports should be prepared in terms of equality legislation

Marriage & Civil Partnership	n/a	n/a	See above
Pregnancy and maternity	n/a	n/a	See above
Race	n/a	n/a	See above
Religion or Belief	n/a	n/a	See above
Sex	n/a	n/a	See above
Sexual Orientation	n/a	n/a	See above

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

Those who apply for a place on the panel will be advised in writing if their application is successful.

It is Council policy that should this advice be required in alternative format, (audio, large print, etc) then this request will be actioned.

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

There will be ongoing monitoring of the performance of the curators on a case by case basis. The budget will be reviewed on quarterly basis.

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

None.

Please send an electronic copy of completed forms to [lesley.crozier@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.crozier@midlothian.gov.uk)