



Midlothian Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of Budget Proposals

2016

Name of Budget Saving	MULTI- AGENCY RESOUC E GROUP (MARG)
Department and service area	Children's Services
Completion Date	
Lead officer	Joan Tranent

Aims and Objectives

1. Does the proposed budget saving affect people? Yes x ☐ No ☐

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

The MARG budget is for external residential school placements and also incorporates secure care. Within Midlothian we are looking at projecting future reductions within this budget through more creative thinking and using our resources differently. Rather than identifying a residential school when a care and education

placement is requested we need to consider what alternative solutions are there that we can access whilst maintaining the child/young person within Midlothian. We have little evidence that suggests that external residential schools offer improved outcomes for our young people therefore our focus for the future is around building an infrastructure both within education and children's services that ensures we meet the needs of all our young people within Midlothian.

Only in very exceptional circumstances would we therefore consider a placement or school provision out-with Midlothian.

With regard to secure care, we know that across Scotland Local Authorities are not using secure care as often as they have done in the past. This is because it rarely offers better outcomes in the longer term. Currently around one third of the secure beds available in Scotland are being used by English Local Authorities and more than 75% of young people who are secured are there not as a result of offending behaviour but because they are deemed as at risk to themselves or the community, most likely as a result of substance misuse or poor mental health. We need permission to be more creative about how we support young people who abuse drugs and alcohol or who have poor mental health rather than resorting to removing their liberty. Therefore we are looking at more creative solutions available to us as an alternative to secure care within Midlothian Council along with our partner agencies.

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	Very few children benefit from being placed in residential placements away from family, friends and their community. Research undertaken in 2014 by Educational Psychologist evidenced the journey of 6 young people in residential schools. There was no	Very rarely a child or young person may have needs that cannot be met within Midlothian, this would be more around educational placements . If this was the case consideration would be given to offering an alternative package of support	

	evidence of improved outcomes or increased learning within school. Therefore the ethos being promoted to maintain all children & young people within Midlothian can only help improve all our children to achieve better emotional, social and educational outcomes		
Disability			
Gender Reassignment			
Marriage & Civil Partnership			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Race			
Religion or Belief			
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			

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

As strategic leaders we shall require a commitment and buy in from all agencies involved that promotes our vision and ethos to care and educate all children and young people within Midlothian. Through policy and guidance we shall share this strategy with our workforce and service users to ensure that this message is effectual in its delivery. There will be a wide range of focus groups with our partner agencies such as Education, Health, Police Scotland and the children's hearing system so that everyone fully understands the strategy and is committed to maintaining young people within Midlothian especially when faced with immediate and real challenges. There needs to be an agreed understanding to this approach especially when we are dealing with young people who present with a high level of risk to either themselves or within their community.

Only in extreme circumstances and when all other possible options have been exhausted would we consider secure care for a young person.

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

On an annual basis we shall undertake a multi agency evaluation of how we are managing our more difficult to reach families to ensure they are in education and where possible living at home with their family or living within Midlothian. The MARG budget is reviewed every 6 weeks at meetings chaired by the Head of Children's Services.

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

This proposal is the right thing to do going forward. We have sufficient evidence within Midlothian from years gone by that supports this approach. The culture across the county needs to change so that everyone is committed and more importantly aware that a Midlothian Child is a Midlothian Child and shall be cared for and educated, wherever possible within Midlothian. This ethos is not purely about saving money but doing the right thing for every Midlothian child. With sufficient investment in new approaches we can build an infrastructure that is both flexible and adaptable to meet the varying needs of our most vulnerable children and young people, and which shall ultimately improve their lives and opportunities.

Please send an electronic copy of completed forms to lesley.crozier@midlothian.gov.uk