



**North
Northamptonshire
Council**

APPENDIX B Equality Impact Assessment

1: Background

Requirement	Detail
Title of proposal	Re-distribution of the Local Authority Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) Supplement 2022-2023 and Beyond
Type of proposal: new policy / change to policy / new service / change to service / removal of service / project	Change to EYMNSS grant funding distribution
Directorate	Learning, Skills and Education
Service area	School Effectiveness
Lead Officer's name	AnnMarie Dodds
Lead Officer's job title	Director of Children's Services
Officer who completed Equality Screening Assessment	Jo Hutchinson
Equality Screening Assessment completion date	21 st February 2022
Date Director informed of full assessment requirement	20 th March 2022
Equality Impact Assessment completion date	21 st March 2022

2: Legal Requirements

The Equality Act (2010) places a general duty on all public bodies to have `due regard` to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Foster good relations.
- Advance the opportunity of equality.

Equality Impact Assessments help us evidence that we have met the requirements of the General Equality Duty. As a local authority we also have a specific duty to publish information about people who are affected by our policies and practices. All Equality Impact Assessments will be published with the Equality Screening Assessment (ESA) on the [North Northamptonshire Council website](#).

3: Proposal Details

Description of the proposal:

The Indicative 2022/23 Early Years Maintained Nursery School Supplement in the Early Years Block DSG published in December 2021 is derived by taking the 2021/22 supplementary funding rate as the starting point and then uplifting it by 3.47% and rounding to two decimal places. This supplementary funding rate is then multiplied by the 15 hour universal participation hours in the January 2021 census. Adjustments are made later in the financial year when actual participation hours based on January 2022 census are known, with the final allocation determined in July 2023 based on 5 months of the January 2022 census and 7 months of the January 2023 census.

The NCC distribution methodology used previously to allocate resources to each of the individual Nursery Schools has been broadly based on historic allocations and adjusted to reflect changing grant levels. The impact of this on the proportional split of grant, as set against levels of participation, the basis on which the grant is allocated to NNC is as follows:

Distribution of participation hours – vs – distribution of funding

Maintained Nursery School	Participation hours	% hours	Funding award 21/22	% Funding award 21/22
Croyland	4117.33	16	£52,079	4
Highfield	5972.00	23	£64,200	6
Pen Green	9652.00	36	£1,027,620	85
Ronald Tree	6514.33	25	£60,112	5
Total	26255.66	100	£1,204,011	100

The actual allocation to each Nursery school does not adequately reflect the purpose of the EYMNSS which is to protect the universal 15 hour provision. As a result of this, therefore the Nursery Schools are projecting increasing deficits year on year as a consequence of this approach.

A paper was presented to the School's Forum at its meeting on 10th February 2022 setting out possible ways forward and proposed a consultation to be undertaken with the Nursery Schools based on three options that could address these issues.

What are the key objectives of this proposal?

- To enable the council to take an informed decision on how it can meet its statutory duty to protect the universal 15 hour provision at its Maintained Nursery Schools
- To ensure that all of the 4 Maintained Nursery Schools can sustainably meet their statutory duty to deliver the universal 15 hours free access to Early Years Education
- To reflect that the EYMNSS grant funding includes an element for the extended offer which, as a result of historic adjustments made by the DfE, has become absorbed in the “enhanced” supplementary funding rate
- To ensure that a robust and transparent distribution methodology that is fit for purpose is in place
- To distribute the EYMNSS grant to all of the 4 Maintained Nursery Schools which fall into North Northamptonshire as is the Statutory Duty of the Local Authority.

The Maintained Nursery Schools which are affected by this proposal are Highfield Nursery School, Croyland Nursery School, Ronald Tree Nursery School and Pen Green Nursery School.

Who will benefit from this proposal?

The Maintained Nursery Schools provide universal early education and childcare offer including to disadvantaged children in some of the most deprived areas of North Northamptonshire. Therefore, by ensuring financial sustainability, the children and families who are supported by the 4 Maintained Nursery Schools in Kettering, Wellingborough and Corby respectively will benefit from this proposal.

What were the findings of the initial Equality Screening Assessment?

- Having met the statutory duties regarding the funding, if the equitable distribution of funding goes ahead then there will be a reduction in funding to Pen Green. This could potentially have a detrimental impact on some of the services or provision which may be delivered by Pen Green to their children. This impact will be dependent on decisions made by the Governing Body of Pen Green about how it allocates the overall resources available to them through a range of funding sources. A reduction in the level of available resource may then detrimentally impact upon individuals within the following groups: Age, Disability, Health and Wellbeing, Pregnancy and Maternity.
- Equally, the ESA identified that the other 3 MNS which may receive an increase in their funding would be in a position to offer a sustained and enhanced service, provision or resource to their children and families. This would further support individuals within following groups: Age, Disability, Health and Wellbeing, Pregnancy and Maternity in the communities that they serve.

4: Data Evidence

What information or data, additional to that found in the ESA, have you obtained?

The Local Authority produced a paper which was presented to the School's Forum at its meeting on 10th February 2022 setting out possible ways forward with regard to the issue of disparity of funding to the 4 MNS.

To support all of the Maintained Nursery Schools impacted by this proposal, the Schools Forum undertook a consultation proposing the following options which were as follows.

Option 1 - Based on participation hours from the Annual Early Years School Census

Nursery	Based on pupil hours Jan 2022	% based on pupil hours Jan 2022	Pupil hours Jan 2022
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£97,617	16%	4,117
Highfield Nursery School	£141,590	23%	5,972
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£228,838	37%	9,652
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£154,448	25%	6,514
Total	£622,493	100%	26,256

Option 2 - Half way House

Nursery	Half Way House	Half Way House
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£74,699	12%
Highfield Nursery School	£102,711	17%
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£336,146	54%
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£108,936	18%
Total	£622,493	100%

Option 3 - Based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools

Nursery	0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools	% based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£52,079	8%
Highfield Nursery School	£64,200	10%
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£446,102	72%
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£60,112	10%

- The consultation has been completed. All 4 Maintained Nurseries were consulted. 3 out of the 4 Maintained Nursery Schools chose to complete the consultation. The consultation closed on 3rd March 2022.
- Individual feedback from the consultation was collated. This information was extracted from the consultation and shared at Schools Forum on Thursday 17th March. At this same Schools Forum group meeting, following the consultation period, NNC also provided a further 2 options for Schools Forum representatives to consider, these were:

Option 4 - Based on 25% increase for the other 3 nursery schools to realign budgets towards participation assuming Reserves agreed for use

Option 5 - Based on 20% increase for the other 3 nursery schools to realign budgets towards participation assuming Reserves agreed for use

- The Schools Forum members in their capacity as Statutory Consultees were asked to contribute their responses to all of the options placed before them, in the light of detailed responses to the consultation.

How does this data or information help you assess the impact of the proposal on protected groups?

- The MNS consultation did not highlight any issues regarding protected groups specifically.
- Reference was made to wanting all MNS to be able to provide high quality education for all of their children. Some mentioned that this should be done by ensuring that funding was shared evenly by participation, others stated that the funding distribution should consider census data and a range of other factors, to include: SEND, deprivation and the services offered at each of the schools, eg 30 hrs, extended provision, vulnerable two year olds and all year round provision.

What changes do you recommend being made to the proposal as a result of this evidence?

- In its decision making process, the Council to seek mitigating actions that will support all MNS in successfully establishing sustainable budgets based on an overall reduction in funding and a move towards an equitable and transparent distribution methodology.
- Further work be undertaken to understand the impact of the reduced funding available to Pen Green and how the Governing Board can be supported to maintain services and focus these on the most vulnerable individuals within their community.
- Consider how future funding decisions in relation to the EYMNSS grant can be developed to best safeguard services to communities and vulnerable individuals.

What impact could these changes have on the overall outcome of the proposal?

Resources are distributed equitably and where possible targeted at the most vulnerable whilst ensuring each of the MNS is sustainable and can continue to successfully serve their community.

Could these changes have a negative impact on any other equality group(s)?

Through effective targeting of resources and the identification of where these can best support outcomes, the impact on identified groups will be mitigated as far as possible within available funding envelope.

5: Equality Impact

Using the evidence gathered above, describe the potential negative impact this proposal may have on individuals or groups because of their characteristics in the table below. Ensure you consider different groups within each of the protected groups.

Characteristic	Potential negative impact
Age	Reduced range of services available due to less funding.
Disability	Reduced range of services available due to less funding.
Sex	None
Marriage or Civil Partnership	None
Pregnancy or Maternity	Reduced range of services available due to less funding.
Race	None
Religion or Belief	None
Gender Reassignment	None
Sexual Orientation	None
Health and Wellbeing	Reduced range of services available due to less funding.

6: Consultation

Who has been consulted with as part of this Equality Impact Assessment?

Who was consulted?	Date(s)	Why was this group consulted?	Any negative impact on equality groups identified?	What change(s) will be made as a result of this consultation?
Maintained Nursery Schools in North Northamptonshire	11 th February 2022 March 3 rd 2022	This group was consulted on the proposed options for the distribution of the EYMNSS grant funding	None was identified from the consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In its decision making process, the Council to seek mitigating actions that will support all MNS in successfully establishing

Who was consulted?	Date(s)	Why was this group consulted?	Any negative impact on equality groups identified?	What change(s) will be made as a result of this consultation?
				<p>sustainable budgets based on an overall reduction in funding and a move towards an equitable and transparent distribution methodology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work be undertaken to understand the impact of the reduced funding available to Pen Green and how the Governing Board can be supported to maintain services and focus these on the most vulnerable individuals within their community. • Consider how future funding decisions in relation to the EYMNSS grant can be developed to best safeguard services to communities and vulnerable individuals.
Schools Forum	17 th March 2022	They are Statutory Consultees	None identified	None

Are further consultations planned? (Give dates, explain reason why this group is to be consulted).

No

7: Assessing the Impact

Will the negative impact identified in the ESA have been eliminated once the above changes have been implemented?

No. The impact will be mitigated as far as possible within the reduced level of funding available.

If no, an Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan must be completed to evidence how the negative impact will be mitigated, reduced and reviewed. (Please see action plan template at the end of this document).

The Governing Boards of all MNS will be supported to develop an action plan based on the targeting of resource within their available resources.

8: Monitoring and Evaluation

What monitoring systems are in place to measure and monitor the impact that the proposals have on protected groups?

The Early Years School Improvement Officers will work closely with the Governing Boards of all MNS to understand the impact of the decisions they make in setting a sustainable budget on identified groups. This will then be fed into the decision making processes for EYMNSS grant funding in future years. Opportunities to mitigate further these impacts will also be identified and investigated as part of this process.

9: Decision Making Summary

Findings should be summarised here. Highlight how the proposal contributes towards the General Equality Duty. Include changes you have made as part of this process.

- The overall funding available to the EYMNSS has reduced and this will impact on the ability of the providers to continue to deliver services at their current level.
- An equitable and transparent distribution methodology will enable the MNS to set sustainable budgets and where possible target resources at identified need.
- The Council will look to mitigate reductions in funding as a result of the lower levels of grant available through the use of any resources available for this purpose.
- Governing Bodies will be supported in their decision making regarding the EYMNSS grant funding to target resources as effectively as possible.
- A review will be undertaken of the changes made in 2022/2023 to inform our future grant allocations and be allocated to best meet need.
- The potential impact on the protected groups identified will be mitigated through these actions and their effectiveness assessed and monitored throughout the year.

10: Authorisation

	Signature	Date
Approved by Equalities Team		
Authorised by Department Director		

- A signed copy should be retained by the owner for audit purposes.
- A completed copy should be attached to the relevant report/policy/proposal.
- An electronic copy must be emailed to [NNC Equalities](#) to be logged and published.

10: Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Negative impact	Action to eliminate or reduce negative impact.	Officer responsible	Action target date	Review outcome (has the action had the intended outcome)