

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**ANGUS COUNCIL - 16 DECEMBER 2021**

**COVID-19 UPDATE**

**REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON – CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to provide elected members with an update on Angus Council's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Council: -

- (i) Notes Angus Council's continued response work to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges and impact this is having on service delivery and staff; and
- (ii) Notes the urgency regarding use of funding provided by the Scottish Government to prevent and respond to financial insecurity this winter as set out in Section 5 and delegate authority to the Director of Finance following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the SNP group to approve project proposals for the use of this funding on the basis that a report informing elected members of those delegated decisions will be provided in the February cycle of meetings.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN**

This report contributes to the following strategic priorities in the Angus Council Plan which are based upon, people, place, economy and our business.

We want:

- Angus to be a go-to area to do business
- To maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities
- Our communities to be strong, resilient, and led by citizens
- Angus Council to be efficient and effective.

The priorities of the Community Plan are to:

- Reduce child poverty
- Improve mental health and well-being improving accessibility and connectivity.

**3. BACKGROUND**

The declaration of a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation in March 2020, and the subsequent impact within the UK has been unprecedented. This has created an abundance of challenges for our citizens, our communities, businesses, and our council.

Angus Council and our partners continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside the implementation of the test and protect programme, community testing and the roll out of the most complex vaccination programme that Scotland has ever seen affirms that COVID-19 will continue to be a priority area of work, for weeks, months and years to come.

**4. CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1** The challenges of COVID-19 are not only being felt locally, regionally, and nationally but across the world with further restriction in other areas of Europe being introduced. In the last few days of drafting this report, a new COVID-19 variant, Omicron, has reached the UK. Very little is known yet about this variant and action has already been

taken by both UK and Scottish Governments to try to reduce its spread as well as analyse any likely wider health impact including the efficacy of current COVID – 19 vaccinations. The Scottish Government is now providing daily updates on the impact as well as guidance. It is very much an evolving situation.

**4.2** The Scottish Government published a report on 19 November 2020 entitled [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): state of the epidemic – 19 November 2021](#). This report brings together the different sources of evidence and data about the Covid epidemic to summarise the current situation, why we are at that place, and what is likely to happen next. This new report will be updated weekly to provide an overview of the current COVID-19 situation in Scotland. This will include real time data on case rates, hospitalisations and deaths and how Scotland's figures compare to those from the rest of the UK. Modelling can tell us where the epidemic is likely to be heading. Local data and data by age group can highlight where problems arise, which can help in addressing some of these issues. In the coming weeks the roll out of the vaccine will continue to be monitored along with its impact on case rates and deaths among different age cohorts. We shall continue to use this information to inform our actions.

**4.3** November also saw the new COVID-19 winter campaign: '**Living Safely for Us All**' launched and again reiterates that Coronavirus hasn't gone away. It provided the following advice.

**To help protect yourself and others:**

- [get the vaccine booster](#) when offered
- [wear a face covering where required](#)
- if you have symptoms - [self isolate and book a PCR test](#)
- if you don't have symptoms - [take a lateral flow test](#) twice a week
- wash your hands regularly, and cover your nose and mouth if coughing or sneezing
- meet outside if you can, and open windows when indoors
- keep your distance from people not in your group
- work from home, or do a mixture of home and office working if possible
- use the apps: [COVID status](#) (vaccine passport), [Protect Scotland](#) and [Check-in Scotland](#)

This campaign pre-dated the emergence of the Omicron variant so messaging is already being updated and changed to reflect this new COVID strain.

**4.4** [Report 208/21](#) asked members to note Angus Council's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the transition to recovery and renew initiatives and the production of the Recovery and Renew Strategic Framework but stated we must ensure that our approach remains flexible and adaptable, and ready to escalate should there be further outbreaks, peaks and/or challenges.

In August 2021, GOLD COVID-19 agreed for the focus of the SILVER Incident Management Team (IMT), to move from Response to Recovery, however due to the ongoing outbreaks and challenges of COVID-19 as well as supply chain issues, it has been necessary for the majority of essential services to continue to focus on response rather than transition and stabilise into recovery. This has resulted in agreement, again from GOLD for SILVER IMT to return their focus to Response.

It is highlighted that the Council is also continuing to support the provision of three vaccination centres in Angus. Members may recall from the ANGUSalve update Reports 202/21 and 283/21 that Reid Hall, Forfar; Arbroath Community Centre; and Montrose Town Hall are being used as temporary vaccination centres in Angus (for influenza and COVID-19 jabs), supporting the request from NHS Tayside. ANGUSalve temporarily handed back these facilities to the Council and this arrangement is currently in place until 31 March 2022, but may require to be extended beyond that time. Council officers have been working with NHS Tayside colleagues to establish the potential future requirements for using these facilities, including a sustainable strategy for vaccination roll-out going forward, particularly now in the context of the new COVID variant emerging. That work is currently in progress.

All essential services are reviewing their business continuity plans through a COVID-19 lens and also taking into account of other concurrent risks, particularly winter and the Omicron variant.

The pandemic is one of several concurrent risks faced by Angus Council and its partners at this time. Winter often brings severe weather events that need to be planned for and responded to. The first named storm of the winter, Storm Arwen, resulted in significant additional pressures on services and we are at the beginning of the winter period. Also, partners continue to monitor potential concurrent risks arising from Brexit. In addition, we are experiencing high vacancy rates and recruitment issues across our teams with certain areas proving particularly challenging as well as supply chain related delays and shortages. In addition, there is the emergence of the Omicron variant which is causing significant public health concerns as well as changes in public health messaging on a daily basis.

#### 4.5 Impact on Services

Officers are experiencing challenges from various concurrent risks. Highlighted below are current key areas of concern:

##### **HR & Business Support**

The HR team continues to review and adapt policies in line with emerging Scottish Government/CoSLA guidance in response to the pandemic. Although there has been some return to 'business as usual' activity, this continues to be delivered via alternative means due to continuing restrictions. Covid-related staff absences had declined but over recent months have increased and have reflected local increases throughout Angus. This was particularly noticeable following the return of schools after the October break. Absences in key services have been noticeable, and particularly in Education & Lifelong Learning, Environmental Services (Waste) and in Children, Families & Justice. Although absences continue to be high, there is some evidence at present that numbers are once again beginning to plateau, but winter pressures are likely to see these increase. A number of arrangements have been put in place to support staff wellbeing which have been widely publicised and well accessed. These have been well received. Whilst staff in the main have managed to remain upbeat and carry on providing council services there are signs of staff experiencing difficulties due to covering the absence of colleagues to provide essential services over a prolonged period of time. Continuing issues with the recruitment and in some areas the retention of staff is a source of concern across a number of areas of the council. Some staff have highlighted issues such as isolation due to the continuing requirement to work from home or have shared their concerns about being required to report for work in a council building whilst infection rates remain high. Guidance has been issued to managers to help support these members of staff, and ready access is available to the Council's Employee Assistance Programme for those wishing to seek specific help outwith the council. There are also robust risk assessments in place to ensure the Council's obligations are met with regard to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff whilst at work. These are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect the most up-to-date Scottish Government guidelines in response to the ongoing pandemic, particularly in light of the Omicron variant.

##### **Housing**

1. **Supply difficulties.** As a result of the construction boom, not only in Europe and Asia, but also in North America, huge infrastructure investment activity is driving high demand, which in turn is causing a shortage of commodities, raw materials (such as timber and cement) and components. This is manifesting itself locally in the form of our contractors having supply chain problems and experiencing rationing from builders merchants and other suppliers. This is resulting in delays to contract programmes as well as increasing prices (in some cases by 20%), because demand has outstripped supply. It's likely that the situation will continue into the mid-term. The short-term situation has been exacerbated by problems at international container ports, as well as the cost of the actual containers. This has resulted in worldwide logistical problems of materials and components being in the wrong place.
2. **Shortage of skilled trades.** The high levels of infrastructure investment in the UK also mean that there is high demand for skilled operatives. This coupled with a reduced workforce available from European countries as a result of Brexit, means that contractors are having problems recruiting and retaining staff, across all trades and skills. Many contractors in Angus and elsewhere in the North East are experiencing a loss of employees as they are attracted away to more lucrative contracts, often in the Central Belt or further afield. In the short term this is delaying projects across all parts of the Housing construction portfolio; capital, planned maintenance, and unplanned repairs. In the longer term this may

well result in higher tender prices and a danger of strategic improvement targets not being met.

- 3. Energy Prices.** The energy sector is currently experiencing issues with wholesale price rises resulting in some smaller energy companies not being viable. This has meant that larger energy companies are reluctant to take on new customers and this is impacting on heating replacement contracts because of the metering aspects. The delays are compounded by the global supply issues with components and materials (especially electric heating components), as well as staff resource shortages previously mentioned.

The impact of these three factors for the Council's Housing Service, is a reduced capacity to carry out repairs to tenanted properties, or to complete planned improvements on schedule across most programmes. It is taking much longer to complete changes of tenancy, causing longer void periods, resulting in greater loss of rental income, and reducing our ability to accommodate either homeless presentations or people who wish to move home. There is an increase in the number of complaints as a result.

### **Environmental and Consumer Protection**

Environmental and Consumer Protection have continued to focus on ensuring compliance with Covid restrictions across Angus whilst assisting the Public Health Team to investigate outbreaks of Covid 19 in commercial establishments. At the same time the teams have worked on the recovery of existing services such as Trading Standards Enforcement, Food Law Inspections and the investigation of other Public Health issues.

### **Education and Lifelong Learning**

Staff absence due to Covid-19 coupled with absence associated with winter illness means that Head Teachers and managers are having to amend plans. This leads to a loss of dedicated time for strategic development and leadership as senior leaders are increasingly class committed. Some settings require to be supported by staff from our central teams to remain open. Redeploying central staff to schools means that planned development and improvement work is delayed. In addition, school staff are working to ensure that children and young people who are isolating continue to be supported and provided with on-line learning materials.

Our schools continue to follow Scottish Government guidance. Restrictions remain in relation to visitors to schools and activities which are not deemed essential. Parents/carers may attend school premises where this is agreed with the school and is considered necessary to support children and young people. All such visits should be risk assessed and agreed in advance by schools as being necessary. Where schools experience an increase in confirmed cases Public Health advise introducing additional mitigations which include minimising mixing between classes, further restricting visitors and maximising the use of outdoor space. Each new iteration of guidance requires review and update of risk assessments as appropriate.

Tayside Contracts have reported increases in prices and supply issues for certain types of foods. They have managed to source alternatives in each case meaning this has not yet caused an issue with supplying school meals. Representatives from ELL meet regularly with Tayside Contracts to review the situation.

Free school meal uptake is improving in primary schools following the relaxation in the Scottish Government guidance allowing classes to mix inside. Uptake in secondary schools remains below projected levels due, in part, to the safety mitigations in place including ventilation guidance. Pupil absence due to COVID-19 has also been a factor.

School lets have resumed in secondary schools only in a limited form. In order to meet the Scottish Government guidance groups are restricted to one area and only one group can use an area per evening. Income from lets therefore will be less than in previous years.

Public Health Guidance for schools is currently changing in light of the Omicron variant and this will remain a fluid situation.

## **Environmental Services**

The waste management team continues to experience COVID-19 related absences, which in addition to other staff absences, makes delivery of the full range of waste and recycling services challenging. This is being managed by prioritising staff resources to the areas of greatest need and the use of agency workers to cover staff absences when required.

There also remains in place COVID related protocols and adjustments to working practices across our waste, parks and burial sites and services. For example, restrictions on the sharing of vehicles cabs remains in place and we continue to use the hire of additional vehicles to safely transport staff between working locations.

## **Angus Health and Social Care Partnership**

The AHSCP finds itself in the position of progressing with recovery and remobilisation whilst at the same time dealing with the continuous challenges of Covid infection prevention and management, particularly in light of the emergence of Omicron. The high risk areas which require particular focus are residential care homes for older people and people with disabilities, and care at home, incorporating personal care, day care, and supported housing. We continue to manage these activities through weekly meetings of the Care Home Operational Group (CHOG) and the Care at Home Operational Group (CaHOG); these are multi-agency groups of involved professionals and regulatory bodies (social work, district nursing, Department of Public Health, Infection Prevention and Control, Scottish Care, the Care Inspectorate etc). These meetings have been in place since March 2020 (CHOG) and September 2020 (CaHOG) and have developed an effective team approach and expertise in Covid matters. The approach has been one of combined support and scrutiny to providers of care, with a rigorous focus on infection prevention and management. Areas addressed are: Covid outbreaks-prevention and management, risk status, data provision; joint assurance visits in response to concerns (a combination of Care Inspectorate, DPH, Infection Prevention and Control, social work, and district nursing depending on the circumstances); PPE supply; vaccine and booster arrangements; staff support; needs of residents; Covid testing; and financial support. Infection outbreaks in care homes and care at home are now, thankfully, infrequent and less pronounced, with less severe results when they do occur, probably as a result of vaccinations and improved infection management practises.

Much normal business has been resumed but still with the potential for Covid-related disruption. Many strategic and operational change programmes are behind schedule due to Covid but are gradually gaining momentum again. These matters are reported regularly to the Angus IJB.

## **Contact Centre**

The Contact Centre continues to operate at a high level, and continues to be involved in incoming contacts (through phone, email and webchat), and outgoing contacts (through Test and Protect) which are likely to be impacted further by Omicron. Over and above the COVID 19 response the contact centre continues its business as usual calls to support services and customers. The Contact Centre has had, and will continue to have, a number of challenges in ensuring the continuing success of its operation. These largely centre around two main areas:

**People:** The Contact Centre has a high number of temporary staff, which does not allow the long-term planning of the operation. This also leads to continual changes in staffing, and an associated management overhead in terms of recruitment, induction, training and support. The Contact Centre is therefore heavily reliant on agency staff, with support from Angus Alive, where possible. Recent attempts to recruit backfill staff for newly vacant posts are made more complex by the short term nature of the contracts, and the technology utilised by the Contact Centre.

**Technology:** The Contact Centre will continue with the current technology till March 2023, in line with Council's telephony contract, however this is outdated and does not offer the functionality afforded with newer systems. This includes the inability of the team to work effectively at home. The Contact Centre is utilising space in Angus Council offices in both Forfar and Arbroath currently, however this is suboptimal. The Contact Centre also relies heavily on secondary systems, which have had challenges, and will continue in the future.

These challenges are in line with other neighbouring local authorities.

## **Children, Families and Justice**

The Children, Families and Justice Directorate has continued to deliver direct services throughout the reporting period. The temporary amended opening hours for Strathmore Avenue Respite Centre have been reviewed and continued by the Director of Children, Families and Justice in accordance with the delegation made by Report No 40/21. This continues to ensure that children with the most complex needs can receive respite, a lifeline service for families. The temporary outreach service has continued to offer additional support to children in the community.

Across the country, there remains significant pressures on the availability of alternative family placements and all our Angus Council carers have worked tirelessly with the staff team to maintain the care of the children they are looking after. We continue to proactively recruit carers across a range of services and have been successful in using Covid legislation to recruit and approve contingency carers to supplement our local offer. Pressure on the availability has resulted in the use of externally commissioned fostering and residential resources out with the Angus area in a small number of cases.

In partnership with the Welfare Rights Team, the Directorate has made direct financial help and support more easily available to families in need through piloting a discretionary social work aid fund operated by the Welfare Rights Team. This has enabled families and care experienced young people to maintain stability and stay together.

Regular reporting on activity to support vulnerable groups has enabled Angus Council and partners to respond to emerging issues such as increased reports of domestic abuse and families in need. A strong commitment to partnership working has been maintained with good examples of joint work through the Child Protection Committee and Violence Against Women Partnership.

The Justice Service has continued to adapt to refreshed guidance to ensure that we are offering the maximum number of opportunities to complete Community Payback Orders imposed by the Court whilst maintaining the safety of staff and participants.

Capacity across the children and families service continues to be impacted by the challenges in both the recruitment and retention of qualified experienced social workers and residential social care officers. The compound effect of this, together with the impact of Covid related absence, the relative isolation of lone-working, and rising demand for social work support is being actively monitored within the service. A range of staff wellbeing supports are in place both locally and nationally and a cautious growth in the ability of teams to work together in shared spaces is progressing.

Similar issues as those highlighted above are being dealt with right across Tayside which are being discussed and co-ordinated through the Tayside Local Resilience Partnership. As with other Services, we are mindful of the likely impacts of the Omicron variant and will take account of the Public Health messaging and Scottish Government advice as it emerges.

## **Communications**

The demand of the response to the COVID 19 pandemic on Communications has been and continues to be very significant. Key issues include:

- the lack of notice on policy decisions and changes to policy at UK and Scottish Government level. These were and continue to be announced publicly with no prior warning to local authorities. This creates demand for further information from the public which the council does not have. This is likely to continue with the emergence of Omicron.
- lack of clear and consistent messaging can create a risk for local authorities and local people at a time when they need to understand key communications.
- the public trying to contact the council for further information on issues on social media, which is not a customer services channel, resulting in enquiries going unanswered.
- the volume of campaign material coming from Scottish Government to support Test and Protect, the Vaccine programme, COVID safe practices and other key messages. This remains a significant volume of work across the team.
- problems in sharing of assets such as large video files from colleagues and external partner agencies both due to size and format of files – Scot Gov and NHS.
- managing Communications out of hours services.

- conflict with business as usual and increased demand for social media communications for all services including video content.

SILVER IMT will continue to co-ordinate the work required to support our essential services and escalate any risks to GOLD.

Due the challenges outline above, critical and immediate priorities require to be the focus. Staff are doing everything they can to support the delivery of non-urgent services, but these are likely to impacted and we are asking the public to

### **Revenues, Benefits and Welfare Rights**

Levels of activity through the Scottish Welfare Fund and applications for Self-Isolation Support Grants continue to fluctuate with peaks in demand being difficult to manage with the staff available. Welfare Rights are also experiencing high levels of demand, particularly in debt cases. Rising prices, changes in Universal Credit and the ending of the furlough scheme are among a number of factors contributing to the challenges for those on low incomes who are seeking support from Welfare Rights. Council has recently agreed to temporarily expand the staffing and scope of welfare rights activity in schools to support more families in need. There is anticipated to be further impacts as a result of Omicron.

## **5. FLEXIBLE FUNDING TO TACKLE FINANCIAL INSECURITY**

On 29 November 2021 the Council received confirmation of its allocation from a new £25m Scottish Government funding allocation intended to tackle financial insecurity. This funding is part of the Government's Winter Support Fund and its purpose is to enable local authorities to support wellbeing by preventing and responding to financial insecurity.

Guidance was published on 11 November which provides a strong steer in favour of cash-first responses, and the integration of money advice and holistic support services to prevent future hardship.

Local authorities have the flexibility to adapt interventions to meet emerging needs. Action may include supplementing local budgets for the Scottish Welfare Fund to meet demand, boosting local funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, proactive assistance for those likely to experience hardship – including people who may have been impacted by the recent UK Government cut to Universal Credit and those who may not be eligible for mainstream support and other action to support wellbeing.

The Council will be required to report its use of the funding to the Scottish Government in April 2022.

Given the funding is intended to address financial insecurity over the winter period work has already commenced across Council services and with third sector partners to identify potential uses for this funding with the intention that it be used to help people most in need, some of whom may not be eligible for other sources of support e.g. due to eligibility thresholds. We know that food and fuel insecurity is a particular challenge for some Angus citizens which has been made worse by rising prices so the expectation is that funding to address these types of needs will be given priority.

Proposals for use of the funding will be identified just prior to the festive break but in order to avoid delaying implementation of these key support measures Council is being asked to delegate authority to the Director of Finance following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the SNP Group to approve proposals to utilise the funding. This will mean people across Angus being supported from early January 2022 onwards rather than having to wait until the February Policy & Resources Committee for approval to commence implementation.

The Grants Officer Sub-Group will review all proposals for use of the funding to support the Director of Finance in drawing up a final list of projects to be funded.

## 6. PROPOSALS

In terms of this report, Council is asked to note Angus Council's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges and impacts that this currently has on our services and staff.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The impact of the pandemic on the council's finances has been the subject of regular updates to Full Council in recent months and those updates have made clear the significant impact in the 2020/21 financial year, in the current financial year (2021/22) and potentially beyond.

The Council's recovery and renew work will continue to be progressed as far as possible and will be kept under regular review so too will the financial implications for the Council. One-off COVID-19 funding allocated to the Council will provide flexibility to support some recovery and renewal work including initiatives by third parties.

The Angus Council allocation from the Flexible Funding to Tackle Financial Insecurity referred to in Section 5 above is £485,000 and any agreed projects to be taken forward will be contained within that funding allocation.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached.

## 9. CONSULTATION

All members of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team have been consulted on the details of this report.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

None





Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

**Step 1**

**Name of Proposal** (includes e. g. budget savings, committee reports, strategies, policies, procedures, service reviews, functions): Noting COVID 19 - Update

**Step 2**

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment No

**(A)** If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people Yes/No

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics  
Yes/No

(iii) It is for information only Yes/No

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year Yes/No

(v) It is technical Yes/No

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

**(B)** If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment Yes/No

Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Yes/No

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.

If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

### Step 3

(i)Lead Directorate/Service: Chief Executive

(ii)Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

No

(iii)What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

The report is mainly for noting but includes a recommendation seeking delegated authority to the Director of Finance to utilise funding provided by Scottish Government to prevent and address financial insecurity within parameter set by Government.

(iv)Is it a new proposal? Yes/~~No~~ Please indicate OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? Yes/No Please indicate

### Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees ~~Yes/No~~

Job Applicants ~~Yes/No~~

Service users Yes/~~No~~

Members of the public Yes/~~No~~

### Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

**Internal data** (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

Information held by Welfare Rights and Education & Lifelong Learning among other services has helped inform this assessment

**Internal consultation** (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

Initial consultation with the Grants Officer sub-group has been undertaken

**External data** (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

None

**External consultation** (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils.

None

**Other** (general information as appropriate).

**Step 6: Evidence Gaps.**

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? Yes/No

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

**Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups?** Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

**Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.**

Age

**Impact**

Positive impact expected – financial insecurity affects people of all ages but we know people with young children and some older people are particularly in need where they don't meet eligibility criteria for existing benefits and support measures

Disability

**Impact**

Positive impact – people with disabilities can be disproportionately affected by financial insecurity so the funding available is expected to make a positive impact

Gender reassignment

**Impact**

Marriage and Civil Partnership

**Impact**

Pregnancy/Maternity

**Impact**

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

**Impact**

Religion or Belief

**Impact**

Sex

**Impact**

Evidence suggests women have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic so the support measures which will be put in place using the funding is expected to have a positive impact on women.

Sexual orientation

## **Impact**

### **Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected**

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

N/a

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

### **Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?**

No negative impacts are anticipated, only positive ones

### **Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.**

### **Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?**

The funding should support people with protected characteristics and thus advance the public sector equality duty

### **Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?**

### **Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY**

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance.

### **Step 13(A) What evidence do you have about any socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome in relation to this strategic issue?**

### **Step 13(B) Please state if there are any gaps in socio-economic evidence for this strategy and how you will take measures to gather the evidence you need.**

### **Step 13(C) Are there any potential impacts this strategy may have specifically on the undernoted groupings? Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from Covid-19.**

**Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each grouping.**

**Low and/or No Wealth** (e.g. those with enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future).

**Impact**

**Material Deprivation** (i.e. those unable to access basic goods and services e.g. repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies).

**Impact**

**Area Deprivation** (i.e. where people live (e.g. rural areas), or where they work (e.g. accessibility of transport)).

**Impact**

**Socio-economic Background** i.e. social class including parents' education, people's employment and income.

**Impact**

**Other** – please indicate

**Step 13(D) Please state below if there are measures which could be taken to reduce socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome.**

**Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?**

**Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?**

**Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation.** Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Jackie Buchanan

Reviewed by:

Approved by:

NB. There are several worked examples of separate EIA and FSD Assessments in the Guidance which may be of use to you.

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