

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Please complete this template using the [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance document](#)

Version 3: January 2013

Title of proposal (include forward plan reference if available)	Sandwell Residential Education Centres: Charges for the period 1 August 2021- 31 July 2022
Directorate and Service Area	Education, Skills and Employment; Residential Education Centres
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Names and titles of other officers involved in completing this EIA	
Partners involved with the EIA where jointly completed	
Date EIA completed	21 May 2020
Date EIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EIA	
Date EIA considered by Cabinet Member	

See [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for key prompts that must be addressed for all questions

1. The purpose of the proposal or decision required
(Please provide as much information as possible)

- 1.1 Sandwell Residential Education Centres mission is “to provide sustainable lifelong learning opportunities for all Sandwell children, young people and adults to become healthier, happier and more successful through residential, outdoor and creative arts experiences.” In short, to deliver beneficial visits for as many Sandwell children as possible, in support of Sandwell Vision 2030.
- 1.2 The intention is to have centres occupied for as much of the school year as possible, increasing attendance and positive outcomes for Sandwell children, and generating income year-round.
- 1.3 About 6,000 Sandwell children and young people experience residential visits to the centres each year, and about 2,000 experience day visits, but numbers have declined in recent years and there is capacity to do more. The proposals aim to encourage access and uptake of places by reducing low-season charges; and increasing the length of the low season.
- 1.4 This report seeks approval to implement the charges attached in line with the Residential Education Centres’ business plan, to provide a sustainable, accessible service.
- 1.5 The centres are open to Sandwell maintained schools, Sandwell academy schools, and non-Sandwell schools and groups. The proportion of non-Sandwell schools using the centres has risen in recent years, bringing in more income, but there is capacity to accommodate more Sandwell schools and children.
- 1.6 The proposed charges (Appendix A) indicate the “commercial” charge to non-Sandwell schools; and then the charges to Sandwell maintained schools with a 30% discount, and Sandwell academy schools with a 20% discount. These discounts for Sandwell children are financed by the service’s other income streams, including weekend, school holiday, and day visit educational courses and commercial events. The percent changes in charges compared with agreed charges for 2020-21 are shown.
- 1.7 Proposed low season charges have been reduced, and low season extended, to increase accessibility, participation and value particularly for Sandwell schools and children, and to encourage demand throughout the year and minimize empty periods, so increasing overall income.

- 1.8 There is greater demand in high season.
- 1.9 The proposal includes the introduction of a discounted rate for large groups at three of the centres, to encourage greater participation, increase competitiveness, and overall to generate more income. Smaller schools will be encouraged to share to take advantage of these rates.
- 1.10 Sandwell Looked After Children will continue to be able to attend the centres free of charge with their schools during term-time.
- 1.11 Demand for Plas Gwynant for 2020-21 is high, and it works at high occupancy levels. The proposed charges for 2021-22 reflect this.
- 1.12 It is anticipated that post Covid-19, many parents and possibly schools will be poorer. The service will continue to review efficiency and costs where possible to provide best value.
- 1.13 The Residential Education Service operates in a competitive market, with a zero-revenue budget since April 2017.
- 1.14 Centres have to generate sufficient income to cover all revenue costs of almost £2 million, including meeting pay awards.
- 1.15 Until the cancellation of courses at the end of March 2020, the service was projecting a balanced year-end budget for 2019-20.
- 1.16 The proposed new charges will be effective from 1 August 2021.
- 1.17 Sandwell maintained school and academy school discounts are largely covered by the generation of income at weekends and during school holidays. The proposal recommends that charges at these times will continue to be set at a rate determined by the Service Manager with Centre Heads.
- 1.18 Service managers regularly review the market in residential education to ensure that Sandwell's centres are competitive. They also regularly receive feedback and communicate with Sandwell and non-Sandwell school leaders and group leaders.
- 1.19 Options to further increase charges are likely to result in a decrease in attendance and reduced social value.

2. Evidence used/considered

Evidence considered is based on:

- On-going monitoring of uptake of courses and places by groups – especially schools – from within and outside Sandwell
- Monitoring of attendance by gender, disability, and LAC.
- Benchmarking against other external providers of similar services.
- Feedback from Head teachers, and other school/group leaders.

3. Consultation

Consultation has taken place through formal and informal discussion with Head Teachers individually, at Learning Community meetings, and Secondary and Primary Partnership meetings.

4. Assess likely impact

Please give an outline of the overall impact if possible.

Reduced charges in low season, and an extension of that season, are intended to give school leaders and parents better value and more confidence in booking courses for their pupils, so increasing opportunity, attendance, positive outcomes and social value.

Prior to Covid-19, bookings for 2020-21 were very strong, particularly year-round at Plas Gwynant. However, all centres had some empty term-time weeks in 2019-20, and the proposed charging strategy seeks to encourage school leaders to take up these slots and increase overall uptake.

In addition to the 30% and 20% discounts for Sandwell schools and academy schools respectively, large groups will qualify for an additional discount, bringing the per person cost down further. Smaller schools will be encouraged to share, or to take two or more year-groups, to benefit from this.

Seasonal charges, various duration of courses, and accommodation choices give schools more price options.

There is no separate change to any of the protected characteristics listed below.

Please complete the table below at 4a to identify the likely impact on specific protected characteristics

4a. Use the table to show:

- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality strands (protected characteristics), that is it could disadvantage them or if there is no impact, please note the evidence and/or reasons for this.
- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relationships within equality characteristics.

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
Age			✓	Centres are attended by all age groups from reception upwards. There is no variation in strategy regarding age.
Disability			✓	Centres have improved their facilities and provision for disabled people, and monitor attendance. It is anticipated that proportional attendance will be retained.
Gender reassignment			✓	No variation in strategy.
Marriage and civil partnership			✓	No variation in strategy.

Pregnancy and maternity			✓	No variation in strategy.
Race			✓	No variation in strategy.
Religion or belief			✓	No variation in strategy.
Sex			✓	No variation in strategy.
Sexual orientation			✓	No variation in strategy.
Other			✓	No variation in strategy.

Does this EIA require a full impact assessment? Yes No

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then you do not need to go any further. You have completed the screening stage. You must, however, complete sections 7 and 9 and publish the EIA as it stands.

If you have answered yes to the above, please complete the questions below referring to the guidance document.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

The Centres have developed more versatile cost-options, including pods, more adaptable accommodation, different lengths of courses, and seasonal charging. Overall capacity at the Centres has increased, with more external income and commercial income from lettings and events enabling the service to subsidise Sandwell schools and children.

Schools are encouraged to use Pupil Premium, PE funding and other sources to enable pupils to attend, and where appropriate we can put fund-raisers in touch with schools.

6. As a result of the EIA what decision or actions are being proposed in relation to the original proposals?

None.

7. Monitoring arrangements

Attendance is monitored and reported by the Residential Education Service Manager.

8. Action planning

You may wish to use the action plan template below

Question no. (ref)	Action required	Lead officer/ person responsible	Target date	Progress

9. Publish the EIA

Where can I get additional information, advice and guidance?

In the first instance, please consult the accompanying guide “Equality Impact Assessment Guidance”

Practical advice, guidance and support

Help and advice on undertaking an EIA, using the electronic EIA toolkit or receiving training related to equalities legislation and EIAs is available to **all managers** across the council from officers within Improvement and Efficiency. The officers within in Improvement and Efficiency will also provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EIA documents.

Please contact:

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