

SECTION 1 - DO I NEED AN EIA?**DO I NEED AN EIA?** *(see note 1)***Name of policy/activity**

A13a4 Essential Skills 100% Savings

Please choose one of the following:

Is this a:

- New policy/activity?
- Existing policy/activity?
- Budget proposal/change for this policy/activity? ✓
- Pilot programme or project?

Decision

Remove the Essential Skills Service.

The service is aimed at adults who have no qualifications at national level 4 and above, a level that is needed to access further education. During 2017-18 the service supported 256 adults.

EIA Required – YES

Date of Decision: 12/04/2019

If undertaking an EIA please continue onto the Section 2. If not, pass this signed form to the Equalities Officer.

SECTION 2: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

General Information

Assessment undertaken by *(please complete as appropriate)*

Director or Head of Service	Graham Jarvis, Acting Director of Education and Social Care
Lead Officer for developing the policy/activity	Sheila Campbell, Principal Librarian
Other people involved in the screening (this may council staff, partner or others i.e contractor, partner or community)	Moira Strathdee, Essential Skills Development Officer

Brief description of policy/activity

Describe the policy/activity *(see note 2)*:

Already approved:

Remove 18 hr post of Youth Literacies Worker - This post has been deleted

Remove 18.7 hr post of Adult Learning Co-ordinator (Forres and Lossiemouth)- This post is still in place due to the agreed consultation process

Additional:

Remove 15.3 hr post of Adult Learning Co-ordinator (Keith and Speyside)- This post is vacant

Remove 22 hr post of Adult Learning Co-ordinator (Buckie)

Remove 30 hrs Adult Learning Co-ordinator post for Elgin (0.83 Fte)

Remove full-time post of Essential Skills Development Officer (1.0 Fte)

Remove supplies and services

Who are your main stakeholders? *(see note 3)*

The Essential Skills Service provides an adult literacies learning service which is not offered by other providers. Our main stakeholders are adults with no qualifications at national 4 and above. This service offers learning in skills for everyday life for employment, health and wellbeing as an individual as well as a family member, worker and community member.

This includes:

- Reading with understanding
- Writing so others can understand

- Communicating, using a variety of media for everyday life
- Using numbers e.g. managing money, making informed choices
- Making informed choices and expressing ideas and opinions
- Gaining the confidence to support children's learning

As an SQA centre, Essential Skills offers support to learners to work towards SQA accreditation which can open the door to further education at college well as help with increasing employability. It provides support to adults working towards other types of accreditation to increase their employability e.g. SVQs, driving theory and Construction Skills Certificate Scheme.

The ES service is not just about delivering a course, it is person-centred and helps adults who have had previous negative learning experiences develop the skills to become reliable, organise their time, overcome barriers, become independent learners as they learn to make time for study and practice their developing skills, develop the motivation to succeed and make plans for positive change in their lives.

Other stakeholders are partners who currently refer their clients to this service. The majority of learners are referred by DWP, Employment Support, Health, Social Work and Criminal Justice. The removal of the service will limit the opportunities available to their clients.

Evidence base for assessment *(see note 4)*

Please cite any quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to groups having different needs, experiences or attitudes in relation to this policy/activity. What baseline evidence do you have already for this policy/activity?

Describe briefly the evidence you will draw on to inform this EIA.

13% of learners fit in learning around a full time job, 7% work parttime; 28% are right at the beginning of the employability pipeline where they need to work on their skills before being ready to work and 28% are unemployed, looking for work and working on their skills to improve the options available to them. Essential Skills offers learning opportunities not provided by other agencies.

Consistently over the last three years an average of 43% of learners are aged 16-25. This service is helping young adults learn how to learn; how to enjoy learning and the benefits of it.

70% of learners make progress and achieve their learning goals.

The Essential Skills Service delivers adult learning across Moray with 54% of learners living outwith Elgin.

Information on service users and evidence of achievement/outcomes

The census 2011 highlighted that 26.7% of the adult population in Moray have no qualifications.

A consultation was held with service users and referral agencies during March/April 2019. The purpose of the consultation was to get a better insight into how removing the service would affect service users and to identify ways of mitigating the impacts. The council's Community Support Unit led the consultation in order to ensure that this was carried out in accordance with the national standards for community engagement as set by the Scottish Community Development Centre. The council's Research and Information Officers gave support with the survey design and analysis.

The results have been used to inform this EIA.

Engagement and consultation *(see note 5)*

Thinking about people inside the council, partners and the wider community use the table below to outline any previous engagement or consultation which is relevant to this policy/activity.

Protected groups	Engagement and consultation
Race	
Disability	√
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	
Gender or gender identify/gender reassignment	
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	
Sexual orientation	
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)	
Religion, faith and belief	
Marriage or civil partnership	
Human rights	
Socio- economic disadvantage (low	

income, deprived area, rural or remote area)	√
Inequalities of outcome (poorer outcomes for certain people or communities)	√
Staff	
Partners/contractors	
Other	

Procurement and partnerships *(see note 6)*

Is this policy/activity currently or anticipated to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or other partners? Are they aware of their obligations to address equalities?

Briefly explain:

N/A

Evidence gaps *(see note 7)*

Are there any significant gaps in the known evidence base, engagement or procurement that would prevent this EIA being completed? If so, you will need to address the gaps before finalising this EIA. Please go to Appendix 1 to assist you in developing a work plan to address the gaps.

NA

Who is affected and what is the impact? *(see note 8)*

From this evidence or engagement you have already, list how this policy/activity might impact equality and/or the elimination of discrimination for each of the equality groups. Impact across groups identified below is set out in the next section.

Protected Groups	Positive	Negative
Race		
Disability		√
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)		
Gender or gender identify/gender reassignment		
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)		
Sexual orientation		
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)		
Religion, faith and belief		
Marriage or civil partnership		
Human rights		
Socio- economic disadvantage (low income, deprived area, rural or remote area)		√
Inequalities of outcome (poorer outcomes for certain people or communities)		√
Whole population (universal service)		
Staff		
Partners/contractors		
Other		

Summary of impacts *(see note 9)*

Summarise the impacts of the policy/activity and resulting activities affect different communities and groups.

Does it create positive impacts? No

Please explain

The proposal means the removal of a service.

Does it create negative disadvantage or inequalities? Yes

Please explain

Essential Skills gives adults the skills they need to access further education, employment or even basic services. It will be almost impossible for individuals who need support with basic literacy and numeracy to source an alternative provider unless they are already literate and numerate and require additional support to undertake a college course.

LEAD Scotland advertise that they provide support to adults over 16, resident in Moray, who identify as disabled or a carer, to improve their reading, writing and number handling. The focus of their work is digital literacy. The needs of the users of Essential Skills are more diverse and the Essential Skills service is set up to provide a person-centred service.

53% of users of Essential Skills services are looking for work.

Over the last 3 years the number of service users in the age group between 16 and 24 has been consistently high at just over 40%. There has recently been a significant drop in the number of pupils staying on in secondary education beyond S4.

The consultation highlighted that a high proportion (more than half) of the service users interviewed had left school with limited or no qualifications.

Many of those interviewed indicated that their ability to learn was affected by lack of confidence or anxiety issues. Almost all of those interviewed said that their contact with the Essential Skills Service had improved their confidence, their self esteem, given them a purpose in life and helped them to gain qualifications.

A significant proportion also said it helped them gain independence, be better organized in life and helped support their child with their learning.

If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact (see note 8):

Legal? Yes/No

Please explain

Local authorities have discretion as to how to deliver the service.

Intended? Yes/No

Please explain

The impact is a result of the need to make financial savings across all council services.

Mitigating action (see note 10)

Can the impact of the proposed policy/activity be mitigated? No

Please explain

This is not a service that is available free of charge unless an individual is registering for a college course or eligible to access support through LEAD Scotland. College courses require qualifications at national level 4 or above.

Mitigation through other organisations such as LEAD is unlikely. There was some consideration given to the possibility of charging for the service. Nearly half of those service users interviewed have indicated that they are prepared to pay for the service. However, the literacy learners would be unable to pay for their support/learning. Generally speaking they are unemployed people who are trying to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in order to improve their chances of gaining employment or to gain credits towards the base level entry requirements for access to college.

Service users would have to find means of self-support such as family, friends or other community support. However, this is likely to be less formal and less effective.

What practical actions do you recommend to reduce, justify or remove any adverse/negative impact? If more than one action, please list them in the action plan in appendix 2.

In the long term, one way of removing any negative impact would be to reduce the number of pupils who leave education at 16 without suitable qualifications. The information from this EIA will be passed to the schools service for consideration and appropriate action but recommending actions to make this happen is outwith the scope of this EIA.

Justification *(see note 11)*

From the evidence you have and the impacts identified, what are the key risks (the harm or 'adverse impacts') and opportunities (benefits and opportunities to promote equality) this policy/practice/activity might present?

Recent staying-on rates for secondary pupils show a significant drop in pupils in Moray staying on in S5.

Individuals who do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills will be unable to learn or improve these skills to support their children's learning, fully function in everyday life, improve their life and employment chances and complete essential forms. They will be unable to fully participate in society.

The proposals offer no opportunity for promoting equal opportunities.

Keeping in mind the proportionality of any action proposed to mitigate the impact, describe the scale and likelihood of these risks.

The risks are very high given that no alternative provision is in place for the users of Essential Skills Service.

If nothing can be done to reduce the negative impact(s) but the proposed policy/activity must go ahead, what justification is there to continue with the change?

Financial challenge faced by the council, however, consideration should be given to the potential follow-on impact to other services (internal and external).

The proposal has been made as part of the Council's overall package of savings to balance its budget. The Essential Skills service is not statutory and so the Council can determine whether and the extent to which it provides this service. This service affects relatively a small number of the local community (around 250). The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget. Given the extent of the financial challenges this saving makes a vital contribution to that position and taking account of the equality impact it is considered to be a proportionate measure to achieve the Council's need to balance its budget.

SECTION 3 CONCLUDING THE EIA

Concluding the EIA *(see note 12)*

Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy will meet the council's responsibilities in relation to equality and human rights referring to the four possible outcomes.

The proposal has negative impacts on people with a disability and on the need to reduce inequalities that are a result of socio-economic differences. It particularly affects those who have low attainment in education.

There are limited local authority led service alternatives in place to remove the negative impacts.

Consideration must be given to whether this proposal is a proportionate response to the Council's financial situation given the equality impact.

Given the impact on relatively low numbers of the community; the potential for users to self-support and the non-statutory nature of the service, the proposal to remove the service is considered proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances.

Decision

Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposal(s)

Date of Decision: 12/04/2019

Sign off and authorisation:

Service	Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport
Department	Education and Social Care
Policy/activity subject to EIA	Essential Skills
We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Sheila Campbell Position: Principal Librarian Date: 19
Authorisation by head of service or director.	Name: Graham Jarvis Position: Acting Director of Education & Social Care Date: 12/4/19
Please return this form to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.	

Appendix 1: evidence gaps

Evidence gaps *(see note 13)*

Have you got a 'baseline' position and understanding of the service users and their views? If not what would be needed to complete that baseline? How do you plan to obtain that evidence?

Engagement and consultation *(see note 14)*

Do you need to further engagement with your stakeholders before the policy/activity can be considered? If so, what is needed and how do you plan to undertake the engagement?

Procurement and partnerships *(see note 15)*

Have you done any work to include equality and human rights considerations into the contracts already? If not, consider steps you can take to build into all stages of the procurement process the requirement to consider the general equality duties and equality more broadly.

Additional research

Do you need any additional research or data to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known effects of the policy? Have you considered commissioning new data or research?

Appendix 2: mitigating action – action plan

Action plan *(see note 16)*

Describe the actions/measures you will put in place to reduce these negative impact(s).
Action/measure: 1
Describe how this action/measure will reduce impact.
State whether this action/measure will completely or partially reduce impact.
Describe how you will know whether this action/measure has had the desired effect i.e. how will you be able to demonstrate that the negative impact(s) has been reduced?
When will the impact of this action/measure be reviewed?
Who will be responsible for this action/measure?
Action/measure: 2
Describe how this action/measure will reduce impact.
State whether this action/measure will completely or partially reduce impact.
Describe how this action/measure will reduce impact.
Describe how you will know whether this action/measure has had the desired effect.

Who will be responsible for this action/measure?
When will the impact of this action/measure be reviewed?
Action/measure: 3
Describe how this action/measure will reduce impact.
State whether this action/measure will completely or partially reduce impact.
Describe how this action/measure will reduce impact.
Describe how you will know whether this action/measure has had the desired effect.
Who will be responsible for this action/measure?
When will the impact of this action/measure be reviewed?