

Equality Impact Assessment: Essential Life Skills programme in Opportunity Areas

This programme will build the essential life skills of young people in Opportunity Areas (OA) by investing £22m in improving their access to a range of extra-curricular activities. These skills are in turn likely to contribute to young people's attainment, wellbeing, behaviour and later life outcomes.^{1,2,3} The programme will be implemented on a local level by OA stakeholders, led by Partnership Boards and supported by DfE heads of delivery.

The Opportunity Areas are twelve areas of the country amongst the weakest in terms of the Social Mobility Index⁴ and school performance and system capacity, this is the capacity within their school systems to improve standards while still accommodating increased numbers of children. All 12 opportunity areas are in the weakest sextile in both the published Social Mobility Index and the published methodology for identifying Achieving Excellence Areas.⁵ Geographical spread was also considered, including looking at coastal, rural and urban areas.

By targeting these areas, the policy has an explicit equality and social mobility agenda. Young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are currently less likely to access many types of extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) were less likely to be reported by their parents as participating in sports activities (35% compared with 47% of non-eligible pupils). These pupils are overrepresented in Opportunity Areas.⁶ According to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), those in the first IDACI quintile had a higher participation rate than those in the fifth quintile (52% and 39% respectively).⁷ When disadvantaged young people do participate in extra-curricular activities they have the potential to benefit more than their more privileged peers.⁸

Notwithstanding this goal to improve equality, there is the potential for other equality related benefits as well as negative impacts. The Equality Act 2010, Section 149 places a legal obligation on the Department to consider how its decisions impact differently on different people.

¹ Durlak, J. A. and Weissberg, R. P. (2007) 'The Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills', Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (NJ1).

² Heckman, James J., Moon, Seong Hyeok, Pinto, Rodrigo, Savelyev, Peter A. and Yavitz, Adam Q. (2010) 'Analyzing Social Experiments as Implemented: A Reexamination of the Evidence from the Highscope Perry Preschool Program', *Quantitative Economics* 1(1): 1-46. Reported in Almlund, M., Duckworth, A. L., Heckman, J. J., & Kautz, T. D. (2011) *Personality psychology and economics* (No. w16822), National Bureau of Economic Research

³ Heckman, J., Moon, Seong, H., Pinto, R., Savelyev, P. and Yavitz, A. (2010) 'Analyzing Social Experiments as Implemented: A Reexamination of the Evidence from the Highscope Perry Preschool Program', *Quantitative Economics* 1(1): 1-46. Reported in Almlund, M., Duckworth, A. L., Heckman, J. J., & Kautz, T. D. (2011) *Personality psychology and economics* (No. w16822), National Bureau of Economic Research

⁴ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2016) 'The Social Mobility Index', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>

⁵ Department for Education (2016) 'Defining 'achieving excellence areas': methodology guidance', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defining-achieving-excellence-areas-methodology>

⁶ Department for Education (2016) 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2016' <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016>

⁷ Panayiotou, Sally, Newton, Sarah, Boulden, Kate, Andersson, David (2017) 'Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: Research report Wave 2', Department for Education

⁸ Chanfreau, J., Tanner, E., Callanan, M., Laing, K., Skipp, A., and Todd, L. (2016). Out of school activities during primary school and KS2 attainment. Centre for Longitudinal Studies Working paper 2016/1. Institute of Education; UCL.

The main potential causes of differential impact in the context of this programme are:

- a) The focus of the programme on twelve geographic areas means that based on the demographics of these areas it could affect groups with protected characteristics in different ways.
- b) The types of activities that can be offered as part of this programme as defined by the programme criteria and in the procurement framework could be more or less relevant or attractive to groups with protected characteristics potentially causing indirect discrimination.
- c) Local stakeholders take on a crucial role in the implementation of this programme, selecting and delivering the activities they believe best address local needs within the programme criteria. This means there is a risk that the activities selection and delivery at a local level leads to indirect discrimination.⁹

Positive equality impacts are particularly likely where the programme's central objective to strengthen equality of opportunity and social mobility for socio-economically disadvantaged young people overlaps with supporting young people with protected characteristics, such as race and disability.

The table below considers each protected characteristic (sex, race, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and age) against the needs identified by the Act, to

- I. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- II. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- III. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This assessment only considers the impact on the areas covered by the programme combined, as opposed to considering the areas separately. Nevertheless, we are aware that the programme may have a differential effect in different areas for example based on how successfully it is implemented. To address this we will be working with the Opportunity Areas team to further explore potential issues as part of their area specific equality impact assessments, which will cover the local implementation of all interventions which take place as part of the OA initiative.

⁹ The DfE heads of delivery responsible for the OAs will likely consider the equality impact of their local activities, such as procurement and activity selection, which will ensure that due regard is given to equality issue as part of the programme implementation.

Protected Characteristics	I. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;	II. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;	III. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
Sex	Different extra-curricular activities appeal more to male or female pupils, therefore there is a risk of indirect discrimination on a local level. For example, male pupils are more likely to engage in sports than female pupils (50% and 41% respectively). However volunteering is more popular amongst female than male pupils (20% compared with 11% boys), as are clubs relating to an academic subject e.g. French club, maths club (25% compared with 19%). ¹⁰ The programme criteria for local stakeholders and the procurement are sufficiently broad to accommodate the preferences of different groups, which mitigates this risk.	The programme is likely to improve access to activities for both boys and girls. Evidence shows that schools are already mindful of offering a wide range of activities to appeal to all their students, therefore we anticipate no impact negative equity impact. ¹¹	Participation in extra-curricular activities have been shown to improve pupils' social skills ¹² and to encourage new friendships. ¹³ Therefore, the programme has the potential to improve relationships between pupils who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
Race	Evidence shows that young people of Asian/British Asian and Black African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, although participation levels vary. For example, 61% of young people from Black backgrounds	Evidence shows that young people of Black African/Caribbean/Black British are least likely not to participate in any out of school activities (11%, compared to 25% of young people from white backgrounds). Therefore, the policy is likely to benefit these groups	Participation in extra-curricular activities have been shown to improve pupils' social skills and to encourage new friendships. Therefore, the programme has the potential to improve relationships between pupils who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

¹⁰ Panayiotou, Sally, Newton, Sarah, Boulden, Kate, Andersson, David (2017) 'Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: Research report Wave 2', Department for Education

¹¹ Bertram, C., Day, L., McLeod, S., Campbell-Jack, D. and Jeyarajah, A. (2017) 'Extended Activity Provision in Secondary Schools: Research report', Department for Education

¹² Durlak, J. , Weissberg, R and Pachan, M. (2010) 'A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45(3-4): 294-309

¹³ Schaefer, D., Simpkins, S., Vest, A., Price, C. (2011) 'The contribution of extracurricular activities to adolescent friendships: New insights through social network analysis', *Developmental Psychology*, Vol 47(4): 1141-1152

	<p>participated in sport compared to 53% on Asian and 44% of White young people.¹⁴ 25% of Asian young people participated in volunteering compared to 18% of Black young people and 14% of White young people.¹⁵ While these different rates of participation could lead to a differing impact on different groups this is likely to benefit minority ethnic groups.</p>	<p>disproportionally and advance equality of opportunity for these groups. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are also overrepresented in the geographic areas targeted by the programme, further increasing the potential for positive impact. 33% of pupils across all OAs are Non-white British, compared to 30% nationally.¹⁶ There is also a considerable overlap between socio-economic disadvantage and race. Almost 50% of children from ethnic minority backgrounds grow up in low-income households, compared to just over 20% of young white people.¹⁷ This means that by improving disadvantaged pupils' access to extra-curricular activities the programme will support equality of opportunity for ethnic minority groups.</p>	
Disability	<p>There is a risk of indirect discrimination depending on the activities that will be offered as part of the programme. Young people with SEND are for example less likely to attend sports activities (32% compared to 47% overall) and volunteering (8% compared to 17% overall).¹⁸ Parents of SEND young people are less likely to agree</p>	<p>The programme has the potential to improve the activity offer for SEND pupils. Parents of SEND young people are currently more likely to want to see more activities offered for their child (32%, compared to 27% of all parents).²¹ In practice is therefore likely that the funds will benefit the equality</p>	<p>Participation in extra-curricular activities have been shown to improve pupils' social skills and to encourage new friendships. Therefore, the programme has the potential to improve relationships between pupils who share protected characteristics and those who do not.</p>

¹⁴ Panayiotou, Sally, Newton, Sarah, Boulden, Kate, Andersson, David (2017) 'Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: Research report Wave 2', Department for Education

¹⁵ Panayiotou, Sally, Newton, Sarah, Boulden, Kate, Andersson, David (2017) 'Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: Research report Wave 2', Department for Education

¹⁶ Department for Education (2016) 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2016' <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016>

¹⁷ Kenway, P. and Palmer, G. (2007) 'Poverty among ethnic groups: How and why does it differ?', New Policy Institute

¹⁸ Panayiotou, Sally, Newton, Sarah, Boulden, Kate, Andersson, David (2017) 'Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: Research report Wave 2', Department for Education

	<p>that activities meet their child’s need (30%, compared to 39% of all parents).¹⁹</p> <p>The programme criteria and procurement framework will encourage the inclusion of SEND young people, thus mitigating this risk. There remains a risk that activity selection at a local level will indirectly exclude pupils with disabilities. However, evidence shows that schools are already mindful of offering a wide range of activities to appeal to all their students.²⁰</p>	<p>of opportunity for disabled young people.</p> <p>There is also an overlap between SEND and socio-economic disadvantage. Across England 14.4% of all pupils are identified as SEND. Pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health as their primary type of need are more likely to be eligible for free school meals than pupils with other primary type of need. 33.0% of pupils with SEN support and 42.5% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan with this type of need were eligible for free school meals.²²</p>	
Religion or belief	<p>Depending on the activities offered there is a risk of indirect discrimination, as for example joined sports activities for female and male pupils and music and performance-based activities can be unacceptable to some faith groups.</p> <p>The programme criteria and the procurement framework are sufficiently broad to accommodate the preferences of different groups, which mitigates this risk.</p>	<p>There has been some research in the correlation between socio-economic disadvantage (deprivation / unemployment / poverty) and religion. Conclusions are often mixed. There is some evidence, for example, that British Muslims as a faith group and especially women within this group have above average joblessness rates.²³ However, given the complexity of the relationship between religion and socio-economic disadvantage and the potential intervening variables such as race, class and education we believe it is unviable</p>	<p>Participation in extra-curricular activities have been shown to improve pupils’ social skills and to encourage new friendships. Therefore, the programme has the potential to improve relationships between pupils who share protected characteristics and those who do not.</p>

²¹ Panayiotou, Sally, Newton, Sarah, Boulden, Kate, Andersson, David (2017) ‘Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: Research report Wave 2’, Department for Education

¹⁹ Panayiotou, Sally, Newton, Sarah, Boulden, Kate, Andersson, David (2017) ‘Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: Research report Wave 2’, Department for Education

²⁰ Bertram, C., Day, L., McLeod, S., Campbell-Jack, D. and Jeyarajah, A. (2017) ‘Extended Activity Provision in Secondary Schools: Research report’, Department for Education

²² Department for Education (2016) ‘Special educational needs in England January 2016’ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2016>

²³ Sooden, Frank (2016) ‘Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK inquiry submission’, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

		to claim differential equality impact on pupils with this characteristic.	
Pregnancy and maternity	While we have no specific data on young mother's participation in extra-curricular activities it is likely that this is below the level of other pupils as a result of child caring duties. It is also possible that the activities selected at a local level will not be suitable for pregnant pupils, therefore indirectly discriminating against them. The programme criteria and procurement framework requirements are sufficiently wide to allow for the selection of activities that are suitable for this group.	No impact anticipated	Participation in extra-curricular activities have been shown to improve pupils' social skills and to encourage new friendships. Therefore, the programme has the potential to improve relationships between pupils who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
Sexual orientation	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	Participation in extra-curricular activities have been shown to improve pupils' social skills and to encourage new friendships. Therefore, the programme has the potential to improve relationships between pupils who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
Gender reassignment	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	Participation in extra-curricular activities have been shown to improve pupils' social skills and to encourage new friendships. Therefore, the programme has the potential to improve relationships between pupils who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
Age	This protected characteristic is not applicable to this policy. The policy targets young people between the ages of 5 and 18.		

In summary, there is a risk of local stakeholders in OAs selecting activities, which are to differing degrees applicable or attractive to pupils with protected characteristics. This affects particularly sex, race, disability, religion and pregnancy / maternity. However, schools and providers are already managing and addressing this issue by offering a diverse range of activities. This risk is further mitigated by the programme through a broad and inclusive set of programme criteria, which focus on outcomes of activities as opposed to content and delivery. The criteria also encourage the inclusion of SEND young people. Department staff who are working with stakeholders in a particular OA will also closely monitor the programme implementation. This will allow us to continuously monitor equality implications and Department staff will be working to mitigate issues arising locally.

Moreover, there is considerable potential for positive impacts on equality especially for young people with disabilities and from minority ethnic groups. The evidence reviewed here shows that especially parents of SEND young people would like to see more activities offered for their children, indicating that they would be willing to encourage participation. For ethnic minorities there is evidence that a number of groups are above average likely to take up extra-curricular activities offered and given the overlap between ethnic minority communities and disadvantage and their overall overrepresentation in OAs it is likely that their equality of opportunity will be supported by the Essential Life Skills programme.