

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00919 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services Governance & Human Resources	Lead Officer Name:	Wendy Barber
		Team:	Information Governance
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Proposal:	Registration Fees & Charges	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	No

Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	No	Yes	No	No

Other, please specify:

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

02/12/2024	To increase income to narrow the gap between the cost of delivering the service and the income brought in by charging for the service.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	Gross expenditure in 23/24 was £348,000. Income was £204,000. Net expenditure was £144,000.	It is not possible to benchmark the overall service spend as each Council delivers the registration service in very different ways depending on their venues and staffing.
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	0	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:	0	The budget is not being increased.
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:	Estimated income from discretionary charges is £100,000. All discretionary charges (other than charge for large ceremony room and charge for fast-track certificates) to be increased by 20%.	For most charges, we are below the Scottish average.
	Expected Annual Income Total:	£20,000 increase. This is based on an anticipated 20% increase to half of the annual income (the other half being non-discretionary fees set nationally).	
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	01/04/2025	
	End Date (if any):	31/03/2026	

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

The registration service is delivered on behalf of National Registers of Scotland. We do not collect information about protected characteristics on its behalf.

Private citizenship ceremonies are delivered on behalf of the Home Office. We do not collect information about protected characteristics on its behalf.

B - Qualitative Evidence This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

The registration service is delivered on behalf of National Registers of Scotland. We do not collect information about protected characteristics on its behalf.

We have no discretion in relation to most of our charges. Where we do have discretion to charge a fee, we offer a concession in line with the Council's concessionary policy (other than for private citizenship ceremonies, as group ceremonies are also available) and for the fast-track certificate service (as the service needs to cover its costs). Going forward, as the service will no longer be based in Burgh Buildings, we will not be able to offer a concession for the use of the large marriage room.

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	Yes
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	The registration service has no discretion in relation to most of its charges in relation to the registration of births, marriages and deaths. Where there is discretion, the charges for services are reasonable compared to many other Councils and private celebrants. It is considered unlikely that there will be any disproportionate adverse impact on those with protected characteristics.
What gaps in data / information were identified?	The service does not hold protected characteristic or financial information about those who use its services.
Is further research necessary?	No

If NO, please state why.

Because services are delivered, for the most part, on behalf of the National Registers of Scotland, it would not be appropriate to collect information which is not required to deliver the service.

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	No	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.		
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.	Given that services are delivered, for the most part, on behalf of the National Registers of Scotland, it would not be appropriate to collect information on individuals which is not required to deliver the statutory service.	
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	No	
Survey	No	
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify		
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	No	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	No	
Is further engagement recommended?	No	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age	✓			n/a
Disability	✓			n/a
Sex	✓			n/a
Ethnicity	✓			n/a
Religion / Belief / non-Belief	✓			n/a
Sexual Orientation	✓			n/a
Transgender	✓			n/a
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓			n/a
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			n/a
Poverty			✓	The increased charges will of course be more difficult to afford. However, concessions are offered where that is practicable, and non-discretionary fees are in place for essential life events.
Care Experienced	✓			n/a
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.	✓			n/a
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)	None identified.			

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	A percentage increase in discretionary charges will have a neutral impact on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	A percentage increase in discretionary charges will have a neutral impact on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	A percentage increase in discretionary charges will have a neutral impact on the duty to foster good relations.

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	No	
Councils	No	
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	No	
Integration Joint Board	No	
Police	No	
Third Sector	No	
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.		

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
Higher cost of service	Those living in poverty	Continue to make customers aware of concessionary charging where that is available - and statutory services, the costs of which are set nationally and over which the Council has no discretion.	Chief Registrar	05/04/2026	Financial Strategy

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

Are actions being reported to Members?	No
If yes when and how ?	

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	No	
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	Yes	<p>There may be a slight impact on those who are living in poverty but concessions are available for certain fees in line with the Council's concessions policy, and all statutory registration services remain at the fee set nationally.</p> <p>The increase in discretionary fees has arisen primarily out of a Council-wide exercise to review fees and charges, in line with benchmarking information from other Councils. Based on that, a 20% percentage increase across the fees for attendance at life events is reasonable, with concessions still available.</p> <p>There is a larger increase proposed in relation to the fast-track certificate process (£5.50 to £10) to narrow the gap between the cost of providing the service and the payment for that. All customers still have the option to obtain a certificate "at cost" (non-discretionary fee).</p> <p>There is a larger increase (from £55 to £125) in relation to the charge for a large ceremony room. This is due to the closure of Burgh Buildings and the need to use an alternative room at Callendar House, where no discounted rate has been given (and therefore no concession is possible).</p> <p>The proposal has a neutral impact on those with protected characteristics and/or who are care-experienced.</p>
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:			
Signature:	<i>Wendy Barber</i>	Date:	04/12/2024

SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:	Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes
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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS	The assessment is based on best judgement, owing to the limited availability of data and the nature of the service. This is reflected in the assessment.	
If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA		
If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA		

Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	No	If YES, please describe:
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LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes	Impact is mainly neutral, with appropriate mitigation in place for the negative impact identified around those experiencing poverty.

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:		
Signature:	<i>Karen Algie</i>	Date: 11/12/2024