



Equality Analysis Toolkit

Bleasdale School

For Decision Making Items

August 2023



Question 1 - What is the nature of and are the key components of the proposal being presented?

The proposal relates to the removal of the boarding provision at Bleasdale School.

Question 2 - Scope of the Proposal

Is the proposal likely to affect people across the county in a similar way or are specific areas likely to be affected – e.g. are a set number of branches/sites to be affected?

There are no pupils boarding at Bleasdale House therefore no current pupils will be disadvantaged by losing the boarding facility. There have been no boarding pupils for 4 years.

Question 3 – Protected Characteristics Potentially Affected

Could the proposal have a particular impact on any group of individuals sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status

And what information is available about these groups in the County's population or as service users/customers?

This proposal will have a particular impact on children and young people with disabilities and their families. Pupils will be within the age (younger people) protected characteristics group and are likely to meet the definition for the disability protected characteristics group.

85% of respondents identified as being white, which may mean this ethnicity may not be significantly different in comparison with the communities which the schools will potentially serve. 4% of the respondents were Asian and 11% of respondents opted to 'prefer not to say'



Question 4 – Engagement/Consultation

How have people/groups been involved in or engaged with in developing this proposal?

An information consultation was undertaken between 5 May 2023 and 11 June 2023, this period of consultation included an online survey between those dates on the Council's 'Have your say' website and a public consultation meeting held on 15 May 2023.

The outcomes of the informal consultation were considered by the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and in June 2023 approval was given to undertake the formal consultation required to make the prescribed alteration/significant change to the school, that is to close the boarding provision at Bleasdale School.

The formal consultation was undertaken between 23 June 2023 and 21 July 2023. This period of consultation included the publication of the statutory notice in the Lancashire Evening Post, in and around Bleasdale School premises and in Silverdale Public Library. An online survey was available between the 23 June 2023 and 21 July 2023 and a public meeting was held in school on 4 July 2023, a representative of the local authority attended this event. Paper copies of the consultation booklet were also made available in Silverdale Public Library.

There were 30 responses received to the on-line survey and one response was received via the paper copy forms made available in the public library in Silverdale. 54% of respondents worked at Bleasdale School and 74% did not have a child or young person with special educational needs in their household. A breakdown of the responses provided is as follows:

- four did not register any information or an opinion or neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 32% agreed with the proposal
- 60% disagreed with the proposal.

The main concerns about the proposal related to difficulties with accessing respite care and future access to the facilities, such as the hydrotherapy pool, the rebound centre and the outdoor play area, that are located within the residential part of the building. This was seen as problematic in terms of the day school offer for existing pupils and to a lesser extent as part of the community offer to pupils and their families.

Concerns were also raised about the future use of the building and whether although it was not needed now for boarding provision, it might be needed at some point in the future. A limited number of respondents suggested the residential building could be developed for post-19 provision.

Question 5 – Analysing Impact

Could this proposal potentially disadvantage particular groups sharing protected characteristics and if so which groups and in what way? This pays particular attention to the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:



- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of protected characteristics;
- To advance equality of opportunity for those who share protected characteristics;
- To encourage people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life;
- To contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not/community cohesion;

It is perhaps important to be clear the current consultation relates to the proposal to remove the boarding provision at Bleasdale School. This was requested by the school because the numbers were decreasing to the point where there were no pupils requiring residential provision. While there may be a need for more respite care this has never been provided by Bleasdale School nor could it be. Boarding provision and respite care are very different types of provision. Each is subject to its own regulations and governance, and they cannot be used interchangeably.

If arrangements cannot be made to provide continued access to the hydrotherapy pool, rebound centre and other facilities in the current boarding premises then the equality of opportunity for pupils moving forward may be detrimental from those which the pupils currently experience. Several consultation respondents expressed particular concerns about this especially as they felt there were no suitable alternative facilities available locally for their children.

Question 6 – Combined/Cumulative Effect

Could the effects of this proposal combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

Procedures will continue to be monitored and revised as appropriate to ensure best practice.

Question 7 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis

As a result of the analysis has the original proposal been changed/amended, if so please describe.

The proposal has not been changed or amended.

Question 8 - Mitigation

Will any steps be taken to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal?

Steps will be taken to ensure that pupils attending Bleasdale School continue to have access to facilities such as the hydrotherapy pool and rebound therapy.



Question 9 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors

This weighs up the reasons for the proposal – e.g. need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time – against the findings of the analysis.

The proposal continues to be to close the boarding facility at Bleasdale House as there have been no boarders at the school for some time and the cost of continuing to provide an unused facility is prohibitive. It is acknowledged that if arrangements cannot be made to continue to provide access to facilities such as the hydrotherapy pool and rebound centre which are located on that site then there is a potential adverse impact for pupils at the school. However, it is felt that these potential disadvantages are outweighed by the need to discontinue a facility which is unused and has been unused for some time.

Question 10 – Final Proposal

In summary, what is the final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The proposal remains to remove the boarding provision at Bleasdale School.

Question 11 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements

What arrangements will be put in place to review and monitor the effects of this proposal?

The need for boarding school provision throughout the County will continue to be monitored and reviewed as appropriate.

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Position/Role Inclusion Policy & Practice Development Officer/Equality & Cohesion Manager

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Service Head

Decision Signed Off By

Cabinet Member or Director

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