

Diversity impact assessment

TITLE: Kinship Zone Programme – Kinship Financial Allowance Pilot and Wider Kinship Support
DATE: 06/05/2026
LEAD OFFICER: CHI CHIRINGA, HEAD OF PROVIDER SERVICES
<p>1 Summary description of the proposed change What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?</p> <p>The proposed change is the implementation of Medway Council’s participation in the Department for Education (DfE) Kinship Zone Programme, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Introduction of a Kinship Financial Allowance Pilot, providing a non-means-tested weekly allowance paid at National Minimum Fostering Allowance rates; and b) Delivery of a Wider Kinship and Family Network Support Packages (FNSPs) to strengthen support for kinship carers and children. <p>This represents a significant improvement on the current situation, where most kinship carers receive limited or inconsistent financial and practical support compared with foster carers. The programme aims to reduce financial hardship, improve kinship care stability, and support children to remain safely within their extended family networks.</p>
<p>2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile</p> <p>Evidence informing this assessment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) DfE Kinship Care Strategy and Kinship Zones Programme guidance. b) National and local data demonstrating higher levels of financial hardship, older carers, disability, and deprivation among kinship families. c) Medway community and deprivation profiles, including higher levels of need in Chatham and Gillingham. d) Feedback from kinship carers nationally highlighting barriers to financial stability and access to support. e) Existing Medway Children’s Services performance and sufficiency data demonstrating pressure on foster care and benefits of family-based care <p>This evidence demonstrates clear inequality in current support arrangements and supports the need for targeted intervention.</p>

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3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to:

Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	No	No	Yes
Disability	No	No	Yes
Gender reassignment	No	No	Yes
Marriage/civil partnership	No	No	No
Pregnancy/maternity	No	Yes	Yes
Race	No	Yes	Yes
Religion/belief	No	No	No
Sex	No	Yes	Yes
Sexual orientation	No	No	No
Care experience	No	Yes	Yes
Other (e.g. low income groups)	No	Yes	Yes

4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

The Programme is expected to have positive impacts on:

- a) Older carers, particularly grandparents, through financial stability and reduced poverty risk.
- b) Carers with disabilities/additional needs and children, through improved access to support and reduced stress.

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- c) Low-income households, by providing a reliable, non-means-tested income.
- d) Children with care experience, by supporting stability and preventing entry into care.
- e) Minority communities, who are disproportionately represented within kinship care.

No adverse impacts have been identified for any protected characteristic group. Eligibility is based on legal order and final dispute resolutions in care proceedings, and safeguarding criteria, applied consistently.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

Although no adverse impacts are anticipated, the Council will:

- a) Provide accessible application routes, including support for carers with low digital skills.
- b) Deliver clear, inclusive communications, including translations and alternative formats where needed.
- c) Monitor take-up to identify any unintended barriers.
- d) Work with voluntary and community sector partners to reach under-represented groups.
- e) Ensure staff are trained on equality, trauma-informed practice, and consistent eligibility decision-making.

6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Monitor applications and take-up by equality characteristic	Programme Board	Quarterly
Review communications accessibility and reach	Project Officer	Ongoing
Provide staff equality and eligibility training	Head of Provider Services	Prior to and during delivery
Review DIA alongside programme evaluation	Programme Board	Annual

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7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

It is recommended that the Council proceeds with the implementation of the Kinship Zone Programme.

The Programme is expected to advance equality of opportunity, reduce financial hardship, and improve outcomes for children and families. No adverse impacts have been identified, and appropriate monitoring and mitigation arrangements are in place.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Kelly Cogger

Date of authorisation

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