



Department  
for Education

# **Annex E- Equality impact assessment for curriculum support intervention**

**October 2022**

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## Overview

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to equality impacts when making decisions in the exercise of their functions (Public Sector Equality Duty). In particular, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following as protected characteristics for the purpose of the Public-Sector Equality Duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including ethnicity)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The equality impact assessment ('EIA') is developed with a view to identifying positive or negative impacts of the policy on the published date on persons with protected characteristics, as compared with those who do not share that protected characteristic, as considered from the perspective of the need to have regard to the: (a) elimination of discrimination, (b) advancement of equality of opportunity and (c) fostering good relations.

The following sets out how we have considered the equalities impacts of the Curriculum Support Intervention, outlined below. Although not a protected characteristic, this assessment also considers impacts on disadvantaged pupils.

## Outline of the proposal

We are proposing an intervention by Government to establish an ALB incorporating Oak that supports teachers to teach, and enables pupils to access, a high quality curriculum whilst also reducing teacher workload.

The ALB is proposed to have the following overall aims.

### Aim 1

Work with schools, teachers and the wider education system to create, develop and support the use of free, optional, high quality full curriculum packages that are available to teachers and pupils through a robust, accessible digital education platform.

## **Aim 2**

Continue to provide a national contingency for remote education should it be needed in the event of disruption.

## **Aim 3**

Provide a package of connected stretching materials for teachers and pupils through the same digital education platform that is available across the four nations and draws on content and expertise from all areas of the UK.

## **Aim 4**

Establish Oak as a high performing, well respected sector organisation that: maintains its 'by teachers for teachers' approach; contributes to the growing understanding of curriculum best practice; is strategically aligned with, but operationally independent from government; and delivers excellent value for money.

## **Which departmental priorities does the request link to?**

Our work on improving curriculum quality, planning and delivery post-pandemic has formed a core part of the Schools White Paper, Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child (March 2022), supporting its policy ambitions of world-class standards of literacy and numeracy. Specific ambitions include ensuring we have brilliant teachers at every stage, high standards in every classroom, and strong schools with excellent leaders and robust systems. It will also support policy ambitions in the 2022 Levelling Up White Paper by supporting teachers working in areas with higher levels of deprivation.

This area is also a priority within the DfE outcome delivery plan 2021-22 under outcome (2): Level up education standards so that children and young people in every part of the country are prepared with the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need. Specifically, this work seeks to address outcome (2.3): Support schools to deliver brilliant lessons for every child and provide support on discipline and behaviour; (2.2): Raise the quality of teaching and leadership in all areas of the country, and (2.1): Support children and young people to recover lost learning as a result of the pandemic.

## **Summary of the evidence**

Summary of the evidence considered for each of the protected characteristics in demonstrating due regard to the equality duty:

- DfE, 'Use and Perceptions of Curriculum Support Resources in Schools' 2018
- CooperGibson, 'The Curriculum Programme Pilot', 2021.

- DfE, 'School Snapshot Panel: Findings from the July, September and December 2020 Surveys', UNPUBLISHED
- Scmidht and Huong, 'Curriculum Coherence and the Common Core State Standards', 2012
- DfE, 'Understanding Progress in the 2020/21 Academic Year: Initial findings from the spring term,' June 2021
- Ofqual, Systematic divergence between teacher and test-based assessment: literature review, May 2021
- Oak National Academy Evaluation Report 2021
- DfE, 'Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Briefing for School Leaders', November 2015
- [A-level results 2021: A grade gap between black and white students widens, sparking concerns from academics \(inews.co.uk\)](#)
- DfE, 'Using Complete Curriculum Programmes for Remote Education- UNPUBLISHED', n.d.
- [School workforce in England, Reporting Year 2020 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- DfE, School Workforce in England, November 2016
- DfE (GCSE Attainment 8), April 2020

## Impact assessment

As set out in the business case, one of the key aims of this intervention is to save teachers' time by giving them access to free high quality full curriculum packages. Saving teachers' time should enable them spend more time on other activities to support their pupils. During the curriculum pilot programme, teachers reported that the time saved enabled them to 'focus more on activities that they felt were meaningful to their role, such as differentiating materials for pupils, planning delivery of lessons and research to develop their subject knowledge.'<sup>1</sup>

As part of the Curriculum Programme Pilot, 82% of coordinators and 50% of teachers reported a positive impact on pupil engagement and the curriculum programmes were reported by teachers to have impacted positively on knowledge, behaviour management and literacy<sup>2</sup>, regardless of pupil's protected characteristics, such as gender, race, or social disadvantage.

The impact of this proposal on specific pupil groups such as with characteristics protected under the Equalities Act 2010 will be reviewed regularly. The extent of consultation on the resources will mitigate any risk of the resources containing non-inclusive content.

## Age

## Staff

The impact on the workforce will be positive due to savings in time and reduction in workload. We expect this to have knock-on positive impacts on wellbeing and stress levels.<sup>3</sup> This, in turn, could support teacher retention, particularly for NQTs and other early career teachers. In 2020, 9.7% of teachers in the profession were new entrants.<sup>4</sup> NQTs and early career teachers are likely to be younger than teachers who have been in the field for many years, and therefore this intervention is likely to be especially positive for this group.

## Students

We are not aware of any evidence regarding the potential impacts on groups of people with this protected characteristic. Nevertheless, we will continue to review the evidence available and update the EIA regularly.

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<sup>1</sup> CooperGibson, The Curriculum Programme Pilot, 2021

<sup>2</sup> CooperGibson, The Curriculum Programme Pilot, 2021

<sup>3</sup> CooperGibson, The Curriculum Programme Pilot, 2021

<sup>4</sup> [School workforce in England, Reporting Year 2020 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

## Disability

This intervention will have positive impacts on SEND students, as it will provide high-quality resources for all students, including specialist support for SEND students, and it will also save teachers' time, enabling them to more time available to work with students and ensure that lessons are appropriate and engaging for their classes.

To ensure accessibility for SEND students, the curriculum support intervention will use the same approach as Oak National Academy. Oak National Academy has seen success with SEND students spanning four main areas of need (communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health difficulties, and sensory/physical needs).

This has been positively received by teachers<sup>5</sup>, who note that the consistency of the lessons can be comforting for many students. Teachers have highlighted several elements of Oak resources which enable independent study, including the ability to progress at an individual pace, and learning in a quiet space with few sensory distractions.

0.5% of teachers in the UK self-identify as disabled, compared to 16% of adults in the general public.<sup>6</sup> A reduction in workload could be beneficial for disabled members of the workforce.

## Gender reassignment

We are not aware of any evidence regarding the potential impacts on groups of people with this protected characteristic. Nevertheless, we will continue to review the evidence available and update the EIA regularly.

## Race

Between 2019 and 2020, the attainment gap between Black and White students widened by 1.43 percentage points.<sup>7</sup> It is possible giving teachers more time to provide support to students may have a positive impact towards addressing the attainment gap.

## Religion and belief

We are not aware of any evidence regarding the potential impacts on groups of people with this protected characteristic. Nevertheless, we will continue to review the evidence available and update the EIA regularly.

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<sup>5</sup> Oak National Academy Evaluation Report 2021

<sup>6</sup> DfE, School Workforce in England, November 2016

<sup>7</sup> [A-level results 2021: A grade gap between black and white students widens, sparking concerns from academics \(inews.co.uk\)](https://www.inews.co.uk/news/education/a-level-results-2021-a-grade-gap-between-black-and-white-students-widens-sparking-concerns-from-academics/)

## Sex

Male students, particularly Black male students, underperform across key stages.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, 64.2% of students receiving support for special educational needs are boys, compared to 35.8% of girls. Therefore, it is possible giving teachers more time to provide support to students may have particularly positive impacts on male students.

## Sexual orientation

We are not aware of any evidence regarding the potential impacts on groups of people with this protected characteristic. Nevertheless, we will continue to review the evidence available and update the EIA regularly.

## Pregnancy and maternity

We are not aware of any evidence regarding the potential impacts on groups of people with this protected characteristic. Nevertheless, we will continue to review the evidence available and update the EIA regularly.

## Marriage or civil partnership

We are not aware of any evidence regarding the potential impacts on groups of people with this protected characteristic. Nevertheless, we will continue to review the evidence available and update the EIA regularly.

## Disadvantages

We believe this intervention is likely to have a particularly positive impact on disadvantaged students, for example by ensuring teachers in deprived areas have ready access to high quality curriculum packages and saving teachers' time to give them more time to provide further support to their pupils.

68% of teachers in the Complete Curriculum Programme Pilot believed that the programme had a positive or very positive impact on students in receipt of pupil premium.<sup>9</sup> Evidence from Oak National Academy shows that its current online resources have reached more teachers in social mobility cold spots, with 58.7% of teachers reporting usage compared with 54.1% in hot spots.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> DfE (GCSE Attainment 8), April 2020

<sup>9</sup> CooperGibson, The Curriculum Programme Pilot, 2021

<sup>10</sup> Oak National Academy Evaluation Report 2021



## Public Sector Equality Duty

We believe that the curriculum support intervention will have a positive or neutral impact on those with protected characteristics, regarding the three limbs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations). In terms of positive impact, we believe it will advance equality of opportunity, particularly by ensuring all teachers have ready access to high quality full curriculum packages, and saving teachers' time to allow them to provide further support to pupils who may benefit from it.

## Decision, perceived impacts, and mitigations

Below we have set out the mitigations we will take to reduce any differential impacts.

### Disability

The Curriculum Body would need to meet Government accessibility standards and ensure its resources and activities are consistent with the Equality Act and the [Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools](#).

Oak National Academy's existing practices to meeting the needs of SEND pupils includes:

- Ensuring compliance with Government accessibility standards
- Training creators of lesson resources on the accessible design of lesson slides, including the use of images, colour and text
- Ensuring their platform meets web accessibility best practices, for example supporting navigation through assistive technology
- Advice from SEND experts

Once set up as the Curriculum Body, Oak will need to continue to meet government accessibility guidelines.

**Table 1: Protected characteristics perceived impact**

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Disability	X		
Pregnancy and maternity			X
Marriage or civil partnership			X
Race	X		
Religion or belief			X
Sex	X		
Sexual orientation			X
Gender reassignment			X
Age	X		

## **Monitor and review**

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a continuing duty, and the public authority is required to keep the equalities impacts of a policy proposal under review. Accordingly, this EIA will be reviewed regularly following an analysis of any other relevant data and meeting with stakeholders.

We will review evidence when we draft Terms of Reference and Key Performance Indicators for the curriculum body.

Following this, we plan on reviewing the evidence every six months in response to receiving updated Management Information from Oak National Academy.



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