

Free at the point of use NHS dental care for 18-25 year olds inclusive

Equality Impact Assessment – Results

July 2021

Equality Impact Assessment - Results

Title of Policy	Free at the point of use NHS dental care for 18-25 year olds inclusive
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	To provide free at the point of use NHS dental care to young adults, as a first step to implementing the manifesto commitment of free dental care for all.
Directorate: Division: team	Primary Care: Dental and Optometry: Dentistry

Executive Summary

This policy aims to provide free at the point of use NHS dental care to young adults, as a first step to implementing the manifesto commitment of free dental care for all.

Background

This is a new policy, part of the SNP manifesto commitment to free NHS dental care for all. It encompasses the 100 day commitment to care experienced young adults, aged 18 to 25 inclusive.

The Scope of the EQIA

In undertaking this EQIA, team members considered impacts on all of the protected characteristics. The Cabinet Secretary also met with the British Dental association on 8th June. This EQIA is interim, with further scoping to be undertaken post-implementation.

Key Findings

As this is a broad policy for free-at-the-point-of-use care for all under 26, through a setting that everyone across Scotland currently has access to, this policy was not deemed to have any impacts on those with protected characteristics beyond the consideration of age.

In terms of the age chosen, this has been fixed upon due to this policy essentially being an extension of the previous 100 day commitment to support young care leavers up to age 26 (i.e., aged 18 to 25 inclusive).

It is worth noting that there is no clear definition as to what constitutes a young adult in either legislation or in non-legislative policy areas: in many cases, such as a parent's legal duty to financially support their adult children who are still in education, the cut-off is at end of age 24; yet in those relating to care experience (such as entitlement to after-care support under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995), the cut-off point is at end of age 25. Therefore, given the history of this policy and its origins in

the previous commitment for young care leavers, the cut-off point has been set at end age 25.

As this policy: (a) does not exclude those from age 26 and up from accessing NHS dental care (although they may still need to contribute towards it); (b) is a temporary stop on the path to providing free NHS care to all whatever their age; and (c) still enables those of all ages currently entitled to remittances such as those in receipt of benefits to retain that free access, this policy may be regarded as not unduly impacting on those 26 years of age and over.

There is some concern that this wider provision of free care may impact those with protected characteristics - such as those who are pregnant - from accessing the care they are entitled to. However, officials are currently working with the sector to encourage them to ensure that all those who need care have access to it, and will evaluate this point during implementation.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Extending free at the point of use NHS dental care will have a positive impact on the oral health of those under 26. Following implementation, an evaluation will be undertaken and recommendations will be made to Ministers regarding appropriate adjustments to this EQIA. This will be carried out by the end of this parliamentary session.



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