

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

Title of Policy	The Lews Castle College (Transfer & Closure) Order 2023
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	To close Lews Castle College and merge it into North Highland College. The merging colleges wish: to create an anchor institution of scale; to become more financially resilient; To increase opportunities for college staff; To make services for learners more resilient.
Directorate: Division: team	Directorate for Lifelong Learning & Skills; Young Workforce & SFC Sponsorship Division; College Governance Team

Executive summary

The public sector equality duty requires the Scottish Government to assess the impact of applying a proposed new or revised policy or practice.

Equality legislation covers the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised existing equality legislation and includes a public sector duty ('the Duty') which requires public authorities to pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations between different groups - by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

This Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has considered the potential impacts of the closure of Lews Castle College and the transfer of its assets and liabilities to North Highland College on each of the protected characteristics.

The provisions and how they impact on people across the protected characteristics are set out under Key Findings. The EQIA has not identified any Bill provisions that would adversely impact on such groups.

Background

The governing bodies of North Highland College (NHC), Lews Castle College (LCC) (also known as UHI Outer Hebrides) and West Highland College (WHC) have proposed to merge the three colleges to form one single, incorporated college. This is to be achieved by the closure of LCC and WHC, with all their property, rights, liabilities and obligations transferred to NHC.

LCC is an incorporated college under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 (“the 1992 Act”) and as such requires a statutory instrument, made by the Scottish Ministers, in order to give effect to its closure and the consequential transfer of property, rights, liabilities and obligations. This includes the transfer of the employees of LCC to NHC, along with the terms of their existing contracts of employment.

As WHC is not incorporated under the 1992 Act that college will be wound up through non-statutory means which does not require any Ministerial involvement.

The Scope of the EQIA

A consultation was carried out by the Scottish Government which ran from 24 February 2023 to 5 May 2023 and the Equalities Fact Finder has been completed.

Key Findings

The Key Findings were that this change would be an administrative change, which is not expected to result in any withdrawal of service from the learners currently served by Lews Castle College.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The closure of Lews Castle College, and its merger with North Highland College is considered to have no impact on any protected characteristic.