Full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

## Skills Development Scotland has a legal duty to consider the impact of any new ‘policy’ on equality groups. A ‘policy’ in this context is taken to mean any new activity, function, policy or product, essentially anything that SDS does. Assessing impact includes considering relevant evidence, including evidence received from equality groups and the likelihood of a positive or negative impact on equality groups of introducing that new product, project or policy. The final section of this form requires us to think about how negative consequences can be mitigated against or removed, and how potential positive impacts can be encouraged. Equality impact assessment helps SDS meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In addition, SDS took the decision to use the impact assessment process to make progress as a Corporate Parent in relation to care experienced young people, which is a component part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The process might also be used to consider other groups that SDS has evidence of experiencing discrimination or underrepresentation.

For more detailed information about equality impact assessment, please see EHRC guidance here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities>

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| --- | --- |
| **Name of EqIA** (e.g. directorate, large project or service) | Minecraft |
| **Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):** name and job title | George Boag |
| **Does your project link to any other** [**published EqIAs**](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications-statistics/publications/?page=1&topic%5b%5d=3-6&order=date-desc)**?**  If so please provide the name of the EqIA (e.g. WBL) | No |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Approved by:** | **Director of:** | **Date approved:** | **Review date:** |
| Signed:A close-up of a signature  Description automatically generated | Digital Services | 09/Aug/23 | August 2024 |

1. **Purpose of project, policy or product**

Provide details of what is being impact assessed below, including the target audience for this project:

Since its release in 2011, Minecraft has amassed 141 million active players worldwide. Over half (56%) of UK children play online games and half of those play games play creative and building games with Minecraft being the most popular game.

Recent insight conducted through the Digital Services Blueprint and Careers Review has indicated that SDS should aim to deliver more immersive, engaging and exciting solutions for younger audiences utilising technologies and platforms they enjoy using.​

Minecraft Careers World will be used in schools across Scotland​.

Children learning and creating within Minecraft will find out about in demand skills and careers.

The target audience is primary and secondary pupils and their teachers.

So far insight has taken place with 35 individuals including pupils with additional support needs and teachers: <https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVP0d7Doo=/?share_link_id=531616580429>.

Launch of the SDS version is due to take place in 2024.

**Evidence and Impact**

* 1. **Age**

**Context:** The project is aimed at primary and secondary pupils and their teachers.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To ensure inclusiveness language and level for different ages should be acknowledged and catered for. | [Up to 54% of boys aged 3 to 12 play Minecraft.](https://theconversation.com/minecraft-teaches-kids-about-tech-but-theres-a-gender-imbalance-at-play-89496#:~:text=Minecraft%20is%20not%20gender%2Dneutral&text=We%20found%20that%20girls%20aged,but%20only%2029%25%20of%20girls – Australian stats)  53% of children aged 6 to 8, and 68% of children aged 9 to 12, are actively playing Minecraft. More than half of those play more than once per week\*. | none | Clear guidance for roles for the different tasks and audiences. Defined roles and expectations. Separate guidance in the partner area for teachers acknowledging different levels of understanding and experience of using Minecraft. |
| To ensure the maximum value of Minecraft is achieved parents should be considered in the development of supporting resources. | Although there is [evidence](https://theconversation.com/minecraft-teaches-kids-about-tech-but-theres-a-gender-imbalance-at-play-89496#:~:text=Minecraft%20is%20not%20gender%2Dneutral&text=We%20found%20that%20girls%20aged,but%20only%2029%25%20of%20girls – Australian stats) that co-play between parents and children is one of the more effective ways to maximise the benefits of digital play, only 11% of parents reported ever playing Minecraft with their children.\* | none | Consider providing supporting resources for parents in a future phase of Minecraft. |
| Information on children and parents media use and attitudes – Ofcom report 2022 | [Source](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/234609/childrens-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2022.pdf%20children%20and%20parents%20media%20use%20and%20attitudes) | n/a | Stay mindful of the findings of this report and action anything relevant. |

* 1. **Disability**

**Context:** Minecraft should be accessible to as many users as possible – we need to ensure there are alternatives and partner resources to support teachers of pupils with visual impairments or who are blind as well as pupils with other additional support needs such as learning difficulties.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| It has been identified that people with visual impairments or who are blind – and also some pupils with these and/or other additional support needs require additional resources. | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7x0ZOB5UoSw> – Blind minecrafter  <https://newsrnd.com/news/2022-04-29-the-blind-also-want-to-play--minecraft---accessibility-grows-in-video-games.ryxe4AbYrq.html>  https://education.minecraft.net/en-us/blog/learning-accessibility-with-minecraft | Insight was conducted with 9 pupils with additional support needs. | Carry out insight with visually impaired and asn customers and their teachers throughout the build.  Confines of not owning the tool outright – would feedback this to Microsoft and Minecraft owners.  Provide alternatives to support users and ensure they are able to play as much of the game as possible.  Work with teachers to co-author support materials. |

* 1. **Gender reassignment** (sometimes under heading of Transgender)

**No specific barriers were identified for gender reassignment/trans at this time.**

* 1. **Marriage and civil partnership**

**No specific barriers were identified for marriage and civil partnership at this time.**

* 1. **Pregnancy and maternity**

**No specific barriers were identified pregnancy and maternity at this time.**

* 1. **Race**

**Context:** Ensure there is no racial discrimination by ensuring a range of skin tones of the characters is available.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| It’s important that there is racial diversity options throughout the game. Visibility of different races and the ability to change skin tone wherever possible ensure there is representation. | [Confronting racial bias in video games](https://techcrunch.com/2020/06/21/confronting-racial-bias-in-video-games/?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALrD3pi1FJkQ1wSDDIrGc-3P6z44SMgg6Hs4HYcKlO4niaCbq0aicA9R0LbMxiXa6sFq3ssDFsBueeF0GbRetHCgyldkfZyFLdagcVy5I32I-X860witT21zVlqXL3zudC6b5vdHiYuir0fvIXc-5uvQOGQ_SZsEtjC2QLOQoImu) | None | Ensure a variety of skin tones is available where possible. Non player characters to be as diverse as possible. |

* 1. **Religion or belief**

**Context:** **No specific barriers were identified for marriage and civil partnership at this time.**

* 1. **Sex** (or gender)

**Context:** Ensure the language is gender neutral

https://theconversation.com/minecraft-teaches-kids-about-tech-but-theres-a-gender-imbalance-at-play-89496#:~:text=Minecraft%20is%20not%20gender%2Dneutral&text=We%20found%20that%20girls%20aged,but%20only%2029%25%20of%20girls.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Research found that girls aged 3 to 12 are much less likely to play Minecraft than boys](https://theconversation.com/minecraft-teaches-kids-about-tech-but-theres-a-gender-imbalance-at-play-89496#:~:text=Minecraft%20is%20not%20gender%2Dneutral&text=We%20found%20that%20girls%20aged,but%20only%2029%25%20of%20girls.), with 54% of boys playing and only 32% of girls. This difference was greatest in younger children: 68% of boys aged six to eight in our study played Minecraft, but only 29% of girls. This is important, because young children’s [digital play is connected to the development of their confidence and literacy with digital technology](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/12/12/using-games-and-digital-media-engage-girls-computing). | [Source](https://theconversation.com/minecraft-teaches-kids-about-tech-but-theres-a-gender-imbalance-at-play-89496#:~:text=Minecraft%20is%20not%20gender%2Dneutral&text=We%20found%20that%20girls%20aged,but%20only%2029%25%20of%20girls.) – find gaming stats generally around gaming | Insight with audiences | Ensure the language is gender neutral and that Minecraft is promoted to girls specifically.  Partner resources to challenge the roles and avoid stereotyping. |
| The players who most often play in the game’s more competitive “[survival](https://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Survival)” mode are more likely to be boys. Girls are more likely to play in the game’s “[creative](https://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Creative)” mode. Ensure game remains as creative based as possible. | [Source](https://theconversation.com/minecraft-teaches-kids-about-tech-but-theres-a-gender-imbalance-at-play-89496#:~:text=Minecraft%20is%20not%20gender%2Dneutral&text=We%20found%20that%20girls%20aged,but%20only%2029%25%20of%20girls.) | Insight showed that girls were more likely to want to use creative mode than survival mode. | Education edition is more based on the creative mode. Aim is working more through the curriculum to introduce learning and build areas to be as creative as possible. |
| The most striking gender difference was in relation to YouTube videos. While 32% of six to eight-year-old boys had watched Minecraft YouTube videos in the week prior to their parent taking the survey, only 9% of girls had. So not only is Minecraft play gendered, but so too is early immersion in the surrounding gamer culture. There is [mounting](http://www.ifets.info/journals/19_2/26.pdf) [evidence](http://icce2017.canterbury.ac.nz/sites/default/files/proceedings/workshops/W8/Minecraft%20as%20a%20Sandbox%20for%20STEM%20Interest%20Development%20Preliminary%20Resu.pdf) that Minecraft can be used to foster interest and skill in the kinds of areas that are relevant to STEM industry careers. And involvement with gamer culture is a likely inroad to interest in gaming and technological pursuits later on in life. | [Source](https://theconversation.com/minecraft-teaches-kids-about-tech-but-theres-a-gender-imbalance-at-play-89496#:~:text=Minecraft%20is%20not%20gender%2Dneutral&text=We%20found%20that%20girls%20aged,but%20only%2029%25%20of%20girls.) | None | Ensure the language is gender neutral and that Minecraft is promoted to girls specifically. |

* 1. **Sexual orientation**

**Context:** **No specific barriers were identified for sexual orientation at this time.**

1. Assessing impact on other groups

This section is the same as above only considers the impact of groups not covered in the Equality Act (2010), e.g. care experience, carers, socio-economic disadvantage). Add sections as required.

* 1. **Care experience**

**Context:** **No specific barriers were identified for care experienced young people at this time.**

* 1. **Add additional factors as needed**

**Context:** The need to ensure fairness and equality of access to young people who do not have access to devices at home, or are in school with few devices or poor connectivity.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Digital Poverty – will this be used out of class? If used outwith (eg homework) then ensure access is free | More than a third (36%) of primary school-age children did not always have access to an  adequate device for online learning at home, compared to 17% of secondary-age children. One  in ten primary-age children rarely or never had access (11%), compared to 3% in secondary  school. (ofcom report) Connecting Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/news/devices-for-700-000-children/> | None | Minecraft will be used primarily in a school setting – this will be reviewed in phase 2. Device access within school is outwith our control but may be a possible blocker for some schools. Teacher resources – mindful of digital poverty when using Minecraft and encouraging usage out of school lunchtime sessions. Phase 2 review. |

1. **Action Plan**

The SRO is responsible for all actions. Throughout the EqIA process you will have identified actions which need to be taken forward. These actions should be added to your workplan and Risk Register where appropriate. Some examples of action you may have identified throughout the EqIA process are:

* Build in equality monitoring / evaluation
* Make amendments to your policy
* Build in additional support mechanisms to your policy if required
* Consult with staff, customers or stakeholders
* Involve staff/customer groups in developing aspects of your policy

| **What is the action?** | **Which group(s) does it relate to?** | **What is the anticipated outcome?** | **What method is used to measure it?** | **Timescale** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Clear guidance for roles for the different tasks and audiences. Defined roles and expectations. Separate guidance in the partner area for teachers acknowledging different levels of understanding and experience of using Minecraft. | Age, disability | Regardless of age and experience everyone should be able to get the most out of Minecraft. | Partner resources to assist with the usage of Minecraft to audiences of different abilities and experience. | June 2024 – or phase 2 whichever is sooner |
| Consider providing supporting resources for parents in a future phase of Minecraft. | Age | Co-play is increased. | Feedback | Phase 2 consider at that point. |
| Open up the Microsoft licenses as far as possible – exploring options to make it available to every pupil regardless of their school’s devices. Consider national coverage as far as possible. | Digital poverty | Fairness regardless of backgrounds. | Partner resources and feedback. | June 2024 – or phase 2 whichever is sooner |
| Insight with all identified groups with the focus being on disability. Carry out insight with visually impaired and asn customers and their teachers throughout the build.  This action has to work within the confines of not owning the tool outright – feedback will be passed on to Microsoft and Minecraft owners.  Provide alternatives to support users and ensure they are able to play as much of the game as possible.  Work with teachers to co-author support materials. | All identified protected characteristics | Fairness for people with additional support needs | Partner resources, insight with additional support needs customers and schools. | June 2024 – or phase 2 whichever is sooner |
| Ensure a variety of skin tones is available where possible. Non player characters to be as diverse as possible. This action has to work within the confines of not owning the tool outright – feedback will be passed on to Microsoft and Minecraft owners. | Race | ‘you can’t be what you can’t see’ – representation | Feedback – insight with users from bme backgrounds. | For phase 1 |
| Ensure the language is gender neutral and that Minecraft is promoted through Marcomms to girls specifically.  This action has to work within the confines of not owning the tool outright – feedback will be passed on to Microsoft and Minecraft owners. | Gender | Equal usage by gender | Feedback – insight from both genders | For phase 1 |
| Education edition is more based on the creative mode. The aim is to work more through the curriculum to introduce learning and build areas to be as creative as possible to appeal to girls. Continue to work within the education edition. | Gender | Equal usage by gender | Feedback – insight from both genders | For phase 1 |
| If Minecraft is to be used out of class then measures need to be taken to ensure that pupils have sufficient data as well as access to suitable devices. Minecraft will be used primarily in a school setting – can review this in phase 2. Device access within school is outwith our control but may be a possible blocker for some schools. Teacher resources – mindful of digital poverty when using Minecraft and encouraging usage out of school lunchtime sessions? Phase 2 Partner resources and possible lunchtime sessions.  Scottish Government are committed to ensuring that every school-aged child has access to a device and connectivity to support their learning by the end of this parliament in 2026. | Digital poverty | Fairness in terms of pupils being able to access Minecraft | Feedback and insight in areas of deprivation. | June 2024 – or phase 2 whichever is sooner |