

Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

An EQIA Screening has identified that this proposal/policy/project requires a full EQIA. This means there is a risk of significant adverse impact on service users/ residents including 'vulnerable groups' and/or and those from certain protected characteristics. An EQIA shows how you have and intend to ensure equalities issues are taken into account in:

1. making key decisions e.g. there are 3 cost saving proposals and you need to agree one
2. implementing an agreed decision e.g. you have agreed the proposals and need take on board the needs of those affected and reduce any negative impact where possible
3. reviewing the outcome of the decision e.g. reviewing the actual impact on people and whether it was successful in achieving savings

This document is a way of recording processes and is a key part of our obligation to show 'due regard'. The document can be updated and shared with decision makers throughout the project to inform which approaches/ ideas etc. are taken forward, how it is implemented and to review its success.

Please append all related:

- **EQIA screenings**
- **Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**
- **Equality Impact Assessment Quality Assurance Checklist**
- **Proposals- budget/ practice/ policy**

Officers Involved in completing screening	
Officer completing Equality Impact Assessment: <i>Responsible for gathering the information needed for the forms and completing the forms</i>	Lucy Lewis – Commissioning Programme Lead
Head of Service or Operational Director authorising Equality Impact Assessment: <i>Responsible for ensuring that equality impact of any proposal has been fully considered</i>	Helen Jones – Director of Commissioning
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:	30 th December 2019

1. Proposal being Assessed	
Title of Budget Option/ Report: <i>Name of the proposed new or changed legislation, policy, strategy, project or service being assessed</i>	South Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework
Service Area and Directorate:	Children's Commissioning Team – Joint Commissioning
Budget Option:	
Budget Reference: <i>Relevant reference if this screening is being used for a formal budget proposal as part of the budget cycle</i>	N/A
Date proposal to be considered at Cabinet (if known):	March 2020
Is this a new proposal?	Yes
If linked to previous years give details:	N/A
On whom will the policy / decision impact?	<p>X Service users</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Staff</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other public-sector organisations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary / community groups / trade unions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify below</p>
Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:	Wiltshire Council currently participates in the South West consortium of Local Authorities for the procurement of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements for looked after children and young people. A regional framework agreement ensures that Wiltshire Council has access to enough high-quality foster carers as close to Wiltshire communities as possible, so that children and young people in care can be found a permanent, stable home

	<p>where they can thrive.</p> <p>At any one time, approximately 140 children and young people will live with foster carers supported by Independent Agencies. A regional framework ensures these agencies and their carers are adequately quality assured and that children and young people are receiving the support they need at the best possible price.</p> <p>The recommendation to Cabinet will be to leave the current South West consortium (led by Bath and North East Somerset Council) and join the South-Central consortium (led by Bournemouth and Southampton Councils), from April 2021.</p> <p>The recommendation is being made because the South Central consortium is much larger than the South West group, offering a stronger voice with which to speak to a key strategic market. The South-Central consortium also has a more developed centralised contract management team, which will allow Wiltshire to drive up the quality of carers available and negotiate the best possible price for our children and young people.</p>
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2. Reasoning behind the Proposal

Note: This proposal received an equality risk score that did not require a full Equality Impact Analysis to be completed due to the low level of risk. However, this document has been completed to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the risks identified and to safeguard against them.

As described above, the proposal is to move from participation in the South-West consortium to join the South-Central consortium for the procurement of Independent Fostering Agency placements for looked after children and young people. The benefits of this approach are:

- Becoming part of a much larger group of Local Authorities (20 instead of 5), with whom to negotiate with providers.
- Accessing a centralised contract management function, allowing internal time and resource to be focused on developing relationships with a smaller number of providers who can offer the best quality local homes for children and young people.
- Accessing data from 20 Local Authorities on the performance of individual providers, allowing Wiltshire Council to make the best possible matches for our children and young people.
- Improving the approach taken to meeting the needs of children and young people with the most complex needs, ensuring these children and young people get the right support at the right price.
- Access to caring households from a greater number of providers (approx. 50 compared to approx. 30)

It is not anticipated that there would be any negative impact on equalities resulting from this proposal.

Currently Wiltshire has access to approximately 30 IFA providers and the proposed approach would increase this to 50, including the existing 30. This increases the opportunity to match children and young people to carers from the same ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds and increases the pool of specialist carers to support children and young people with disabilities and/or complex needs.

The core terms, conditions and expectations around carer recruitment, training and support for agencies joining the framework will remain the same. If for any reason an existing provider opted not to bid to join the South-Central framework, existing placements would continue under the Terms and Conditions of the current framework and new placements with these providers would be spot purchases, but no children or young people would be required to move or experience any change in their support package. However, it is unlikely that any provider would opt out of joining a larger framework. All providers will be required to meet the standards set out in the procurement exercise and all providers will be regulated and regularly inspected by Ofsted.

Therefore, children and young people should not experience any reduction in the support they receive, or any disruption to continuity of relationships.

Wiltshire will be fully engaged in the procurement process for the new framework, which will begin in March 2020. This provides plenty of time to ensure that existing providers are aware of the South-Central framework and are supported and encouraged to join.

The framework will include multiple Lots for different types of placements, ensuring that the needs of all children and young people can be catered for. The South-Central approach will improve the Lot used to source homes for our most complex children and young people, ensuring that the most vulnerable receive the best possible support.

Results from the screening

Specify which protected characteristics (and groups within) were identified in the screening as at risk of adverse impact

Age	Disability	Race	Religion or belief	Gender
This Service is open to 0-18 year olds in line with statutory duties and best practice. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this approach.	The Service will have a specific Lot for supporting children and young people with disabilities, ensuring providers can adequately meet their needs. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this	The Service will be open to all races. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this approach.	The Service will be open to all religions. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this approach.	The Service will be open to all gender identifications. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this approach.

	approach.			
Maternity or pregnancy	Transgender	Sexual Orientation	Marriage or Civil Partnership	Socio-economics/ at risk groups
The Service will offer mother and baby placements where a mother is under 18. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this approach.	The Service will be open to all gender identifications. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this approach.	The Service will be open to young people of any sexual orientation. There will be no reduction in Service compared to current circumstances under this approach.	N/A	N/A

3. Making Informed Decisions – Useful Data

Data Gathering - Summary

No protected groups will be effected by this change.

Profile:	Are any groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (who, how and why):
Age profile:	Are any age groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (who, how and why): No
Disability profile:	Are disabled people or those with certain disabilities disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): No
Race profile:	Are any ethnic groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):

	No
Religion or belief profile:	Are any faith groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): No
Gender profile:	Are male/female residents disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): No
Maternity or pregnancy:	Are pregnant women or breastfeeding mothers disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): No
Transgender profile:	Are transgender residents disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): No
Sexual Orientation profile:	Are heterosexual/ gay/ lesbian/ bisexual residents disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): No
Marriage or Civil Partnership:	Are people who are married or who have entered into a civil partnership disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): N/A
Socio-economics/ at risk groups profile:	Are any groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why): No
Multiple characteristics : (e.g. males with a learning disability)	Are there any groups which may be impacted in a cumulative way due to multiple protected characteristics? No

4. Making Informed Decisions – Stakeholder Consultation/Engagement

Consultation has been completed with members of the South West consortium and members of the South-Central consortium to understand the benefits and challenges of each approach.

Key internal stakeholders have been involved in the decision, including the Head of Service for Looked After Children and the Director of Families and Children.

At least two market engagement events will be held in 2020 with providers, to ensure that the proposed framework agreement meets the needs of providers as well as participating Local Authorities and to maximise the chances of providers joining the framework.

Consultation with children and young people has not been held, because children and young people should notice no difference at all in a change to the contracting process with the providers supporting their carers.

A full Cabinet paper is being prepared and will be considered by:

- The Head of Service for Looked After Children
- The Head of Service for Joint Commissioning
- Procurement, Finance and Legal
- Public Health

5. Overall Impact

The overall impact of the proposal is considered to be low. The proposal is to contract the existing service under a different regional framework agreement.

Following this assessment there are no identified changes to the proposal. It is felt that the risks identified will be mitigated against through the proposed actions.

6. EQIA Outcome

No change – continue to implementation

Adjust the policy and continue with implementation

Stop and remove

7. Mitigating Action Plan

Action	Anticipated Outcome	Lead	Deadline	Actual Outcome	Comments
A robust tender process to ensure we fully and clearly specify the service required and ensure the successful provider is capable of delivering it.	Wiltshire has identified a Senior Commissioner to fully engage in the regional commissioning exercise, beginning in March 2020.	Jenine Brister	31 Feb 2021		

8. Next Steps	
Are there plans to provide feedback to the groups or people that have been consulted in preparing for this assessment?	No
How is it proposed that the Mitigating Actions Plan will be monitored?	Through the Placement Commissioning Strategy.
Has the assessment been included with Cabinet papers?	Yes.
Has a review date been identified to revisit this assessment to consider if there has been a significant change in circumstance	As any new information becomes available this EIA would be reviewed at the time should it be required.

Officers Involved in Completing Screening

Officer completing Equality Impact Assessment	Lucy Lewis – Commissioning Programme Lead
Date submitted	30 th Dec 2019
Head of Service or Operational Director sign off	Gary Binstead
Date approved by Head of Service or Operational Director	4 th January 2020