

Equality Impact Assessment

Title	Residential Options – The future need for Children’s Residential Care		
Release	Date:	Version No.	1.0
Revision History	1.0		
Type of strategy, policy, project or service			
Existing	New or Proposed		
New or proposed			
Changing, update or revision			
Other			
Is this an internal or external Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	Internal		
Officers involved in the screening	Tim Wells – Senior Manager Placements and Resources. Julie Oliver – Contracts and Placements Claire Shiels – Communications and Business Intelligence		

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Directorate or Service	Children’s Services
Version No	0.1

Aims
What are the aims of your strategy, policy, project or service?
<p>Improving outcomes for children are core business of children’s services. It is widely recognised and evidenced that children who come into care are disadvantaged in almost if not all aspects of their life. Therefore, there is specific importance in understanding their needs and ensuring the highest quality of care provision and delivery to minimise the impact of coming into care.</p> <p>For children who find themselves needing residential care there is the added impact of living in a group care setting and the personal relationship management issues they face with having multiple care-givers.</p>

Therefore, there is a greater challenge in ensuring resources are of the highest quality, meet and exceed the regulatory standards and are managed and staffed by teams who are well trained, knowledgeable, resilient and insightful.

Residential care can be a very positive option for a small group of young people by comparison to the wider cohort of children who are looked after (in care).

The proposals intend that the best possible outcomes for children are afforded through the most effective and cost-efficient way of providing residential care for vulnerable children in Dorset

What is the background or context to the proposal?

The local council has a duty to provide accommodation for a child or young person who for whatever reason is not able to live at home. The council in exercising the duty to protect and promote children in such circumstances may following an assessment place a child in alternative provision such as foster care or where indicated Residential care. (Statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 apply).

The council has a sufficiency duty in so much that the council should (with regard to section 22G of the Children Act 1989) take steps that secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the local authority area to meet the needs of children and young people they are looking after (who are in care) and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare to be placed within the local authority area.

The sufficiency duty includes local authorities working with partners and the use of commissioning models to secure the most appropriate range of care provision for the children and young people for whom care provision is required.

Dorset County Council is considering the most effective models of residential care to provide for the needs of the current groups of young people identified as needing a more specialist intervention.

The council are being asked to consider whether the most effective way of meeting our duty to care for children who need residential care is by way of DCC internally managed resources or by using a commissioning framework model to work in partnership with an external provider. The council has two residential homes for children Maumbury House Dorchester and The Cherries (a specialist resource for children who are disabled and who have the most complex needs) in Weymouth. The Cherries is not within scope of this EqlA or the proposals.

At the Cabinet Meeting of December, the 6th 2017 council members agreed that a period of consultation be undertaken with key partners, staff and services, the local community and young people to fully understand the future need for Residential Care in Dorset and the efficacy of any operational model.

The DCC internal provision, Maumbury House has faced significant challenges in meeting the regulatory and Inspection standards. This has been characterised over the last 6 months by a series of poor inspection judgements at both Maumbury House and West End House (now closed).

Whilst improvements at Maumbury have been acknowledged by Ofsted Inspector, the pace of change needed may not be sustainable. Contributory factors being unable to recruit registered manager, staff vacancies a higher than expected level of staff sickness and staff development, to meet the complex needs of the children in need of care.

It is acknowledged that there will be impacts upon the existing staff establishment at Maumbury House both in the sense of the future use of the resource and training and development needs.

Staffing Establishment:

There are currently 12 staff permanently contracted to Maumbury House

This equates to 10.2 full time equivalent.

6 staff are female

6 staff are male

Should any change management process be initiated a specific EqIA will be undertaken within the prescribed parameters.

Intelligence and Communications

What data, information, evidence and research was used in this EqIA and how has it been used to inform the decision-making process?

Data has been collected and collated from the following sources:

- Looked after children numbers and trends
- Residential Staffing Establishment
- Available care placements (internal to the council and external)
- Placement request data children requiring alternative care
- Care placement type
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Distant and specialist placement analysis
- Commissioning Framework

The data has been used to inform the context of the recommendation and the future placement needs of children and young people needing substitute care in Dorset. The data and trends over time have indicated a diverse range of placements are required and specifically for young people in urgent need.

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your proposal will have an impact on?

Primary data exists and has been interrogated regarding the number of children who require or who may require residential care. Children’s services hold case records on the care episodes and the planning for children within the care system.

Locally we hold data on numbers of children and young people:

- who are placed in house (DCC provided) residential care
- who are placed in house fostering placements
- who are placed in external / Independent residential care
- who attend external / independent specialist schools (with social care need)
- who are placed in external / independent fostering placements

These categories of placement and the children placed are regularly reviewed and monitored both from a child care (welfare and protection) context and from a commissioning and contracts (financial impact) context.

National and statistical neighbour (local authorities with deemed similar demography) comparative data is available – reference the DfE statistical first release 2017.

Placement data for the year from 1st April 2017:

The figures are taken from the data to be used for the forthcoming CLA (children looked after) Census concerning the current reporting year and were produced Thursday 8th March 2018. The figures have been amended to ignore multiple starting care episodes i.e. those who started care, left care and came back into care within the same reporting period (There were 5 matching this scenario in the reporting period).

Age:	
0 to 4	64
5 to 12	75
13 to 17	140
Male=	138
Female=	141
Placement destination:	
Foster Placements	202
Residential Placements	35
Placed with Parents or Persons with Parental Responsibility	11
Independent Living	19
Other	12

Please note this does not equate to the number of children in care rather the flow of children into the care environment. The actual number of children in care is aggregate of the entrants and those who leave the system m and an a on the day figure calculated once per week.

Placement Data for Maumbury House Children’s Home Dorchester year from April 1st, 2017:
(Figures as at 8th March)

Number of Admissions	9
Number of Children	7 (2 children 2 episodes)
Average length of Stay	27 days
Shortest Stay	24 hrs
Longest Stay	87 days and continues
Occupancy last year	40%
Occupancy last 3 months	20%

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this EqIA?

A stakeholder consultation has been undertaken and the outcome from this is available as a presentation. Reference Survey Monkey

Interested parties have been invited to submit their views through e mail to the Forward Together for Children Programme.

The outcomes from the survey and consultation are in the appendices to the report.

Children and young people have been invited to comment through the children in care satisfaction survey run independently by Participation People (a commissioned service working in partnership with DCC).

The outcomes from the survey and consultation are in the appendices to the report.

The consultation period ended on the 23rd February 2018

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

N/A

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

A stakeholder feedback presentation has been formulated. It is proposed that this be shared with the Key Stakeholder groups who were contributors to the consultation process.

Key stakeholders are both Internal and external to the council

Any Internal staff directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals will be subject to more specific and direct feedback sessions.

Assessment

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

Positive Impact

Negative Impact

Neutral Impact

Unclear

Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Age	Positive Impact
What age bracket does this affect?	Primarily 12 to 18 years Looked After Children as a specific group
Please provide details	Increasing the range any type of placement availability for this age range of children is likely to facilitate more positive placement to needs matching
Disability	Neutral Impact
Does this affect a specific disability group?	No
Please provide details	Children and young people who have a specific or enduring disability are likely to need a more specialised placement matched against their assessed need. Dorset CC already has a council operated resource for disabled children.
Gender Identity	Positive Impact
Please provide details	A wider range and access to more specific needs matched environments would be likely to help young

	people who are in the journey of adolescence and exploring their emotional and physical development.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral Impact
Please provide details	Children and young people who become pregnant or who have become a parent will require additional care and support which extends beyond the scope of the placement types referenced or proposed. Each individual case would be assessed against the specific support needs.
Race and Ethnicity	Positive Impact
Please provide details	A wider range and access to more specific needs matched environments would be likely to offer access to culturally or ethnically appropriate placements for young people
Religion or belief	Positive Impact
Please provide details	A wider range of and access to more specific needs matched environments would be likely to offer access to appropriate opportunities to express and celebrate their beliefs in an open and inclusive way.
Sexual orientation	Positive Impact
Please provide details	A wider range of and access to more specific needs matched environments would be likely to help young people who are in the journey of adolescence and exploring their emotional and physical development.
Sex	Positive Impact
Please provide details	For some young people being cared for alongside others of the same sex is preferable to a mixed environment. A wider range of care placements can afford the opportunity for this.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral Impact
Please provide details	Although not to exclude the potential it is extremely unlikely that there would be any impact in this context given the age group of the young people within the scope of this assessment

Other Socially Excluded Groups For example: Carers, rurally isolated, low income, economically disadvantaged, single parents, armed forces.	Positive Impact
Please provide details	Looked after children are recognised as a specific group and are vulnerable because of the nature of their prior experiences and substitute care experiences. Any opportunity to improve the quality and effectiveness of placements and resources should be beneficial in improving outcomes across the life chance spectrum for looked after children.

Action Plan			
What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate the likely identified negative impacts?			
Objective/Outcome	Action to be taken	Lead Officer	Deadline

EqlA Signatories		
EqlA role	Name	Date
Lead Manager / Project Sponsor	Tim Wells	14/03/2018
Directorate Chair on behalf of the Directorate Diversity Action Group		