

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

Name:	Carol Hosking
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Members of the assessment team:	
Date assessment started:	
Date of completion:	
Version Number:	1.0

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	
New or proposed	✓
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	✓
Both of the above	

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

Social Care Placement Sufficiency Programme

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

The SCPS Programme intends to adopt a No Wrong Door approach in providing an integrated service for young people aged 12 -25 with complex needs who are either in care, edging to or on the edge of care, or who have recently moved to supported or independent accommodation whilst being supported under No Wrong Door.

The proposal is to develop two sites that have been identified in the Weymouth area to provide a children's home and supported housing for children in care and care leavers. The programme also aims to provide activity and co-working spaces which would bring together early help, education, health and police colleagues to provide a range of services which could divert children from care, strengthen contextual safeguarding arrangements in the area, and provide integrated support for care leavers.

The programme aims to:

Improve:

- Accommodation stability
- Engagement and achievements in education, employment and training
- Relationships with others
- Planning of transitions from care to independent living
- Resilience and wellbeing
- Access to support in crisis

Reduce high risk behaviours, including:

- Criminal activity
- Self-harm
- Child exploitation
- Missing from home and care incidents
- Drug and alcohol substance misuse
- Reduce cost to society, including to a range of agencies including NHS and Police.

What is the background or context to the proposal?

There is a continuing need to have access to residential care for Dorset children, and this care should be available in Dorset. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked after children. The SCPS Programme will address this issue, starting with the area of greatest need and demand (this is the Weymouth and Portland area, from where almost 40% of the Council's looked after children originate). As well as improving outcomes for children & young people the programme will also help to address the current placement overspend & will benefit the climate through reduced travel requirements.

The programme falls within the Good Care Provision priority in the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2020-23.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

a) The number of children in care has risen nationally by 17% in the years 2010 to 2018. In Dorset the number of children in care has risen from 344 in 2013 to 466 in December 2019, peaking at over 500 in early 2017. Meanwhile the rate per 10,000 of children who are in care has risen to 64 from 60 nationally between 2013 and 2019. The rate of increase in Dorset has outstripped the national rise – rising from 44.4 per 10,000 in 2013 to 68.4 in December 2019. In addition, Dorset's rate per 10,000 has gone from being lower than south west authorities and statistical neighbours to exceeding both.

b) During the last five years, the use of residential placements nationally has increased by over 8%. Within this increase there has been a reduction of children placed within the local authority boundary and in local authority run children's homes and a substantial increase in children placed in nearby or distant placements run by 'for profit' organisations.

c) In the current financial year, a spend of £12,767,728 forecast for residential care, and secure accommodation, with an average annual cost of £255,355 per placement. This assumes that numbers of children, and individual placements costs remain stable.

d) At time of writing, 181 children are placed in external placements, residential or independent fostering placements. Of these, 28% (50) are placed with providers in Dorset. Of the external placements which are out of county, 47% (85) are placed in authorities which border Dorset.

e) The issue is more acute with respect to residential care. 50 children are placed in external placements, but only 7 of these are in the County of Dorset. A further 17 are placed in neighbouring authorities. This means that children who are deemed to require residential care are more likely to have this provided in distant placements as it cannot be sourced within Dorset.

f) This is a poor outcome for the local authority as it adds to placement costs and to care planning and monitoring costs. It may also lead to poorer outcomes for the young person as they are placed far from family and friends and experience a lack of continuity to their care, education and health provision. They may in turn have less resilience and will potentially be more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, including through county lines networks.

g) In addition to this, Dorset Council have an unusually large number of looked after children who will be transitioning to adulthood over the next 3 years. There are currently 156 looked after children between the ages of 15 and 17. The Council has a duty to identify and, if necessary, provide suitable accommodation for these young people until the age of 25.

h) The National Audit Office (NAO) report *Children in Care* was able to map the national mismatch between the number of children's homes in local authority areas, and the number of children in care – with patterns of over and under supply across the country. The NAO was also unable to establish a link between house prices and the cost of residential provision with evidence that market pressure was the driver of cost differentials.

i) The 2015 report Financial stability, cost charge and value for money in the children's residential care market from the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes analysed in more detail the nature of the market for children's residential care noting:

- The market is not stable, and many providers struggle to maintain a viable business
- The market cannot be understood in isolation as it interacts with the market for family placements and secure accommodation.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

Although work will need to take place to both reduce the number of young people entering the care system, and increase the proportion who live in family placements, there will be a continuing need to have access to residential care for Dorset children, and that it should be available in Dorset. The SCPS programme will begin to address this outcome, starting with the area of greatest need and therefore demand. This is the Chesil locality where almost 40% of the Council's looked after children originate from.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

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

- Workshops – Partners in Practice workshops facilitated by North Yorkshire local authority to support the application of the No Wrong Door model in Dorset. Multi-agency partnership including senior members from police, health, CAMHS, Youth Offending Service & schools
- Workstreams – Multi-agency partnership meetings including police, health, housing, CAMHS, & Youth Offending Service
- Young People engagement activities planned throughout the programme
- Public engagement – online & virtual Q&A session

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

- Feedback shared through regular operational team meetings, workstream meetings & programme board meetings
- SCPS Programme Teams site – accessible by Dorset Council staff & external partners
- Dorset For You – public information page to be monitored & updated throughout project
- YP Feedback - Feedback has been provided to Harbour Young People's Participation Group and via Children in Care Council.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqIA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqIA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqIA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	✓
An EqIA is not required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqIA because:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

Please send a copy of this document to [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#)

Next Steps:

- The EqIA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Communications and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- If not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.

Part 4: Analysing the impact

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:

- 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.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Positive impact</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	Young people aged 12 -25
Please provide details:	<p>The programme seeks to improve outcomes for young people with complex needs by helping to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • divert young people from care • strengthen contextual safeguarding arrangements in the area • provide integrated support for care leavers • provide placements nearer to home, education & communities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve accommodation stability • improve engagement and achievements in education, employment and training • improve relationships with others • improve planning of transitions from care to independent living • improve resilience and wellbeing • improve access to support in crisis • reduce criminal activity • reduce self- harm • reduce child exploitation • reduce missing from home and care incidents • reduce drug and alcohol substance misuse • reduce cost to society, including to a range of agencies including NHS and Police
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Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Positive impact</i>
Does this affect a specific disability group?	Young people with special educational needs & disabilities (SEND)
Please provide details:	<p>The programme seeks to review our residential provision and apply a model of practice and delivery which better meets the needs of the most vulnerable young people.</p> <p>It will help to better prepare our young people with SEND for a settled adulthood including developing the skills required for employment and independent living and focus on improving transitions between services.</p>

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified. We will ensure that discrimination, harassment & victimisation would be dealt with and that specific services can be used to support young people e.g. Space?

Pregnancy and maternity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified

Race and Ethnicity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified

Religion or belief:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Sexual orientation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified. We will ensure that discrimination, harassment & victimisation would be dealt with and that specific services can be used to support young people e.g. Space?
Sex (consider both men and women):	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Carers:	<i>Positive impact</i>
Please provide details:	The programme provides community outreach support to parents & carers to avoid placement breakdown
Rural isolation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Single parent families:	<i>Positive impact</i>
Please provide details:	The programme provides community outreach support to parents & carers to avoid placement breakdown
Social & economic deprivation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Armed Forces communities	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Stuart Riddle	Date:	
Equality Lead:		Date:	
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:		Date:	

Next Steps:

- Please send this draft EqIA to: [Diversity & inclusion Officer](#)
- The report author will be invited to an Equality & Diversity Action Group (these are held monthly - dates are available on the intranet)
- The Equality & Diversity Action Group will review the EqIA and you may be asked to make some alterations
- EqIAs are signed off and published
- The report author is responsible for ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.