

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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

Initial Information

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Members of the assessment team:	
Date assessment started:	10/03/21
Date of completion:	
Version Number:	1.1

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?

Children in care and care leaver services – employee consultation

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

1.1 In March 2020, Cabinet approved a series of recommendations which signalled a major change of strategic direction for Children’s Services. In response to the rise in numbers of children in care, and the attendant pressure on budgets, it was agreed to return to the direct provision of children’s homes by Dorset Council, including the building of new homes and the purchase of additional properties. Alongside this, there was an agreement to develop a systemic approach to working with young people on the edge of care, and working with young people in the care system, based on North Yorkshire County Council’s No Wrong Door Project.

1.2 The council has also taken steps to improve the sufficiency of care provision for children in Dorset by block contracting with residential care providers to provide accommodation in Dorset, and to shape the market for fostering and independent special schools.

1.3 The leadership team has also considered options for the alternative delivery of fostering services and has committed to the improvement and development of in-house fostering provision.

1.4 This has brought together an integrated approach to the provision of services for children in care and care leavers which is not just about the increase and aggregation of in-house provision, but which is based on a new approach and culture. At the core of this is the approach we have adopted from North Yorkshire County Council, and which we call the Harbour.

1.5 The Harbour will develop a whole system service for our more complex and troubled young people. It will ensure that their needs, no matter how diverse, are addressed within a single team of trusted and skilled workers. The integrated team will stay with the young person throughout their journey, be it to prevent care, in care or leaving care. It ensures that young people are not passed from service to service and they have a dedicated highly trained team around them.

1.6 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 Social Care Placement Sufficiency 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

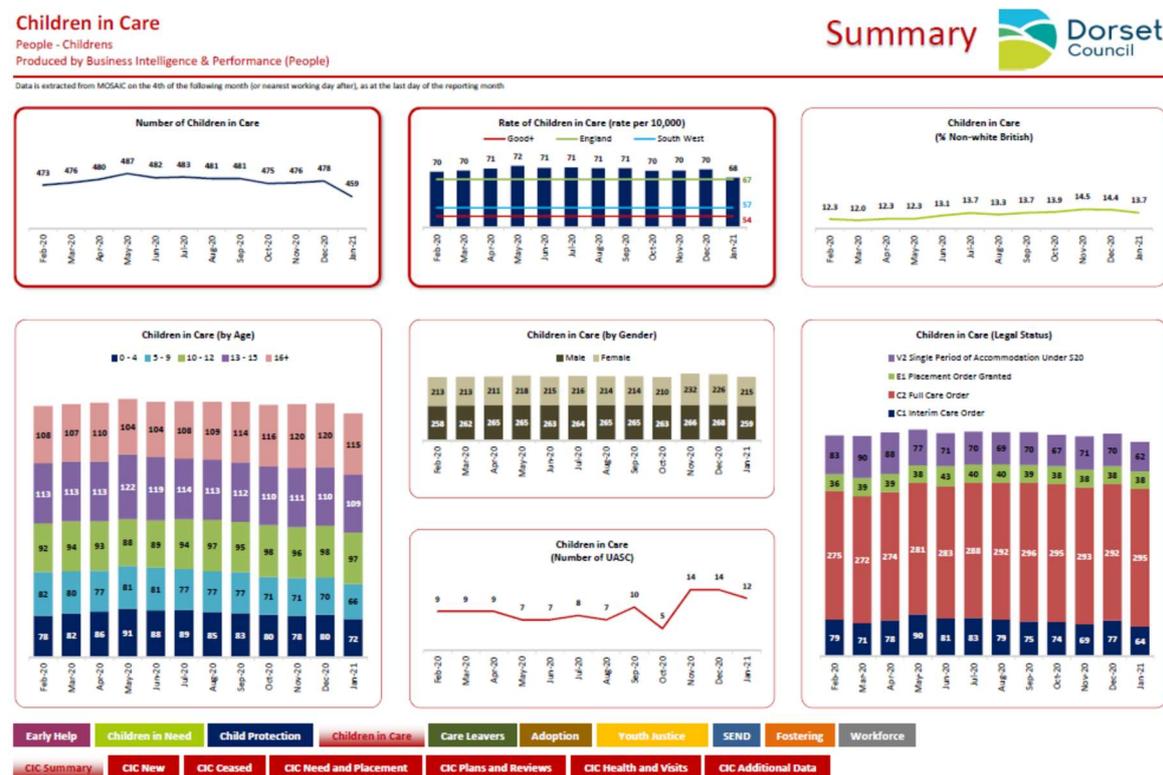
address the current placement overspend & will benefit the climate through reduced travel requirements.

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.

There is currently no whole system strategic leadership for services for children in care and care leavers at Head of Service Level. The work which has been undertaken to date to implement the Harbour and to register new children's homes in Dorset has led to a recognition of the need to consolidate these services within a single organisational structure which will give focus and direction to the work.

The work has also identified the need to recognise and create a service manager post which would manage the residential provision we are bringing on line, and manage the Harbour approach, and a service manager post which could lead the improvement and development of our fostering service as part of this overall. There is also the need for a service manager post which can develop our approach to work with children who are disabled and reshape services so that a whole life approach can be taken to meeting their needs.

In addition, the proposal brings the employees in one of our new children's homes into this management structure and will fully integrate our existing adolescent team into the Harbour with the same terms and conditions as the existing residential workers.

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
- Employee consultation commences on 18 February 2021

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
- Employee consultation feedback to staff and trade union representatives on 22 March 2021

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>Neutral Impact</i>												
What age bracket does this affect?	Employees of all ages												
Please provide details:	<p>Age Characteristic</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Row Labels</th> <th>Count of Age Group</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>25-39</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-49</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-59</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-64</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The employee groups tends to be older. Some older workers may not wish to work evenings and weekends as part of a rota pattern at this point in their career. Work will take place as part of our recruitment strategy to broaden the age range of the workforce and attract younger people.</p>	Row Labels	Count of Age Group	25-39	2	40-49	1	50-59	5	60-64	2	Grand Total	10
Row Labels	Count of Age Group												
25-39	2												
40-49	1												
50-59	5												
60-64	2												
Grand Total	10												

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Unclear</i>								
Does this affect a specific disability group?	Not known								
Please provide details:	<p>Disability Characteristic</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Row Labels</th> <th>Count of Disability</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Disabled</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Disabled</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Row Labels	Count of Disability	Disabled	1	Not Disabled	9	Grand Total	10
Row Labels	Count of Disability								
Disabled	1								
Not Disabled	9								
Grand Total	10								

	Individual meetings will take place with employees. These will enable reasonable adjustments to be continued, or made where required.
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Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified.

Pregnancy and maternity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified. Individual employees who are pregnant may need to modify their working patterns in line with medical advice.

Race and Ethnicity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified. All employees in cohort identify as White British. Work will take place as part of our recruitment strategy to increase the diversity of the workforce.

Religion or belief:	<i>Neutral impact</i>								
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified <table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Religion</td> </tr> <tr> <td>not declared</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>none/no religion</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	Religion		not declared	5	Christian	1	none/no religion	2
Religion									
not declared	5								
Christian	1								
none/no religion	2								

Sexual orientation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>						
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified <table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Sexual orientation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>not declared</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>heterosexual</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </table>	Sexual orientation		not declared	5	heterosexual	5
Sexual orientation							
not declared	5						
heterosexual	5						

Sex (consider both men and women):	<i>Neutral impact</i>								
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified <table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Gender Characteristic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Row Labels</td> <td>Count of Gender</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table>	Gender Characteristic		Row Labels	Count of Gender	Female	7	Male	3
Gender Characteristic									
Row Labels	Count of Gender								
Female	7								
Male	3								

	Grand Total 10 The cohort is predominantly female.
Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Carers:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	Individual meetings with employees will identify whether any have caring responsibilities. Employees who are not able to work a shift pattern due to their caring responsibilities will be able to explore other employment options within children's services.
Rural isolation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Single parent families:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	Individual meetings with employees will identify whether any have caring responsibilities. Employees who are not able to work a shift pattern due to their caring responsibilities will be able to explore other employment options within children's services.
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:		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.