



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the Dorset Council style guide and also use the accessibility checker to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible, please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point.
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language.
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations, or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them.
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council website

Before completing this form, please refer to the supporting guidance. The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project, or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents, and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the Diversity & Inclusion Officer.

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project, or service being assessed:

Department for Education : Family First for Children Pathfinder Programme

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

- New policy, project, strategy, project, or service
- Review of policy, project, strategy, project, or service

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

Dorset Council has been invited to be a pathfinder authority to implement the reforms under the Families First for Children Pathfinder programme (FFCP). This launched officially in Dorset in September 2023 and will run until March 2025. Dorset was one of three local authorities in wave 1 of the programme chosen to deliver end to end service reform.

This programme of remodelling of services will enhance, develop, and grow our existing services and the model will be shared across the country to improve the outcomes for children and families nationally. Some of the design has been set by the Department of Education within their minimum expectations, as a pathfinder, and some of which has been shaped by our local ambitions.

The key strands of the pathfinder programme are:

- Family Help – established locality based multi-disciplinary teams that collaborate with partners to [provide intensive, non-stigmatising and effective support that is tailored to the needs of children and families.
- Child Protection – a more specialised service responses involving workforce transformation.
- Family Networks - greater use of family care and support, with earlier use of family groups decision making, with support to enable more children to live at home or to transition into kinship care.
- Safeguarding Partnerships – greater clarity on multi agency roles and responsibilities and an increased role for educational partners

5. Please provide the background to this proposal.

Dorset Council has been invited to be a pathfinder authority to implement the Through the FFCP, we will make some key changes to practice across the partnership that will include but not be limited to:

- Embedding a partnership multi-disciplinary group case supervision and line of sight model
- Ensuring a focus on our Dorset System including system leadership, partnership induction and learning events.
- Redesigning the practice model with safeguarding partners across Family Help and Child Protection with a specific focus on Family Group Decision Making, ensuring families are engaging, participating early, and empowered to co-design and develop plans to support and safeguard their children.

Updated April 2023

- Strengthening our practice framework and continue to expand and embed the principles of Motivational Interviewing, Therapeutic Thinking, Trauma Informed, Restorative & Relational Based Practice across the whole children's workforce and the partnership.
- Establishing a single whole family assessment and planning process which includes the development of multi-agency chronologies to support analysis, intervention, and planning. This will include the development of the lead practitioner role to deliver this work where appropriate.
- Development of the Family Hubs workforce including an introduction to the family hubs e-learning module
- Developing and embedding a training offer for the workforce, providers and settings focused on children under 2 years of age.

Our approach is to ensure that the system builds on families' strengths, addresses the full spectrum of need, and is poverty-aware and anti-discriminatory.

Our current practice model is well embedded and is rooted in the principles of restorative practice and trauma informed approaches. Multi-agency professional relationships within our model will be built on co-design, partnership and empowering family-led solutions and using strengths-based language. Our population needs assessment and business intelligence functions will continue to ensure we are addressing the full spectrum of need, and that we are poverty-aware and anti-discriminatory. Examples include:

- Embedding the principles of the Staff College 'Just Heart, Just Hope, Just Home' publication which commits to racial justice, equity and inclusion and being passionate about tackling racial disparities within and across Children's Services.
- Working closely with our LGBTQIA+ communities and ensuring they feel safe and are represented and responded to with our system.
- Our locality model and alignment with partnership place-based strategies means that we are responding to local need and embedding community driven solutions across a diverse spectrum of need.

Evidence gathering and engagement.

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g. national statistics, employee data):

Central government strategy / independent review of services

7. What did this tell you?

As this is a pathfinder, there are no specific data sets which can be used for this assessment. This is a test and learn programme and we intend to use local and national evaluation to evidence the positive nature of the programme. Ahead of this, we do know that the pathfinder will have only positive and / or neutral impacts on different groups of people and protected characteristics.

The ambitions of the pathfinder align closely with our local ambitions for children, young people and families. The pathfinder is rooted in findings of the independent review of children's social care and intended outcomes in Stable Homes built on Love which aim to reform children's social care in by focusing on key priorities that promote stable and loving family environments for all children. Here are the key ambitions and outcomes of the strategy:

- **Early Support for Families:** Focus on providing early, effective help to families, reducing the need for crisis interventions, and ensuring children can remain with their families whenever possible.
- **Strengthening Child Protection:** Reforming child protection services by integrating multi-disciplinary teams across agencies such as social services, health, and police to offer a more coordinated and efficient response.
- **Expanding Kinship Care:** Enhancing support for kinship carers, enabling children who cannot stay with their parents to be cared for by relatives or close friends, ensuring they stay connected to their family networks.
- **Workforce Development:** Introducing training programs and support frameworks for social workers to ensure consistent, high-quality care and protection for children.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

We have a well-established system for engaging, capturing, and responding to the voice of lived experience when designing and delivering our services. We will continue to utilise this system to further develop, design and hold to account the FFCP model as we move through implementation. Feedback from our children, young people and families tells us they do not want to be engaged multiple times on the same issues and expect consistency of relationships (in both how they are engaged and in terms of service delivery.) As such, we will continue to engage thematically and utilise the strong pre-existing networks of organisations that represent the views of children, young people, and families in Dorset. Examples include:

- DPMC – Dorset Parent Carer Council

Updated April 2023

- 0-25 Voluntary and Community Sector Forum
- Youth Voice arrangements – including Care Leaver Forum, Children in Care Council and Dorset Youth Council
- Local Alliance Groups (multi-agency groups that come together to deliver outcomes for children in a particular locality – these are sub-groups of the overarching Strategic Alliance described above)
- Parental engagement role through the safeguarding partnership

Through the FFCP we will also embed some specific engagement roles/mechanisms that will focus on gathering and responding to feedback from children, young people, and families. Examples include:

- Engagement officers working with children, young people and families in Family Help and Child Protection
- Youth Voice officers who will collaborate with young people to define and deliver our commissioning offer.
- Establishing a Start for Life & Family Hub Parent Carer Forum to enable input to develop and ongoing delivery of our offer.
- Kinship Carer Engagement Forum to co-develop our own local kinship care charter.

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

Our local evaluation which will include feedback and insight from service users and colleagues working across the partnership will continue to inform our decision making process during the implementation of the programme.

Is an EQIA required?

Yes

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project, or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different protected characteristics.

Key to impacts

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.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Positive impact	Children and Young People up to the age of 25 years and their families will benefit from an enhanced model of delivery of Family help and Child Protection services
Disability	Positive impact	Children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) will benefit from an enhanced model of delivery of Family help and Child Protection services
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral Impact	We expect work to strengthen young peoples access to emotional health and wellbeing services will be a positive step
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral impact	No specific impacts identified
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive impact	<p>The programme aims to provide supportive environments before conception, during pregnancy and following birth.</p> <p>Significant opportunities have been identified for the programme to develop an asset-based approach to community resilience which</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		wraps around pregnancy and parenthood to harness and capitalise on the rapid improvement in joint working with community settings. This includes Family Networks and Family Help. The programme includes working together to strengthen the local maternity system developments with a community wrap around offer, to support pre-/post pathways of support between maternity services, health visiting and local authority services through the introduction of a network of community based, and virtual Family Hubs across Dorset
Race and Ethnicity	Positive impact	The plan promotes anti-discriminatory and anti-racist education and practices through a coproduction model which seeks to listen carefully to and acting on the experience of children and young people from Black and other ethnic minority groups
Religion and belief	Neutral impact	No specific impacts identified
Sex (consider men and women)	Positive impact	Through the programme we intend to provide intensive support for women who have had multiple children remove from their care, through the PAUSE programme, Work is underway to support expectant parents as they prepare for parenthood will also take place. Family Hubs, early help and edge of care services will provide support to parents and carers. Through the

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>programme we intend to embed whole family approaches, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of children living with parental substance misuse, mental ill-health, or domestic abuse through the Safeguarding Families Together project.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Neutral impact</p>	<p>There are a range of actions within the programme that we expect to have a positive impact as developed. For example: We will ensure young people receiving our service will be involved in decisions about how we help them, where professionals listen to the and understand their needs. We will support the provision of a wide range of positive activities for young people , including access to youth work such as open access , youth clubs, detached youth work, one to one and virtual online youth work and targeted issue based group work programmes to support vulnerable young people whose needs might otherwise escalate and we will work with partners to deliver these programmes locally in line with other priorities in the programme. We will make sure young people have access to a wide range of support to promote their emotional wellbeing and address any mental health concerns. We will also be promoting how the</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		programme partners work together to ensure that communities, services, and business are welcoming and inclusive places
People with caring responsibilities	Positive impact	The programme recognises the importance of carers and when developing the workforce, we will include parents and carers too. The programme included action to strengthen fostering services which will include ensuring a robust service for the most vulnerable teenagers and children that avoids breakdown and escalation. Foster carers will be considered as a strengthened service within the programme to support young people in the care system to have more stable placements and to remain or return to foster care where it is appropriate to do so. Also, the programme looks to develop market capacity and both commission and facilitate a comprehensive Short Break Offer which supports families and prevents escalation to care or inpatient status.
Rural isolation	Positive impact	<p>The programme, collaborating with colleagues in the authority, seeks to improve accessibility in the countryside and local beaches; increase cycle lanes and improve public transport.</p> <p>The programme also looks to enhance the existing Thrive Locality Model through the six Local Alliance Groups that</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		bring together local partners to understand local needs and development local plans that make the most of collective resources and address issues that are important to local communities.
Socio-economic deprivation	Positive impact	The programme aims to collaborate with key partners to address low social mobility to develop a co-ordinated wrap around support, including community assets and specific social, emotional, and practical interventions. For instance, in Dorset there are stark differences between where children group up and the chances, they have of doing well in adult life, with Weymouth and Portland ranking one of the lowest areas for social mobility in the whole country. There is significant evidence that place-based approaches lead to positive outcomes for children by enabling people to come together to address complex health, social and economic issues, which no one individual or agency can solve alone.
Single parents	Positive impacts	The programme includes the development of family network and family help, and support would be available through the network of Family Hubs within communities and virtually.
Armed forces communities	Neutral impacts	No specific impacts identified.

Updated April 2023

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

- Family Help – locality based multi-disciplinary teams that collaborate with partners to provide intensive, non-stigmatising and effective support at the right time, that is tailored to the needs of children and families
- Child Protection – a more specialised service response involving workforce transformation.
- Family Networks - greater use of family care and support, with earlier use of family group decision making, with support to enable more children to live at home or to transition into kinship care.
- Safeguarding Partnerships – greater clarity on multi agency roles and responsibilities and an increased role for educational partners

Updated April 2023

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
	All positive actions are related to the delivery of the Family First Childrens Pathfinder Programme. (FFCP)	Progress against the programme will be monitored by the Programme Strategic Board at six weekly meetings. We are also working with the Department for Education appointed Delivery and Evaluation Partners.	Action with the FFCP Programme will be delivered by April 2025
	This EQiA will continue to be reviewed, as the work to deliver the detailed implementation Plan and evaluation reporting. Impacts will become clearer, and monitoring of the impacts will be implemented across the life course of the programme and beyond.		

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Avril Harrison

Officers involved in completing the EqIA:

Date of completion: 01/05/2024

Updated April 2023

Version Number: 1

EqlA review date: Equality Lead Sign Off:

Next Steps:

- the EqlA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqlA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqlA, to get a better understanding.
- EqlA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)