

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Before completing this form, please refer to the supporting guidance documents which can be found on the equality page of the intranet. The page also provides the name of your Corporate Equality Group member should you need any additional advice.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a planning tool that enable us to build equality into mainstream processes by helping us to:

- consider the equality implications of our policies (this includes criteria, practices, functions or services - essentially everything we do) on different groups of employees, service users, residents, contractors and visitors
- identify the actions we need to take to improve outcomes for people who experience discrimination and disadvantage
- fulfil our commitment to public service.

The level of detail included in each EIA should be proportionate to the scale and significance of its potential impact on the people with protected characteristics.

This assessment may be published on the Authority’s website as part of a Council or Cabinet Report. It can also be requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and can be used as evidence in complaint or legal proceedings.

Proposal details

1. Name of the policy or process being assessed	Fostering Strategy 2022-25	
2. Version of this EIA (e.g. a new EIA = 1)	1	
3. Date EIA created	14/10/22	
	Name	Service or organisation
4. Principal author of this EIA	Jackie Ingram	Children in Care, Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding North Tyneside Council
5. Others involved in writing this EIA <i>EIAs should not be completed by a sole author. Think about key stakeholders and others who can support the process and bring</i>	Juliet Morris	Strategy and Transformation Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding North Tyneside Council

<i>different ideas and perspectives to the discussion.</i>		
--	--	--

6. What is the purpose of your proposal, who should it benefit and what outcomes should be achieved?

A refreshed three year strategy of the North Tyneside Fostering Service relating to its recruitment and retention of Foster Carers to meet the needs of the Borough for children and young people requiring care.

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- 1. To increase the total number of local Foster Carers available for the children and young people of North Tyneside who need care.*
- 2. To increase the number of Foster Carers with the skills to care for teenagers*
- 3. To increase the number of Foster Carers with the skills to care for sibling groups*
- 4. To improve the resilience of our Foster Carers through our support to them, reducing the number of placements which break down*
- 5. To cease the use of Independent Fostering Agency placements in emergency situations*
- 6. Reduce the number of external Children's Home placements for children and young people in favour of placements with skilled Foster Carers*

7. Does this proposal contribute to the achievement of the Authority's public sector equality duty? Will your proposal:

Write your answers in the table

Aim	Answer: Yes, No, or N/A	If yes, how?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment	N/A	
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Yes	<p><i>One element of the Strategy seeks to improve the transparency and consistency of fostering allowances for all members of our Fostering Community. Another element looks to improve the training and support afforded to Carers, including the way in which they meet the particular needs of children and young people in their care. The Strategy also seeks to ensure the recruitment of a diverse range of carers to best match the needs of the children and young people cared for.</i></p> <p><i>The fostering assessment and placement match takes into account all of the protected characteristics of both the Foster Carer and the child or young person, with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity.</i></p>

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	N/A	
--	-----	--

Evidence Gathering and Engagement

8. What evidence has been used for this assessment?

Measuring service practices against the Public Sector Equality Duty, the North Tyneside Council Equality and Diversity Policy, and market research with regional Local Authorities regarding the costs and payments of age-related allowances.

We aim to increase the number of mainstream carers, and the diversity of our Carer Community. The information below shows the number of mainstream and connected carer households we have. We have also compared the profile of North Tyneside and our Children in Care.

Mainstream Carer Households:

- Female solo = 29
- Couple = 54

Connected Carer:

- Female solo = 29
- Male solo = 5
- Couple = 49

Ethnic background

- White British = 98%
- Mixed other = 0.8%
- Asian Pakistan = 0.4%
- White other = 0.4%
- Not obtainable / unknown = 0.4%

North Tyneside Population

Gender

- Female = 52% / Male = 48%

Ethnic background

- White British = 95.1%
- White other = 1.5%
- Asian or British Asian = 1.5%
- Mixed = 0.9%
- Chinese or other = 0.6%

- Black or Black British = 0.4%

Profile of Children in Care in North Tyneside

Gender

- Female = 41% / Male = 59%

Ethnic background

- White British = 88.3%
- Other = 5.1%
- White Asian = 3.7%
- White background = 2.5%
- Asian or other = 1.9%
- Black or Black British / African = 1.7%

9.a Have you carried out any engagement in relation to this proposal?

	√
Yes - please complete 9b	√
No	

9.b Engagement activity undertaken	With	When
<i>Two consultation events</i>	Foster carers	September 2022
<i>Online survey</i>	Foster carers	September 2022

9. Is there any information you don't have?

	√	Please explain why this information is not currently available
Yes - please list in section A of the action plan at Q13		
No	√	

Analysis by protected characteristic

	A	B	C
11. Protected characteristic	Does this proposal and how it will be implemented have the <u>potential</u> to impact on people with this characteristic? (Answer – Yes or No)	If ‘Yes’ would the <u>potential</u> impact be positive or negative? (Answer – positive or negative)	Please describe the <u>potential</u> impact and the evidence (including that given in Q8 and 9) you have used
All Characteristics			
Sex – male or female	Yes	Positive	<i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i>
Pregnancy and maternity – largely relates to employment, but also to some aspects of service delivery e.g. for breastfeeding women	Yes	Positive	<i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i>

<p>Age – people of different ages, including young and old</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Negative</p> <p>Positive</p>	<p><i>A person must be aged 21 or over to enable them to foster.</i></p> <p><i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i></p>
<p>Disability – including those with visual, audio (BSL speakers and hard of hearing), mobility, physical, mental health issues, learning, multiple and unseen disabilities</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Negative</p> <p>Positive</p>	<p><i>A person’s suitability to foster is identified through a full assessment, which is done in partnership with the individual and is completely person centred. The assessment considers the skills, knowledge and experience of the carer in relation to their ability to meet children’s needs.</i></p> <p><i>Although disability as a characteristic in its own right does not preclude an adult from fostering, there may be circumstances in which the level of disability makes matching a child with that carer more difficult.</i></p> <p><i>However, the assessment identifies on a case-by-case basis whether individuals can be provided with development training and support to enable them to foster. This is done in every case, ensuring that all decisions are made on merit.</i></p> <p><i>Our Payment for Skills structure has three payment bands (‘Accredited’, ‘Advanced’ and ‘Specialist’) for Foster Carers, linked to competency, skills and training. This ensures that, when required, children and young people are placed with specialist carers who can meet their needs.</i></p> <p><i>We also provide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Opportunities for less experienced Foster Carers to ‘buddy’ more experienced carers for peer advice, support and mentoring</i> <i>• Foster Carer Support Groups</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist support to Foster Carers from the Health, Information and Advice, Virtual School and Emotional Wellbeing Team (HIVE Team) <p><i>The fostering assessment and placement match takes into account all protected characteristics of both the Foster Carer and the child or young person, with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity.</i></p> <p><i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i></p>
<p>Gender reassignment - includes trans, non-binary and those people who do not identify with or reject gender labels</p>	Yes	Positive	<p><i>The fostering assessment and placement match takes into account all protected characteristics of both the Foster Carer and the child or young person, with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity.</i></p> <p><i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i></p>
<p>Race – includes a person’s nationality, colour, language, culture and geographic origin</p>	Yes	Positive	<p><i>The fostering assessment and placement match takes into account all protected characteristics of both the Foster Carer and the child or young person, with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity. It is possible that carers from a particular race may be actively recruited to meet the needs of specific children.</i></p> <p><i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i></p> <p><i>We also provide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for less experienced Foster Carers to ‘buddy’ more experienced carers for peer advice, support and mentoring • Foster Carer Support Groups

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Specialist support to Foster Carers from the Health, Information and Advice, Virtual School and Emotional Wellbeing Team (HIVE Team)</i>
Religion or belief – includes those with no religion or belief	Yes	Positive	<p><i>The fostering assessment and placement match take into account all protected characteristics of both the Foster Carer and the child or young person, with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity. It is possible that carers from a particular religion or none may be actively recruited to meet the needs of specific children.</i></p> <p><i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i></p> <p><i>We also provide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Opportunities for less experienced Foster Carers to ‘buddy’ more experienced carers for peer advice, support and mentoring</i> • <i>Foster Carer Support Groups</i> • <i>Specialist support to Foster Carers from the Health, Information and Advice, Virtual School and Emotional Wellbeing Team (HIVE Team)</i>
Sexual orientation – includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight people	Yes	Positive	<p><i>The fostering assessment and placement match take into account all protected characteristics with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity.</i></p> <p><i>We continue to actively recruit Foster Carers from all backgrounds and with all protected characteristics.</i></p> <p><i>We also provide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Opportunities for less experienced Foster Carers to ‘buddy’ more experienced carers for peer advice, support and mentoring</i> • <i>Foster Carer Support Groups</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist support to Foster Carers from the Health, Information and Advice, Virtual School and Emotional Wellbeing Team (HIVE Team)
--	--	--	--

Marriage and civil partnership status - not single, co-habiting, widowed or divorced– only relates to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment	No		
Intersectionality - will have an impact due to a combination of two or more of these characteristics	No		

If you have answered ‘Yes’ anywhere in column A please complete the rest of the form, ensuring that all identified negative impacts are addressed in either Q12 ‘negative impacts that cannot be removed’ or Q13 ‘Action Plan’ below

If you have answered ‘No’ in all rows in column A please provide the rationale and evidence in the all characteristics box in column C and go to Q14 ‘Outcome of EIA’.

12.a Can any of the negative impacts identified in Q11 not be removed or reduced?

Yes - please list them in the table below and explain why	✓
No	

12.b Potential negative impact	What alternative options, if any, were considered?	Explanation of why the impact cannot be removed or reduced or the alternative option pursued.
Age	None	Under UK law, a person can foster at the age of 18, but the consensus amongst most foster service providers and social workers is 21

Disability	None	There may be circumstances in which the level of disability makes matching a child with that carer more difficult
------------	------	---

Action Planning (you do not need to complete the grey cells within the plan)

13. Action Plan	Impact: (Answer remove or reduce)	Responsible officer (Name and service)	Target completion date
Section A: Actions to gather evidence or information to improve NTC's understanding of the potential impacts on people with protected characteristics and how best to respond to them (please explain below)			
<i>Regular consultation / engagement with the Fostering Community (as set out in the Fostering Strategy) will highlight any potential impacts</i>		Senior Manager for the Fostering Service	Ongoing
Section B: Actions already in place to remove or reduce potential negative impacts (please explain below)			
<p><i>A person's suitability to foster is identified through a full assessment, which is done in partnership with the individual and is completely person centred. The assessment considers the skills, knowledge and experience of the carer in relation to their ability to meet children's needs.</i></p> <p><i>The fostering assessment and placement match takes into account all of the protected characteristics of both the Foster Carer and the child or young person, with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity.</i></p>	Reduce	Senior Manager for the Fostering Service	
<p><i>The assessment identifies on a case-by-case basis whether individuals can be provided with development training and support to enable them to foster. This is done in every case. Full and ongoing training, tailored to meet the needs of the child, is provided</i></p>	Reduce	Senior Manager for the Fostering Service	
Section C: Actions that will be taken to remove or reduce potential negative impacts (please explain below)			
No additional actions have been identified			

Section D: Actions that will be taken to make the most of any potential positive impact (please explain below)			
Where required, we will actively recruit carers from a particular race or religion to meet the needs of specific children.		Senior Manager for the Fostering Service	Ongoing
Section E: Actions that will be taken to monitor the equality impact of this proposal once it is implemented (please explain below)			
Regular consultation with the Fostering Community and measuring the following key metrics: 1. How many Independent Fostering Agency placements have we used 2. How many additional Fostering Households have we recruited 3. What percentage of our children in care are placed with our own local Foster Carers 4. What percentage of sibling groups have we been able to place together 5. Has there been any change in the profile of the Fostering Community 6. Does the profile of the foster care community match the Borough demographic profile 7. Does the profile of the foster care community meet the needs of the profile of the LAC community		Fostering Service	Ongoing
Section F: Review of EIA to be completed		Senior Manager for the Fostering Service	October 2023

14. Outcome of EIA

Based on the conclusions from this assessment:

Outcome of EIA	Tick relevant box	Please explain and evidence why you have reached this conclusion:
The proposal is robust, no major change is required.	✓	<i>The fostering assessment and placement match takes into account all of the protected characteristics of both the Foster Carer and the child or young person, with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity</i>
Continue but with amendments		
Not to be pursued		

Now send this document to the [Corporate Equality Group member for your service](#) for clearance.

Quality assurance and approval

Questions 15-18 are only for completion by the Corporate Equality Group Member for your service

15. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?	Agree	✓	Disagree	
16. If disagree, please explain:				
17. Name of Corporate Equality Group Member:	Anne Foreman			
18. Date:	2 November 2022			

Conclusion:

- If the assessment is agreed, please send the document to the Head of Service for sign off.
- If you disagree return to author for reconsideration.

Questions 19-22 are only for completion by the Head of Service

19. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?	Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. If disagree, please explain:				
21. Head of Service:	Julie Firth			
22. Date:	02/11/22			

Please return the document to the Author and Corporate Equality Group Member.