

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The separate EIA guidance notes outline what should be included for each section. Please read them before you begin. If you have any queries, contact your Corporate Equality Group rep, or the Engagement Team on 643 2828.

1. Author, service area, date

Jodie Henderson Senior Manager HECS, September 2019

2. Who else has been involved in writing this EIA?

*Julie Firth Assistant Director, Children's Services
Nik Flavell Senior Manager HECS
Ellie Anderson Assistant Director, Adult Services*

3. What proposal is this EIA assessing?

A proposed 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

4. What is the purpose of your proposal and what is it expected to achieve?

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*
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. Cease the use of Independent Fostering Agency placements by the Council

6. Reduce the number of Children's Home placements for children and young people in favour of placements with skilled Foster Carers

5. Is there any relevance to the aims of the public sector equality duty? Write your answers in the table

| Aim | Yes, No, or N/A | Details if 'yes' |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not | Yes | <i>One element of Strategy seeks to improve the transparency and consistency of payments to Foster Carers and improve remuneration 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 recruitment of carers from across the Borough, increasing the diversity of the Fostering Community. Fostering assessment and placement match take into account all protected characteristics with the specific aim of ensuring equality of opportunity.</i> |
| Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not | Not applicable | |

6. Analysis by characteristic Write your answers in the table

| Protected characteristic | Potential positive or negative impact? | Explanation and evidence |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Age | There is a potential negative impact of adults who are either very young | <i>Fostering assessment takes into account the skills knowledge and experience of the carer in relation to their ability to meet children's needs. Although age is not a criteria it is less likely that a very young adult would be able to demonstrate the skills required to meet the fostering standards. For elderly adults it is possible that the impact of aging on stamina may impact adversely on the fostering assessment.</i> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| | adults or very elderly adults. | |
| Disability | There is a potential negative impact on this protected characteristic. | <i>Fostering assessment takes into account the skills knowledge and experience of the carer in relation to their ability to meet children's needs. Although disability as a characteristic in its own right does not preclude an adult from fostering or being paid in any particular band, there may be circumstances in which the level of disability makes matching a child with that carer unfeasible.</i> |
| Gender | N/A | <i>The proposals for the improvements in fostering support and fees for skills payment structure are not in any way linked to gender; therefore we have no reason to believe that the proposals would have any greater or lesser effect regarding gender.</i> |
| Gender reassignment | N/A | <i>We have no reason to believe that the proposals would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of gender reassignment.</i> |
| Marriage and civil partnership status | N/A | <i>We have no reason to believe that the proposals would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of marriage and civil partnership status.</i> |
| Pregnancy and maternity | N/A | <i>We have no reason to believe that the proposals would have any greater or lesser effect on those people who are pregnant or have young children.</i> |
| Race | There is a possible positive effect for these protected characteristics. | <i>It is possible that carers from a particular race may be actively recruited to meet the needs of specific children.</i> |
| Religion or belief | There is a possible positive effect for these protected characteristics. | <i>It is possible that carers from a particular religion may be actively recruited to meet the needs of specific children</i> |
| Sexual orientation | N/A | <i>We have no reason to believe that the proposals would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of sexual orientation</i> |

7. Have you carried out any engagement in relation to this proposal? If so, what?

Consultation has been undertaken with members of the North Tyneside Council Fostering Community. This has included regular consultation with children and young people in care about their needs, and 4 specific events and a snap survey with North Tyneside Foster Carers.

8. Is there any information you don't have that you need to find?

No

9. What actions are already in place, or will be taken, to remove or reduce potential negative impacts? (add more lines to the table if you need to)

| Action | Responsibility | Timescale |
|--|---|---|
| <i>We have identified potential negative impact in relation to age and disability. Neither of these characteristics absolutely preclude adults from fostering. It is important to note that a decision is made on suitability to foster which is identified through a full assessment, which is done in partnership with the individual and is completely person centred. As a result, no additional generic action can be identified however the assessment will identify 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.</i> | <i>Senior Manager for the Fostering Service</i> | <i>Immediate and ongoing at every assessment.</i> |

10. Are there any potential negative impacts that cannot be removed or reduced? If so, why is this?

Yes, the assessment may identify that despite training development and support the adult cannot meet the fostering requirements.

11. Based on your conclusions from this assessment, what are your next steps?

Implementation of the three year Strategy following the approval of Cabinet on 14 October 2019

12. How will the impact of this proposal be monitored after it is introduced?

The impact of the Strategy on meeting its aims and objective will be monitored by the Service. This will include regular consultation with the Fostering Community and children and young people in care. We will also use four 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*

13. When will this EIA be reviewed?

This EIA will be reviewed in September 2021