

Equality screening and Full Impact Assessment template

Name of a policy / procedure / function / project: FOSTER CARE

Date: 20 August 2009

Carried out by: Doug Lawson, Lesley Goode, Helen Keaney-Cheetham

Name	Role
Doug Lawson	Principal Manager Looked After Children

Aims of the policy / procedure / function / project:

- Ensure that there is a wide range of foster carers with the diversity of skills, knowledge, background and experiences to meet the individual and diverse needs of children in care.
- Prospective foster carers are recruited in a manner that does not deter, prevent or exclude any sections of the community unfairly from applying for, or becoming, a foster carer.
- Prospective foster carers are assessed using a competency based approach that focuses on the skills and experience they will need to foster effectively.
- Applications from prospective foster carers are considered in a consistent manner and registration as foster carers approved or rejected based on the evidence presented.
- The approval of each foster carer is reviewed annually to ensure that they continue to be suitable to foster and that the terms of the approval continue to be appropriate.
- Foster carers are supported through supervision and training.

Stakeholders:

Foster Carers, foster carers' own children, children and young people and their families, care leavers, social workers, supervising social workers, Team Managers.

Considering the purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment process, is the policy (function, procedure etc.) relevant?

Yes No

Quick check:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Is the policy (function, procedure etc.) concerned with people? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Is the policy (function, procedure etc.) outward looking (i.e. community, employees, partners)? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Does the policy (function etc.) involve face to face contact? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Does it include making decisions based on someone's individual Characteristics, circumstances or needs? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Is there history of long-established pattern of unequal outcomes? (and do I have enough evidence to prove otherwise?) | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Is the policy (function, procedure ...) likely to have a significant impact on someone's life or wellbeing? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Exit the process if you answered No to all of the above questions, otherwise please continue.

Potential impact on target groups:		
Target group	Potential impact <i>Please describe</i>	Measures currently in place
<p>Race <i>(also ethnicity, nationality and associated aspects such as culture and language)</i></p> <p>Gypsies and Travellers</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that with 99% local population being of a White British ethnicity, those from diverse groups may feel more isolated, and their needs may need pro-active consideration</p> <p>Context within which diversity needs to be considered: Of 191 Foster Carers, 190 are White British Of 324 fostered children 18 are from diverse groups (7 White Irish). Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to enhance the life chances of unaccompanied Asylum seeking children (UASC) • Reflect diversity without having to only reflect home background. Children to be matched to Foster Carers that can meet their needs, with diversity being one of the factors considered. 	<p>Training programme in place to train carers in matters relating to diversity.</p> <p>Consult regularly with stakeholders, including children and young people. Use the feedback to inform and shape service development and delivery.</p> <p>Have regard to the profile of children and foster carers to recruit carers from more diverse ethnic origin, as appropriate.</p> <p>Access to aids and adaptations, translation or linking those with specific needs with other carers networks from specific groups .e.g. Polish speakers</p>
<p>Disability <i>(consider full rainbow of mental and physical impairments: mobility, manual dexterity, speech, hearing, learning, understanding, visual sight, MS, cancer, HIV etc.)</i></p>	<p>Those with disability may be underrepresented within this service and their involvement may need to be promoted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently have a group of Foster Carers with 	<p>Supervising Social Worker will support Foster Carers as</p>

Potential impact on target groups:		
Target group	Potential impact <i>Please describe</i>	Measures currently in place
	<p>range of disabilities such as hearing impairment, diabetes, in receipt of Disability Allowance. Carers will be accepted so long as disability does not prevent them from undertaking a caring role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy issues – Foster Carers are expected to maintain record keeping and due to literacy issues may put off potential foster carers 	<p>appropriate to undertake their role as issues arise.</p> <p>Individual assessments undertaken at time of carer approval on literacy issues by SSW, and to support with identified issues .e.g. provide voice activated software where appropriate, flowchart guide to recording for carers</p>
<p>Gender <i>(consider associated aspects e.g. safety, single-parenting, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment,</i></p> <p>Transgender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition that the male does not generally play the greatest role with children in the family structure, mirroring role in society. Males are not discriminated against as single carers. Those children trying to determine identity require carers that can support them. 	<p>Induction training sets the culture of the service e.g. 'The service is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications to become a foster carer from all sections of the community regardless of age, class, race, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation or disability.'</p> <p>On-going training provides continual support.</p> <p>Peer support networks are in operation for both children and carers.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation <i>(includes heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gay and Lesbian people can be Foster Carers as promoted by website and recruitment materials. Lesbian couples have been approved as Foster Carers As a service no one has been refused the opportunity to become a Foster Carer on the grounds of sexual orientation 	<p>Recruitment targeted at gay and lesbian community e.g. run advertisements in pink paper and plan to widen campaign in the future.</p> <p>Commissioned Albert Kennedy Trust to provide care to children who are gay or lesbian due to specific needs.</p> <p>Training programme includes sexual orientation issues as does Peer Education Programme.</p>
<p>Age <i>(including all groups - children, young people, working age, elderly)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an ageing profile of Foster Carers. Challenge to promote foster caring as a career for all age range of adults. 	<p>Currently reviewing recruitment strategy with a view to identifying gaps in service. Appropriate action to fill these gaps to follow.</p>

Potential impact on target groups:		
Target group	Potential impact <i>Please describe</i>	Measures currently in place
Religion and belief <i>(the most common religions include Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Shinto, Nonconformists)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service does not discriminate against people with different religions or faiths (including those who do not have a religion or faith) • Have regard to the faith needs of children and try to match with carer. Likewise seek carers to provide and promote culture and religious beliefs of children. • Need to reflect children and young people's choices. 	Assessment process will look at how carer can meet the needs of a particular child.
Rural issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service needs to have regard to child's own community when considering placement. Recruitment of diverse group of carers will assist in this. • Transport may be an issue. 	<p>Recruitment Strategy will take account of need to have a diverse range of foster carers to ensure children retain links with own community.</p> <p>Lobbying to gain travel passes for children and young people.</p>
Socio-economic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to place children with carers of similar background to own in order to normalise and maintain links with aim to return home. 	<p>Good percentage of children placed with family and friends as foster carers to retain background.</p> <p>Some checks to satisfy that income of foster carers is appropriate to providing appropriate care.</p> <p>Rates of pay to foster carers recognise the expense of caring for children. Fees and allowances are set to recognise the individual needs of children.</p>
Other <i>(there may be other target groups relevant to your service)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and Friends – actively promote the extended family as carers where the child cannot stay with birth family. 	Support is offered to family and friends as carers.

Is the Policy/Function likely to have an impact on Human Rights?

We all have basic human rights which must be upheld. Human rights are about ensuring Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity and Autonomy (FREDA) for everyone. Everyone has the right to enjoy their basic human rights such as right to life and not be treated in an inhuman or degrading manner, protected by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Evidence:

Evidence to support the above answers. Customers' equality data monitoring and how the results inform service provision. Please consider quantitative, qualitative research, national and international evidence, results of any consultations you might have carried out. Please refer to the Equality Monitoring Guidelines on the intranet (or contact the E&D Managers) when considering introducing equality monitoring initiatives.

- Post codes, ethnicity data and age profiles are being analysed as part of Recruitment Review.
- Undertaking 'mystery shopper' exercise to test responses to Equality Impact Assessment approach.
- Consultation Focus Group with key stakeholders has taken place to analyse some policies and procedures from an Equality Impact Assessment perspective. Feedback has been received and an action plan is now required.

Proposed actions (to be reflected in the Service plans):

Actions emerging from the "Potential impact on target groups" and the "Evidence" sections in order to address any gaps

Action	Target date	Responsibility
Agree and implement new Recruitment Strategy ensuring staff are aware of and follow policies for the recruitment of foster carers	January 2010	HK-C & Recruitment Officer
Further review policy and procedures	October 2010 Ongoing	Doug Lawson & SLT
Recruitment and Retention Strategy – Ensure staff understand and own the values and principles of the Foster Care Service.	January 2010	HK-C, Recruitment Officer, Team Managers & SSW's
Fostering Panel to provide independent scrutiny	With Immediate effect	HK-C, John Dunkerley & Paul Boyce Head of Service
Provide independent professional advice to	December 2009	Appointment of Agency Adviser

Fostering Service and Fostering Panel		
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Rating:								
<i>In light of the above how would you rate the impact of your policy/function etc. on any of the target groups, for guidance please see footnotes.</i>								
	Race	Disability	Gender	Sexual orientation	Age	Religion & belief	Rural Issues	Other
High¹ <i>Please continue below</i>								
Medium² <i>Please exit the process</i>	√			√	√			
Low³ <i>Please exit the process</i>		√	√			√	√	√

IMPORTANT!

Only policies (functions, procedures etc.) rated as high have to be fully Impact Assessed. Full Impact Assessment requires consultation with members from the target groups highlighted as being at the receiving end of any potential impact. EIA consultation exercises will be undertaken by relevant service with the help and support of the Research and Intelligence team and Equality and Diversity Officers.

¹ High = significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place or no evidence available, urgent need for consultation with service users, general public, employees

² Medium = some potential impact, some mitigating measures in place but no evidence available how effective they are, would be beneficial to consult with service users, general public etc. but not urgent

³ Low = almost bordering with non relevance to the EIA process (heavily legislation led - very little discretion exercised, limited public facing aspect)

Full Equality Impact Assessment part:

Affected target group <i>(e.g. people with disabilities)</i>	Race	Disability	Gender	Age	Religion & belief	Rural
Any particular segment within the target group <i>(e.g. people with learning disabilities)</i>						
Specific issues to be a subject of consultation <i>(e.g. how could the Council make its annual financial results understandable to people with learning disabilities, what support needed etc.?)</i>						
Outcomes of consultation						
What changes have been made as a result of the consultation outcomes						
Feedback given to the consultees? Yes/No						

.....
Lead person responsible the EIA

.....
Approved by Head of Service

Date:

Next review of the EIA, measures put in place, changes:
(high – 1 year, medium – 2 years, low – 3 years)