

Equality analysis is a valuable tool to help embed equality into everything we do

Evidence based equality analysis – can include documents, quotes, and web links for photos and videos

Policy / procedure / function / project / decision: Children in Need

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

The Children & Young People’s Service holds the lead responsibility on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council for the delivery of services to safeguard children and families.

Only a small percentage of children nationally and in Cheshire West and Cheshire require the support or intervention from Children and Young People Service. Most people access support required through universal services available to all children and families.

The majority of children and families who become involved with this service have complex needs and may need support services which are delivered by a range of agencies. Such services are focused on promoting the welfare of children and young people, safeguarding from harm and protecting children who, without such intervention ,would be at risk of significant harm or neglect.

Services are delivered under legislative frameworks and associated guidance, including the Children Act 1989, the Adoption and Children Act 2002, Children Act 2004, Care Leavers Act 2002 and Care Standards Act 2000

The service continues to provide a robust management oversight and accountability to its work through increased capacity at Team Manager and Senior Manager Level which allows continued focus on good quality and timely assessments and plans for the children. The role of the Senior Practice Leads to work with complex cases and provided a mentoring and coaching role to social workers to improve practice in all area's and assist with newly qualified social workers and the assessment requirements within their first year of employment continues to be consolidated.

The service seeks to deliver caseloads that are appropriately weighted addressing the skill mix within the social work team and ensuring children and families receive good quality, timely social work support.

Policies and Procedures are regularly reviewed and can be found on the Chester West and Chester website and ensure services delivered are meeting statutory guidance and legislative requirements.

Lead officer: Gillian Ackerley, Senior Manager, Ellesmere Port

Stakeholders: Children and young people, their families and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board

While process is important, equality analysis is essentially about **outcomes**.

Lack of evidence of discrimination is not evidence of a lack of discrimination.

It is not acceptable to say that a policy is applied uniformly to all groups and is therefore fair and equal. Applying a policy or procedure consistently may result in differential outcomes for different groups.

For each of the areas overleaf, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a **positive, negative or neutral impact**, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is

negative, this needs to be given a **high, medium or low assessment**. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Target group / area			
Race and Ethnicity <i>(including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers, asylum seekers etc.)</i>	<p>The Childrens and Young People’s Plan 2012 -2016 notes that Cheshire West and Chester has a relatively small Black and Minority Ethnic population at around 6% This data does include some Traveller children and children from migrant worker families. However, we cannot assume this captures the ranges of diverse needs within Cheshire West and Chester.</p> <p>Within Children in Need (CIN) services we work to the Assessment Framework which addresses equality and diversity issues for children and families and we are currently working with teams and managers to improve how individuality is reflected within assessments and how we may need</p>	<p>Locality meetings have been established to ensure that agencies delivering services at each level of need come together to ensure development of services and identification of any gaps in service provision.</p>	<p>We currently do not proactively engage with all of the population and further work to address this is being undertaken as part of the Team Around the Family (TAF) work, All Together Better work stream and through the locality meetings.</p>

	to adapt how we engage with children and families depending upon their individual needs.		
<p>Disability <i>(as defined by the Equality Act - a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</i></p>		<p>There are specific resources available within the department in relation to children with complex disabilities and this includes a Children with Disabilities Team and a residential respite unit.</p> <p>Those children who fall outside the service criteria will automatically be assessed and deemed as children in need by the social work service as they will meet the criteria under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as being deemed as children in need due to their disability.</p> <p>All parents/carers caring for a child with a disability are able to request a carer's assessment.</p> <p>For parents who have a disability then specialist support services will be provided, such as, hearing impaired parents there will be the provision of a signer.</p> <p>In relation to parents with a learning disability/difficulty and this is impacting upon how they are parenting their child then a referral</p>	

		<p>and involvement from Adults Learning Disability Team and health colleagues will be required to form a view on parent cognitive functioning in order to inform how we design our work to meet both the child and the parent's needs.</p> <p>Government good practice guidance of Working with Parents with a learning disability has been disseminated to social work teams. Joint working arrangements /provision of advice are in place for Children in Need social workers and children with disabilities social workers in respect of the assessment for direct payments and personalisation budgets.</p> <p>Further work is required with Adult Mental Health services in how services are delivered in partnership to ensure those families where a parent has a mental health issue is given every opportunity through support to safely parent their child.</p>	
Gender/Gender Reassignment		<p>Anti-oppressive practice threads through every element of our work within children's services. Whilst gender is acknowledged within all of our assessments the primary focus is upon individuality and promoting</p>	

		<p>the rich diverseness of all children within CWaC.</p> <p>In relation to gender reassignment the Equality Act 2010 provides the legislative framework. Guidelines for assessments specify that all assessments should be specific to individual children and young people.</p>	
Religion and Belief	<p>Child centred assessments take into account religion and belief and how this may impact upon a true reflection of the child and family's needs.</p> <p>An auditing process is well established within Cheshire West and Chester and we need to ensure that within this process the impact of acknowledging and positively promoting the area of religion and belief upon outcomes of children and families is captured.</p>	<p>Assessments undertaken ensure that the voice and wishes of the child and family are incorporated and included in plans.</p>	
Sexual Orientation <i>(including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual)</i>	<p>Child centred assessments and the care planning process reflect sexual orientation. Information on the assessment and care planning process is available on the Cheshire West and Chester website.</p>	<p>This is incorporated in relevant training as applicable</p> <p>Assessments undertaken ensure that the voice and wishes of the child and family are incorporated and included in plans.</p>	

	<p>In order to evidence assessment and care planning processes capture and address issues of sexual orientation then case exemplars that are anonymised should be included within any practice guidance and procedure.</p>		
<p>Age (<i>children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults aged 25 – 50, younger older people aged 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+.</i> The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).</p>		<p>Assessment and care planning processes emphasise the need for clear understanding of the impact of parenting capacity of a child’s developmental needs, the need to identify the extent to which children are in need or at risk of harm and implement clear plans to address presenting issues.</p> <p>Under the Continuum of Need, practitioners are encouraged to engage with parents at the earliest opportunity when doing so may prevent problems or difficulties becoming worse. The children and Young Peoples directorate business plan 2011/14 has as one of its priorities to ensure that “right services are delivered to right children at the right time”.</p> <p>Clear processes in place to “step up and Step down cases between CIN and the early support services.</p>	<p>Whilst all children within CWaC may be in need at some point in their childhood, children in their pre-school years are potentially vulnerable with those under age of one being the most at risk of significant harm.</p> <p><u>High Impact</u> At the point of referral with young children there is a need to ensure involvement/engagement with children’s services and to access 2 year old funding for placements</p>

		<p>There is greater focus upon providing help and support at an earlier stage with the use of the Team Around the Family (TAF) process; ensuring families receive a co-ordinated multi-agency response to assist them. Those children with complex needs reaching the age of adulthood then robust early joint planning with adult services takes place, specifically around areas of continued funding.</p> <p>Where children come into care and there are on-going assessments considering long term plans for children then early consideration within 3 months should also be given to plans of permanence, specifically with very young children to avoid drift and ensure every child has the right to belong to part of a family.</p> <p>Training is provided via a 2 day Child development course i covering 0 -18 years of age and delivered by Chester University.</p>	
Rural communities	The department has regard to children’s own communities when considering a response to identified needs. The assessment and care planning process acknowledges the impact of environmental factors on		

	<p>the lives of children and young people, noting that rural deprivation is an acknowledged factor impacting on the lives of children and their families.</p> <p>Targeted work to be delivered through The Altogether Better project will address some of the individual needs of the rural community and will test out new radical and local approaches to delivering public services.</p>		
Areas of deprivation	<p>The Children in Need teams are based in the localities they service and therefore in a position to work with those who experience deprivation.</p> <p>The department recognises the link between social economic circumstances and good outcomes for children and young people. Children’s services delivered with CWaC are responsive to demographic need. Data captured which evidences the profile of families and their needs within different parts of the Local Authority is used to effectively commission bespoke services.</p>		
Human Rights	The Human Rights Act 1998 underpins all of our social work	Training where appropriate on this will incorporate this area such as the	

	<p>practice when working with families. Due regard should be given to share information, consideration given to all our interventions in infringing upon individuals Human Rights. Further work is required in evidencing the consideration of this within our everyday practice.</p>	<p>legal update training on The Children's Bill on the 31st Oct 13.</p>	
<p>Health and Wellbeing (<i>consider both the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, as well as the possible impacts on lifestyles and the effect there may be on health and care services</i>)</p>		<p>There are a number of working groups of multi-agency services that are themed in area's such as Housing and employment and crime and education which report to the Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children Board upon thematic areas of work based upon cross agency data and the profiling of local need.</p> <p>Locality meetings bring together professionals from across agencies to consider how issues affecting health and wellbeing are being addressed.</p>	
<p>Procurement/Partnership (<i>if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance</i>)</p>		<p>Procurement of any type is governed by the Cheshire West and Chester Finance and Contract Procedure Rules This is based on a number of principles</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure compliance with all legal requirements - Achieve best value - Ensure transparency, openness; non discrimination and fair competition demonstrate probity, consistency, accountability and integrity - Support the Council's corporate and departmental aims - Protect Officers to ensure compliance with the Council's Procurement Strategy 	
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Evidence (see guidance note for details of what to include here):

- **Inspection of the local authority in executing it's safeguarding responsibility and providing needs based services by Ofsted considers the impact of services on safeguarding children with particular reference to diversity and how intervention has improved outcomes for children and families .**
- **All children in the Child in Need service have a Plan, either a Child in Need or a Child Protection Plan which is based upon a Single Assessment and focussed upon the individual child. Assessments and plans are regularly audited by Team Managers, Senior Managers and the LSCB Audit group focussing upon aspects of equality and diversity and establishing the uniqueness of each child's wishes and views as well as capturing the voice of the child.**
- **The Cheshire West and Chester scrutiny process provides challenge on service provision and delivery, it establishes whether the rights of the child and family have been acknowledged as prescribed in the Human Rights Act 1998.**
- **The Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures are clear that they apply to all children irrespective of economic status, gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.**
- **There are published standards on the Cheshire West and Cheshire website in relation to Initial and Core Assessments, the Children in Need planning and review procedures and the Single Assessment practice guidance.**

- **Guidance on the use of interpreters is available on the Cheshire West and Chester website.**

Action plan:

Actions required	Key activity	Priority	Outcomes required	Officer responsible	Review date
Cheshire West and Chester Council website information accessible to all minority ethnic groups.	One line in each language detailing where to go for more information.		Easy to access information for minority ethnic groups	Gillian Ackerley	April 2014
Safeguarding Children's Board information accessible to all minority ethnic groups.	One line in each language detailing where to go for more information		Safeguarding information easily accessible for minority ethnic groups.	Safeguarding Senior Manager	April 2014
Feedback from service users to be embedded in the Children and Young Person's Service	Service users to be encouraged to return feedback forms.		Knowledge on the impact of safeguarding services on children's lives.	Gillian Ackerley	April 2014
Auditing process to ensure that belief and religion and its impact on child's and families outcomes is captured	Explore if audit form can be adapted		Beliefs and religion to be considered in any assessment and plan	Gillian Ackerley	April 2014

Sign off	
Lead Officer:	
Approved by Head of Service:	
Moderation and/or Scrutiny	
Date:	
Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating (high impact – review in 1 year, medium impact - review in 2 years, low impact in 3 years)	

Please forward the completed Equality Analysis to the Equality and Diversity Managers for publishing on the Council’s website