

**Equality Impact Assessment Template**

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of item being assessed:</b>                      | Children's Services Improvement Plan |
| <b>Version and release date of item (if applicable):</b> | V3 6-7-2015                          |
| <b>Owner of item being assessed:</b>                     | Rachael Wardell                      |
| <b>Name of assessor:</b>                                 | Rachael Wardell                      |
| <b>Date of assessment:</b>                               | 5-7-2015                             |

**1 What are the main aims of the item?**

**(What does the item try to achieve?)** Improved children's services for the children and families of the district.

**2 What are the results of your research?**

**Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.**

**(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)**

| <b>Group Affected</b>      | <b>What might be the effect?</b>  | <b>Information to support this.</b>   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Children and young people. | Improvement in children's services will lead to reductions in drift and delay which is likely to lead to prompter (and possibly more frequent) intervention in families which meet the threshold for statutory intervention. This should protect more children from potential harm. | The Ofsted inspection report recommends action which must be taken to prevent these services from being inadequate and is clear about the negative impact on children if these steps are not taken. |

|                                |  |   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Disability                     | <p>Children with a disability are known to be more vulnerable to neglect and abuse.</p> <p>Parents with a disability (especially a learning disability) can sometimes be unfairly over-represented in care proceedings because they have not received sufficient support for their parenting to prevent their children's needs reaching the threshold for statutory intervention. There is a risk of intervening in a heavy-handed way in families who could parent well with support.</p>   | <p><a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-safe-disabled-children-abuse-report.pdf">http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-safe-disabled-children-abuse-report.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/Booth-parents-with-lea-diff.pdf">http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/Booth-parents-with-lea-diff.pdf</a></p> |
| Gender Reassignment            | No issues yet identified.  | No source information identified. Continue to review.   |
| Marriage and civil partnership | No issues yet identified.  | No source information identified. Continue to review.   |
| Pregnancy and maternity        | <p>In certain circumstances, pregnant women can find their unborn child subject to a child protection plan, or plans for immediate removal of the child at birth.</p> <p>In certain circumstances expectant mothers are also children themselves, and in these circumstances are likely to be vulnerable children or at high risk.</p> <p>Improving the quality of children's services should lead to better protection of the rights and interests of parents and children (including parents who are children). However this remains a challenging area, so will need to be monitored.</p> | <p><a href="http://www.aims.org.uk/Journal/Vol15No1/childProtectionInvestigations.htm">http://www.aims.org.uk/Journal/Vol15No1/childProtectionInvestigations.htm</a></p>  |
| Race, religion or belief.      | <p>Children of non-white heritage are slightly over-represented in the council's care, in relation to the composition of the local population.</p> <p>Improving the quality of children's services should lead to better outcomes for these children and therefore the intentions are</p>  | LAC Data – Corporate Parenting Panel  |

|                             |   |                                      |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|                             | benign; however questions should be asked about that over-representation and whether it is justified.   |                                      |
| Sex and sexual orientation. | Boys are over-represented in the council's care.<br><br>Improving the quality of children's services should lead to better outcomes for boys and therefore the intentions are benign; however questions should be asked about that over-representation and whether it is justified.<br><br>There are no identifiable issues related to sexual orientation at this time. | LAC Data – Corporate Parenting Panel |

**Further Comments relating to the item:**

The intention of the Improvement Plan is to Improve Children and Family Services in West Berkshire. The intentions are therefore wholly benign and ought to be beneficial to all children, and their families regardless of any protected characteristics. However, child protection is an area, like any other, where structural biases and personal prejudices can impact negatively on practice and outcomes, even where intentions are benign. In pursuing the improvement of our children and family services we will therefore need to monitor whether our progress appears to impact negatively on any group with protected characteristics.

There are currently no negative effects identified in this assessment, but the potential for negative effects is clear.

**3 What actions will be taken to address any negative effects?**

| Action             | Owner | By When? | Outcome |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| None at this time. |       |          |         |

**4 What was the final outcome and why was this agreed?**

(Was the item adjusted, rewritten or unchanged? Refer to page 15 of *Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision Making* for more information.)

No changes were made to the Improvement Plan – which should be a benefit to all, regardless of protected characteristics.

**5 What arrangements have you put in place to monitor the impact of this decision?**

The composition of our looked after children cohort is monitored in Corporate Parenting Panel. The broader cohort of families we are working with is not monitored closely, but the data is collected and could be reviewed more proactively.

File audit could be amended to explicitly address equalities issues within the audit. This would lead to relevant local learning.

**6 What date is the Equality Impact Assessment due for Review?**

6 months after implementation of the Improvement Plan.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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**Appendices:**

(list all documents that have supported this EqIA)

Appendix A:

Appendix B: