

Equality Impact Assessment, Family Placement

Date if EIA	June 2011
Directorate	Children's Services
Part One – Initial Screening Record	
1. Activity to be assessed	Fostering, Private Fostering, Permanency Planning and Adoption for Children's Services.
2. What is the activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change
3. Is it a new or existing activity	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing
4. Who are the members of the EIA team?	Sue Adamantos, West Central Locality Manager
5. Initial screening assessment. If the answer to either of these questions is 'yes' then it is necessary to go ahead with a full Equality Impact Assessment	<p>1. Does the activity have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the Council's workforce or the community?</p> <p>No – the aim of the policy is to ensure that the overall needs of Looked after Children are met in an appropriate and timely way taking into account the specific needs of the individual and taking into account the views of the child and of their parents. The process is transparent and decisions are open to challenge.</p> <p>2. Does the activity make a positive contribution to equalities?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Policy and Procedures provide guidance to staff involved in placing children in foster carer, permanency planning and Adoption for looked after children who are a vulnerable group. This involves assessing the child's needs and considering a range of options before deciding on the one which will provide the most appropriate match, stability and continuity of care for the child. These options include return to parents' care as well as Fostering Long and Short Term, Adoption, Kinship Care and Special Guardianship. These placements are defined within a framework of emotional, physical, social and legal conditions which are designed to provide placement security and permanence for the child.</p>
6. Did Part 1: Initial Screening indicate that a full EIA was necessary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes – full EIA completed and recorded below

Part Two – Full EIA Record

<p>7. Why is a full EIA being completed on the activity? Double click on boxes to check all that apply</p>	<p>The activity has the potential to have an adverse impact/discriminate against different groups in the community. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The activity makes a positive contribution to equalities. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>8. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?</p>	<p>The purpose of the activity is to:</p> <p>This activity covers a range of policies and procedures and functions which contribute to the placement of children in foster care and adoptive placements for children who are Looked After by West Berkshire Council.</p> <p>The activity is designed for:</p> <p>Looked After Children.</p>
<p>9. Summarise the information gather for this EIA including research and consultation to establish what impact the activity has on different equality groups.</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures reflect the range of options available to children who require placements. This EIA covers all these policies and arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fostering Services policy and procedures • The Adoption Services policy and procedures • Special Guardianship policy and procedures • Private Fostering policy and procedures <p>The following legislation is relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children Act 1989 and associated regulation and guidance • The Adoption and Children Act 2011 • Humans Rights Act 1998 • The Care Standards Act 2000 National Care Standards Commission (Fees and Frequency of Inspection (Adoption Agencies) Regulations 2003 • The National Care Standards Commission (Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 – England • The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 • The Adoption (Intercountry Aspects) Act 1999 (and accompanying regulations and guidance) • The Adoption Agency Regulations 2011 • The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 • Fostering Services Regulation 2011

- Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011

Brief description of the service

The impact assessment covers the whole range of fostering and adoption services.

West Berkshire Council's Fostering and Adoption service provides a range of services to Looked after Children and aims to provide quality foster care and adoptive placements to meet the child's individual needs in respect of race, culture, disability and language. The fostering and adoption service has a range of foster carers and adopters to enable us to provide safe, stable and secure family environments in which children and young people can live and be supported in order to achieve their full potential.

The Fostering Service exists to provide high quality locally based substitute family care, on either a short or long term basis; to meet the needs of looked after children and young people who are unable to live with their birth parents. The service also supports some children within their families of origin by providing regular periods of family-based short breaks care.

The service is committed to ensuring that the foster care services provided for children and young people and their families value diversity and promote equality. Each child and their family will have access to services which recognise and address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. The service seeks to ensure that foster carers and adopters provide care that respects and preserves each child's unique history and enhances the child's confidence and feelings of self worth.

The service aims to maximise young people's life chances by providing them with positive childhood experiences and the opportunity to reach their full potential as they move towards adulthood.

The service provides a Post Adoption Support service where appropriate. This will include the counselling of adopted adults and support where appropriate to birth parents and others affected by adoption. (Adoption and Children Act 2002).

Children and young people and their carers are consulted regularly through the statutory review process and a range of feedback is used to ascertain their views and wishes.

Children in Court Proceedings have a Children's Guardian appointed to ensure their views, wishes and feelings are represented at Court.

The Fostering and Adoption service is regularly inspected by OFSTED.

<p>10. A) With regard to the equalities themes, upon which groups does the activity impact?</p> <p>B) Might any of these groups be adversely impacted?</p>	<p>A) Groups impacted</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race and ethnicity</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify</p>	<p>B) Groups impacted adversely</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Race and ethnicity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gender</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Age</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify</p>
<p>11. What evidence is there to suggest an impact/adverse impact?</p>	<p>All placements takes place within a statutory framework and all LAC Care Plans are reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer.</p> <p>http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/docs/public_lawoutline.pdf</p> <p>Research indicates that nationally LAC do less well than other children but there are national and local plans in place to narrow this gap. No other adverse impact has been identified for LAC in West Berkshire.</p>	
<p>12. On what grounds can impact or adverse impact be justified?</p>	<p>Looked After Children are at risk of poor outcomes due to their social history and status.</p> <p>Fostering and Adoption services ensure that plans are made to minimise disadvantage and improve positive outcomes for this group.</p>	
<p>13. Have any examples of good practice been identified as part of the EIA?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work of family placement team to assess foster carers, family and friend foster carers, private foster carers, adopters and those who wish to apply for special guardianship orders. • Work on recruiting and approving a range of quality placements to improve placement stability for LAC. • Use of Special Guardianship and Adoption to give children who cannot live with their parents a permanent and secure living arrangement. • Public Law outline – provides a robust legal framework for children who are subject to Court decision making. Some will move on to permanent placements and some will return home. 	

<p>14. What actions are you currently undertaking to address issues for any of the groups impacted/adversely impacted?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Plans are reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer. • Assessment of permanent substitute carers is rigorous and the approval of foster carers/kinship foster carers and adoptive carers go through an independent panel. • Support for placements through the CAMHS service, the Life Chances Team, Education Support team and Connexions service all contribute to stability and better long term outcomes. • Outcomes for all LAC are monitored locally and evaluated by an inspection framework.
<p>15. What actions will you take to reduce or remove any differential/adverse impact?</p> <p>Please also list any other actions you will take to maximise positive impacts</p>	<p>No further action required.</p> <p>Service Plans in place.</p> <p>Policies relating to the Fostering and Adoption services will be updated to ensure that meet they meet the requirements of the new Fostering and Adoption regulations.</p>
<p>16. Into which action plan/s will these actions be incorporated?</p>	<p>West Berkshire Council Children and Young People's Plan</p> <p>Family Placement Team Plan</p>