


APPENDIX B - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – STEPPING CHILDREN INTO FAMILIES FROM RESIDENTIAL CARE

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): The person completing the EIA template.	Vivien Lines	Department and service:	Children's Services – Children, Young People and Families	Date of assessment:	10 June 2025
Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Karen Blake	Signature:		Approval date:	28 July 2025
Overview: <p>We believe that children and young people in care should grow up in a family home with foster carers so that they can experience secure attachments and to support healthy development. Exceptionally, residential children's homes can be appropriate to enable a young person to make progress with their emotional and behavioural needs in order to achieve a planned move back into a family home. We are committed to placing children in care in settings that are as close as possible to their home to enable them to maintain family and friendship relationships (where positive), access their social worker and local health and therapeutic services and maintain their school placements to support good outcomes including a supported and local transition to independence.</p> <p>Both cost and volume pressures are being experienced. A growth in demand has been seen of children with experiences of childhood neglect, trauma, disrupted attachments and additional learning needs. The number of children in care has risen as a result.</p> <p>Plymouth have experienced a growth in numbers of children in care and like many local authorities around the country, as a result of a severe national shortage of foster carers Plymouth currently has a high number of children in high-cost residential care creating a significant pressure for the Council. A significant cohort of these children in care are identified to be ready to step onto family settings, either foster care or with their own family. Focused work has been in place over the last year to achieve this for these children with limited success given the shortage of foster carers available nationally to meet the more complex needs of these children.</p> <p>The purpose of this programme is to develop and implement an approach to transition children and young people from residential care to a family-based setting, where their assessed need determines this as being appropriate and within their best interests. The planning and intervention aims to improve the well-being and stability of children who have experienced trauma and to allow successful care within a supportive family setting. The purpose is to also identify and support prospective carers for children and young people including foster carers, connected carers and parents to provide trauma informed care within an enhanced support network. This programme is needed now more than ever due to the rising cost of residential care, which is incompatible with the ever-increasing deficits and pressures on financial resources available to local authorities.</p>					

	The provider will commit 4 – 6 FTE experienced practitioners over this period, working alongside Plymouth City Council Children's Service social workers to achieve family-based care arrangements for children through foster care, reunification with parents and kinship care. The predominant change of setting is to Foster Care, given the low average age (13 years) of the cohort.
Decision required:	I. Award of contract to Reconnect on a payment by results basis for support to step twenty-one children down from residential children's homes to foster care or to be reunified to their family achieving potential savings of £5.8m. Maximum contract value estimated to be £1m over two years subject to payment by results conditions as outlined.

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

Potential external impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics?	Yes		No	X
Potential internal impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees?	Yes		No	X
Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required and you must complete section three)	Yes		No	X
If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.	The proposal aims to be inclusive of all children who meet the criteria for being in need of a placement in a children's home and ready for step down to fostering, this is not affected by any protected characteristics. The approach aims to be inclusive of all children in their diverse needs and presentations, however, I have detailed this further below.			

SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback)	Adverse impact	Mitigation activities	Timescale and responsible department
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Age	<p>Plymouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15. • 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64. • 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over. • 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over. <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64. • 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over. <p>England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14. • 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64. • 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over. <p>(2021 Census)</p>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>The proposal intentionally creates an offer that is flexible and allows children of all ages to access the support that they need at the time that they need them. The offer enables children of all ages to have a fair and equal provision.</p>	<p>Transformation Team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.</p>
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<p>Care experienced individuals</p> <p>(Note that as per the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommendations, Plymouth City Council is treating care experience as though it is a protected characteristic).</p>	<p>It is estimated that 26 per cent of the homeless population in the UK have care experience. In Plymouth there are currently 7 per cent of care leavers open to the service (6 per cent aged 18-20 and 12 per cent of those aged 21+) who are in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The Care Review reported that 41 per cent of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people in the same age group.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are currently 50 per cent of care leavers aged 18-21 Not in Education Training or Employment (54 per cent of all those care leavers aged 18-24 who are open to the service).</p> <p>There are currently 195 care leavers aged 18 to 20 (statutory service) and 58 aged 21 to 24 (extended offer). There are more care leavers aged 21 to 24 who could return for support from services if they wished to.</p>	No adverse impact	Children who are care experienced will have the same opportunity to access the support as all other children. They may even be more likely to secure a place if their current home is not in Plymouth.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a lot' because of a physical or mental health problem.</p> <p>12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a little' because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)</p>	No adverse impact	The support approach will consider the needs of all children and offer a service which is fully inclusive of their needs in line with the registration of the home.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.</p>

Gender reassignment	0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census).	No adverse impact	The service will have a diverse workforce who are highly skilled and offer a therapeutic approach to care.	Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department. Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.
Marriage and civil partnership	40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married. 0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census).	No adverse impact	The service will support all children, where applicable, into their transition to adulthood. They will be mindful and supportive to young peoples' personal choices and preferences.	Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department. Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.
Pregnancy and maternity	The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5.	No adverse impact	The service will support all young people in their development and work with partners, agencies and other providers who specialise in parent and child care.	Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department. Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.

Race	<p>In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census)</p> <p>People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census)</p> <p>92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).</p>	No adverse impact.	The service will support children of all races and will aim to provide a workforce which reflects this diversity.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census).</p> <p>Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth's population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).</p>	No adverse impact	The service will support children in their personal choices and family preferences to engage in and practice their religious and cultural beliefs. Where applicable they will be supported to access religious communities or sites as a part of their care plan.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 12 months dependent on the child's timescales and identification of foster family.</p>

Sex	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	No adverse impact	The service will support children regardless of gender and will aim to provide a workforce which reflects a mix of gender.	Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department. Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.
Sexual orientation	88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).	No adverse impact	The service will support children in their sexual development and provide a tolerant and inclusive environment in which they can grow and learn safely.	Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department. The service will support children of all races and will aim to provide a workforce which reflects this diversity.

SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
	N/A	N/A	N/A

SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
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Work together in partnership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promote equality, diversity and inclusion ▪ facilitate community cohesion ▪ support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together 	The offer aims to accommodate all children in the city in which they already live, to maintain engagement with their local community, family and school to ensure they are fully included.	N/A	N/A
Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.	The service aims to nurture and wrap support around young people whether they are care experienced or not.	N/A	N/A
Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.	The service will have a full and fair recruitment process with an aim to employ a workforce which reflects a child's family life and relationships.	N/A	N/A
Support diverse communities to feel confident to report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.	The service will maintain positive links with partners in the Police to ensure that there is a positive promotion of behaviour an expectations while also promoting a safe community.	N/A	N/A