

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Engagement and our equality duty

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting ‘everyone’, additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people’s opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement. People with protected characteristics are often described as 'hard to reach' but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Contacting the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) will help you to understand how you can gain insight as to the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Emotionally Healthy Children & Young People service
Date of Assessment	28 th June 2023
Assessment Lead Officer Name	Trevor Smith
Directorate/Service	People Directorate/Thriving & Prevention
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	<p>Description of the service: The Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People’s (EHCYP) service aims to offer secure, sustainable support to all children and young people who may need help or advice in order to achieve good emotional wellbeing. The service brings together colleagues from early years, education, health and the voluntary sector to support children, families and professionals in Cheshire East in their efforts to improve mental health outcomes.</p> <p>The purpose or aim: To improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people across Cheshire East.</p> <p>Why is the service being commissioned and what evidence has been used to reach this decision? The existing EHCYP service contract naturally expires on 31st March 2024 and a new service will commence on 1st April 2024. The proposal for the new service is to adopt a new delivery model which will see a mental health alliance created and the removal of the lead provider. A robust series of engagement/consultation sessions have been undertaken over a period of 3 months which has enabled the co-production of a plan/model for the new service going forward into the future.</p>
Who is Affected?	<p>The new service model proposal will affect the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people (CYP) • Families • Service providers • Partners & stakeholders

	<p>CYP may be affected by the service recommissioning (in the short term) as the new service model may take a short period to mobilise, however in the longer term the service model intends to be more inclusive and easier accessed, so the impact on CYP and their families will be positive in nature. CYP and their families have helped to co-produce the new service design through active engagement and consultation so the proposed model has been formulated based on their feedback.</p> <p>Key partners and stakeholders will not be adversely affected as many of them have been on the journey of coproduction and are on-board with the new service model.</p>
<p>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.</p>	<p>The proposed model does not adversely impact upon delivery of other Council services, functions or procedures. The proposal does link into the following strategies and policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025 • Cheshire East Live Well for Longer Plan 2022 – 2027 • Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership Interim Strategy 2023 – 2028 • Cheshire East Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2028 • All Age Mental Health Strategy (draft) • Children and Young People’s Plan 2022-2026 <p>The proposed service fits into the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan as it supports all children to have the best start in life, increases opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs and ensures all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.</p>

<p>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p>	<p>The proposed service helps the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed service delivery model was coproduced with CYP, their families and relevant professional partners • The proposed service is inclusive to CYP and their families of all cultures, religions and nationality. Workshops and engagement events were held with hard-to-reach groups including migrants and asylum seekers to ensure their voice contributed to the design of the new service • The engagement and consultation process actively included CYP who consider themselves to have a disability and those from the LGBTQIA+ community • The new service proposal is inclusive to all, it does not distinguish between genders or sexual orientation as the principles and commitments benefit everyone
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Section 2- Information – What do you know?

<p>What do you know?</p>	<p>What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to commission/change/decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?</p> <p>There has been a blend of information, both qualitative and quantitative which has provided the foundation to the new service proposal. Public Health colleagues have conducted a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) deep dive review on emotional and mental wellbeing in CYP and the resulting data and recommendations have provided a foundation for commissioning intentions. 36 focus groups have been conducted with over 300 participants, including CYP and their families, and a host of other stakeholders such as Children and Families Service, commissioned Providers, early years, education, further education providers, Headteachers, Police, Primary / Secondary School staff, Health (GPs & 0 – 19 Service), the LGBTQ+ community, SEND, the VCFSE Sector, the Out of School / Tuition team and Youth Justice.</p>
<p>Information you used</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Together in Cheshire East (our shared definition of coproduction): TOGETHER in Cheshire East Equality and Human Rights Commission: Protected characteristics Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)</p>

	Jigsaw for young people with additional needs: Jigsaw for young people with additional needs CheshireEast MarketPlace Utopia LGBTQ+ Youth Group: Utopia LGBTQ+ Youth Group - Crewe CheshireEast MarketPlace
Gaps in your Information	There are no gaps in information as the engagement/consultations were so thorough.

3. What did people tell you?

What did people tell you	What consultation and engagement activities have you already undertaken and what did people tell you? Is there any feedback from other local and/or external regional/national consultations that could be included in your assessment?
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	<p>Between September 2022 to December 2022 there were 36 focus groups held both face to face and online and 346 participants engaged, including children and young people in Primary School, Secondary School, Further Education, Alternative Education and Youth Clubs. Young Carers, Children in Care, LGBTQ+, Migrants and SEND were specifically engaged.</p> <p>A number of stakeholders were also engaged. These included Children and Families Service, commissioned Providers, early years, education, further education providers, Headteachers, Police, Primary / Secondary School staff, Health (GPs & 0 – 19 Service), the LGBTQ+ community, SEND, the VCFSE Sector, the Out of School / Tuition team and Youth Justice.</p> <p>From the focus groups we learnt that the current challenges are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of early intervention and increased complexity • Covid has left a legacy • Self-harm and suicide ideation is increasing, younger people are presenting with issues and there is a grey area • Organisations and partners are often working in silo's • There are increasing academic pressures facing children and young people currently • There are system navigation issues for partners and referrals are 'bouncing' around the system • There is a geographical inequality across Cheshire East

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of therapeutic support for under 11s • There is a distinct lack of parenting support • Pathways are unclear • There is a lack of emotionally available trusted adults • There is a lack of support for bullying and online abuse • There is a lack of knowledge from children and young people around online safety • Support in schools is inconsistent • Emotional needs have risen exponentially, and resilience is down <p>Following the focus groups a specific design event took place in January 2023. From that design event which was attended by a number of key stakeholders and partners 6 key themes emerged which form the basis on the new service model. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • System access and navigation • Parenting • Bullying and social media • Suicide and self-harm • School <p>In March 2023 6 multi-agency task and finish groups were set up and a total of 57 people participated in these groups. The purpose of the groups was to generate solutions to the issues raised in the focus groups, specifically around the 6 key identified themes.</p>
<p>Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback</p>	<p>There are no identified gaps in knowledge given the comprehensive feedback received from children, young people, partners and stakeholders.</p>

4. Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of information used to inform the proposal	What did people tell you? Summary of customer and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential). These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.
Age	The co-production process was inclusive of all ages. Children and young people contributed to the insights because it was important to hear their intentions and wishes for their future.	The new service proposal should focus on children and young people aged between 0 to 19 years (up to 25 for SEND). There is a current inequality of service offer relating to age.	Positive impact
Disability	The engagement and consultation process actively included children and young people who consider themselves to have a disability so the proposed service model will be inclusive to this community.	What's it like to be a young person? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long waiting lists • Pressure to achieve from schools – all about academic results • I love my independence • Obsessed with social media, addiction, fear of missing out, • Pressures from social media, route for bullying, bullies can reach me at home • Impact of lockdown – mental health, domestic abuse, missing out • transitions without preparation • lack of social interaction • Stopped leaving the house due to OCD (germs) What needs to be in place to pick you up when you're feeling down? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from school / college • Cut down waiting lists for mental health services • Talk to someone I trust – parents / family, youth support service, teacher, peers 	Positive impact

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place to go to where there's support available – face to the service, rather than just a phone number • Communication about support services as they are often hidden <p>Barriers to services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting lists • Not knowing they exist • Referral process and fear of not meeting criteria / thresholds • Inaccessibility due to transport and physical health difficulties • Not feeling confident • Don't access help because they don't think they're bad enough – let it get to crisis point before they seek help 	
Gender reassignment	The proposed service model is inclusive to all, it does not distinguish between genders as the principles and commitments benefits children and young people and their families.	CYP told us that advice and support around gender reassignment is predominantly only available for adults, so they feel dismissed. Hormone treatment therapies are also not readily available for CYP.	Positive impact
Pregnancy and maternity	The proposed service model is inclusive to all	Prospective parents told us that they would benefit from parenting support as early as possible to equip them with the knowledge and confident needed to address problems with their children early and to prevent escalation	Positive impact
Race/ethnicity	The proposed service model is inclusive to all cultures, religions and nationalities. Workshops and engagement events were held with hard to reach groups including migrants and asylum seekers to ensure their insights contributed to the Plan.	<p>What's tough about being a Young Person & from another race or religion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults can be judgmental about young people • School work can be tough and homework too frequent • Difficult to motivate yourself to attend school • People being fake – also fake profiles online and abuse • Covid was really tough – it messed up options at School • Language is different at home than it is at School – so harder to transition back and forth (most parents could only speak broken English at best so had to revert to non-English language) • The pandemic did affect language as we got sent home in lockdown which affected our development and time was lost 	Positive impact

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic meant we had to stay in a bubble which was ok but limited social interaction • We kind of lost our identity (within School) during Covid lockdowns due to the disruption • Could not travel back to native Country due to the increased costs – so could not see wider family in person 	
Religion or belief	The co-production process involved engaging with children and young people of various religions and beliefs.	See comments in race/ethnicity	Positive impact
Sex	The co-production process involved engaging with children and young people of all genders.	There was no disparity in feedback across all genders, with all CYP highlighting the same gaps in service.	Positive impact
Sexual orientation	22 representatives from Vibrance and Utopia LGBTQ+ focus group engaged with during consultation process.	<p>What's good about being a young person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending Utopia youth group • I get confidence from looking confident and I don't care about standing out • NHS are there for me – they don't know everything, but they help me • Phones / social media – be myself, more social, anonymity <p>What's bad about being a young person?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's an unrealistic expectation to fit in • You can be a bit different, but not too much, but only if you're popular • Bullied for being different, bullied for being fake • Schools don't always follow up on bullying complaints and take a punishment rather than supportive approach • Scared of talking about my feelings to close family as I don't want to be a burden • Mental health issues are overlooked in young people • Prejudice towards sexuality – especially in school 	Positive impact

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of confidence in teachers to address behavioural issues (e.g. homophobia) • Help is more accessible for older people (e.g. hormone therapy) • I'm only taken seriously if I reach crisis point • Social media – hate, death threats, lack of security • Poor experience of crisis MH services (CAMHS, A&E) 	
Marriage and civil partnership	The service proposal is inclusive to all.	CYP and their families told us that taking a 'whole family' approach to support provision is vital for addressing their mental health and emotional wellbeing.	Positive

5. Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Mitigation	What can you do? Actions to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts
<p>Please provide justification for the proposal if negative impacts have been identified?</p> <p>Are there any actions that could be undertaken to mitigate, reduce or remove negative impacts?</p> <p>Have all available options been explored? Please include details of alternative options and why they couldn't be considered?</p> <p>Please include details of how positive impacts could be further enhanced, if possible?</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts identified. The proposed service model is entirely coproduced by CYP, their families and professional stakeholders so there will be no negative impact on service delivery, only positive as the proposed service will go further to accurately meet needs. The proposed model creates an 'alliance' of agencies working in partnership to take a systematic approach toward achieving a shared goal.</p> <p>The current model has a lead provider and several sub-contractors, which is an option that has been explored. However, this requires additional funding for the lead provider for contract management oversight, which takes resource away from delivery, so the preferred model is proposed as an alliance of providers with an infrastructure development lead to encourage collaboration and create sustainability.</p>

6. Monitoring and Review -

Monitoring and review	How will the impact of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure be monitored? How will actions to mitigate negative impacts be monitored? Date for review of the EIA
Details of monitoring activities	The impact of the new proposal will be monitored through regular meetings, quarterly reviews, feedback from service users, feedback from providers, partners and stakeholders.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	Review September 2024, Trevor Smith – Project Support Officer, Thriving & Prevention, People Directorate

7. Sign Off

When you have completed your EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review. If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer to be published on the website. For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

8. Help and Support

For support and advice please contact EqualityandInclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk