

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cheshire East Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy  
Strategy 2022 – 2026

## VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
18/03/22	1.1		Initial EIA
<b>14/04/22</b>	<b>1.2</b>		<b>Update of data</b>

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT


**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

<b>Department</b>	Children's Social Care		<b>Lead officer responsible for assessment</b>		Kerry Birtles Director of Children's Social Care	
<b>Service</b>	Children and Young People		<b>Other members of team undertaking assessment</b>		Laura Hindhaugh Business Development Manager	
<b>Date</b>			<b>Version</b>		1.2	
<b>Type of document (mark as appropriate)</b>	<b>Strategy</b> ✓	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Service</b>
<b>Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)</b>	<b>New</b> ✓		<b>Existing</b>		<b>Revision</b>	
<b>Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)</b>  <b>Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service</b>	<p>Cheshire East Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022 – 2026</p> <p>In Cheshire East, we believe caring for our cared for children and care leavers is one of the most important responsibilities held by elected members, partner agencies, and individual staff working with children and young people in the care of the local authority. We want these children and young people to have the same opportunities and care as any good parent would want for their own child. The strategy sets out a number of pledges to improve outcomes for cared for children and care leavers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would</li> <li>• We will improve education, employment and training outcomes</li> <li>• We will work to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe</li> <li>• We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes.</li> </ul>					

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will prepare children and young people for adulthood.</li> <li>• We will work TOGETHER with children and young people</li> </ul> <p>This strategy has been developed TOGETHER with children and young people. The ‘Pledges’ that we make to them are based on the things that they have told us matter most to them.</p> <p>The Cared for and Care Leavers strategy meets the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 as it contributes to ‘A council which empowers and cares about people’ and the priority to ‘be the best Corporate Parents and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people’.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Stra</p> </div>	
<p><b>Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children and young people</li> <li>▪ Foster carers</li> <li>▪ Councillors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Operational Staff</li> <li>▪ Partners such as Health, Housing, Education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What consultation method(s) did you use?</b></p>	<p>Our Cared for and Care Leavers strategy has been developed with our cared for children and young people and care leavers, we have carried out a variety of group and one to one sessions to gain their views and an understanding of what matters most to them. Children and young people told us that the pledges in the current strategy still feel relevant, however they didn't like some of the language we use to talk about their lives, we have made changes to the new strategy to reflect this and have also changed the name of the strategy from Corporate Parenting Strategy to Cared for and Care Leavers strategy .We have also referred to the results of our care leavers survey carried out in November 2021 when developing this strategy.</p> <p>We conducted an online survey in March to give foster carers an opportunity to share their views and ideas during the development of the strategy. Their responses around the relevance of the pledges echoed that of the children and young people we spoke to, with some feeling the use of ‘being a good corporate parent’ is vague and lacks context. 72% felt that a pledge around participation should be included in our new strategy. Some foster carers commented that they would like improved communication with them to be included as part of the new strategy and</p>	

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	<p>we have developed actions to support this in our action plan.</p> <p>We have held focus sessions during workstream groups and Corporate Parenting Operational Group where managers, operational staff, councillors and health colleagues were able to share their views on the priority areas and actions needed in the strategy.</p>
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**Stage 2 Initial Screening**

<p><b>Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</b></p>	<p>There are approximately 523 children and young people currently in the care of Cheshire East Council and 364 care leavers, we know that this cohort of children are among some of the most vulnerable in our community and we aim to improve outcomes for these children and young people.</p> <p>Currently there are 286 males and 236 females with one indeterminate cared for children.</p> <p>The age range of cared for children is as follows:</p> <p>0-4 years 97 children</p> <p>5-10 years 116 children</p> <p>11-15 years 186 children</p> <p>16+ years 124 children.</p> <p>The ethnicity of cared for children is as follows:</p> <p>White British 432</p> <p>White Other 22</p> <p>Chinese 2</p>
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	<p>Pakistani 1</p> <p>White and Black Caribbean 9</p> <p>African 3</p> <p>Information not obtained 2</p> <p>Gypsy/ Roma 4</p> <p>Any other Asian Background 5</p> <p>White Asian 3</p> <p>Other Ethnic Group 19</p> <p>Other Mixed Background 13</p> <p>White and Black African 4</p> <p>Any other Black Background 3</p> <p>Traveller of Irish Heritage 1</p> <p>Indian 0</p> <p>Caribbean 0</p>
<p><b>Who is intended to benefit and how?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children and young people in care of the local authority</li> <li>▪ Young people who are care leavers</li> <li>▪ Unaccompanied children (immigrants who are under the age of 18 years and are not under the care of a parent or legal guardian)</li> </ul>

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	<p>This strategy will help us to ensure we follow the 2017 the Children and Social Work Act Corporate Parenting Principles for children in care and care leavers up to the age of 25 years as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people</li> <li>2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings</li> <li>3. To take account of their views, wishes and feelings</li> <li>4. To help them gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners</li> <li>5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people</li> <li>6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work</li> <li>7. To prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood</li> </ol>
<p><b>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</b></p>	<p>The strategy supports the cared for children and care leavers in Cheshire East, who are some of the most vulnerable children in our community, it will not result in any adverse impact on any other part of the community.</p>
<p><b>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</b></p>	<p>Only to the extent of provision of support and services to Cheshire East children and young people who have life experiences of being cared for children or care leavers.</p>
<p><b>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)</b></p>	<p>No - The strategy supports the cared for children and care leavers in Cheshire East, who are some of the most vulnerable children in our community, it will not result in any adverse impact on any other part of the community.</p>
<p><b>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough</b></p>	<p>All children and young people have a right to be treated equally and have their disability, gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs met. As corporate parents for children and young people in care and care leavers, it is essential that the Council is able to demonstrate that it considers equality implications in all decisions made in relation</p>

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<b>evidence to prove otherwise)?</b>	to cared for children and care leavers. The new strategy will consider any actions to improve equality issues for cared for children and young people and care leavers (a vulnerable group because of their experiences) and ensure that they are supported to achieve the same outcomes as their peers.
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**Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please highlight)**

The implementation of this strategy addresses the potential negative impact on all specific characteristics to reduce the level of risk.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>

<b>What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts</b>		<b>Level of risk (High, Medium or Low)</b>
<b>Age</b>	The age range of cared for children in Cheshire East shows that we have more 11 plus aged children in care. We will need to continually recruit experienced carers who can look after more challenging children and young people, including teenagers.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Disability</b>	Factors that lead to a disabled child becoming looked after are complex, factors can include family stress, abuse or neglect, and parental illness. We are working to recruit more carers who can care for disabled children, including short breaks foster carers.	<b>Low</b>

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<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Gender identity and sexual orientation issues may be masked by behavioural and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) difficulties making early intervention and support more difficult to deliver effectively. We provide support and training to foster carers to support children and young people and through the delivery of this strategy will ensure that Cared for Children and Care Leavers have their health assessed in a timely way, leading to appropriate support where needed.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	Cheshire East will highlight to potential foster carers that they do not need to be married in order to foster, and that single people can foster too, as well as those in civil partnerships, and living with their partner. We continue to raise awareness through our market and recruitment activity on social media and through events such as Foster Care Fortnight.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	Research shows that girls in care are around three times more likely than the average to become teenage mothers and figures also suggest at least one in 10 care-leavers who become parents have their children taken into care. We have made it an action within this strategy to support care leavers that become parents through prisonisation of access to services and earlier referrals to support services.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Race</b>	An increasing number of asylum-seeking children are becoming cared for in Cheshire East as part of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). Many of these children may have experienced trauma, which means that they often need more specialist care. We continue to work with our Marketing and Communications Team on launching a fresh campaign for Foster Care Fortnight to launch our new 'BE THERE' campaign and to consolidate our targeted recruitment to attract more foster carers who can offer home to sibling groups, teenagers, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Through the delivery of this strategy we will ensure that practitioners understand and meet the diverse health needs of our children and young people, including those with health inequalities faced by race, ethnicity, ability and disability and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	We are aware of the importance to some children and young people of the religious observance of their family's traditional religion. Our fostering recruitment aims to seek a diverse range of carers who can support children and young people from a variety of	<b>Low</b>

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	religions and beliefs.		
<b>Sex</b>	In Cheshire East we have a slightly higher number of boys than girls in care which reflects the national demographic profile. We regularly monitor this figure and through our marketing and recruitment campaign continue to ensure that we recruit foster carers who are experienced to support male and female children and young people.		<b>Low</b>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Research by Action for Children in 2013 revealed that 32% of LGBT people in the UK believe that being LGBT means you cannot foster, a misconception which must be challenged. Cheshire East is talking this by attending events such as Virtual Pride event whereby a fostering couple from the LGBTQA+ community talked about fostering for the council.		<b>Low</b>
<b>Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b> ✓	<b>Date:</b> 14 April 2022
<b>Lead officer sign off</b>	Laura Hindhaugh	<b>Date:</b> 09 May 2022	
<b>Head of Service sign off</b>	Kerry Birtles	<b>Date:</b> 09 May 2022	

**If yes, please proceed to Stage 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue**

**Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website**

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