

## 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

<b>Proposal Title</b>	Cheshire East Cared for Children's and Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement for 2024
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	07/12/2023
<b>Assessment Lead Officer Name</b>	Simon Riggs
<b>Directorate/Service</b>	Childrens and Families
<b>Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.</b>	<p>To update the previous Cared for Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy for Cheshire East.</p> <p>This strategy augments the Cheshire East Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26, which sets out how we will work together to advocate and champion the needs of cared for children and care leavers in everything we do, having high aspirations for their future, keeping them safe, happy, and healthy and supporting them into adulthood.</p> <p>Local Authorities are required, under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989, to publish an annual Sufficiency Statement for children in care. As an authority we recognise the importance and usefulness of a clear strategy that the service and partnership can work towards.</p>
<b>Who is Affected?</b>	<p>The proposals outlined in the Sufficiency Strategy Update affect the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children looked after (aged 0 -17)</li> <li>• Care Leavers (aged 18 - 25)</li> <li>• Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and care leavers (aged 0 - 25)</li> <li>• Children with disabilities</li> <li>• Families of children looked after</li> <li>• Foster carers</li> <li>• Kinship carers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s services staff – to include commissioning staff, business and finance partner support, and children &amp; families social care teams.</li> <li>• Independent and not-for-profit providers including residential care providers, independent sector fostering agencies, supported accommodation providers, and other third party support providers</li> </ul>
<b>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.</b>	<p>The Sufficiency Strategy is the key document to outline the ability to set out the demand for (and detail how we will meet our legal duty to provide) sufficient good quality, stable and loving homes for Cared for Children and Care Leavers in Cheshire East . This includes for example fostering placements, residential childrens homes, Supported accommodation, Adoption, other services for cared for young people and associated commissioning and operational activity.</p> <p>The Strategy is linked to the Corporate parenting strategy and builds on the principles included in that document. It aligns with the priority within the Council’s Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025 of ‘a council which empowers and cares about people’. This includes the sub priorities of ‘work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient’ and ‘reducing the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home’. Aspects of these approaches will help to meet a key aim of the Council’s Digital Inclusion Plan 2023 -2026 ‘to improve health, wellbeing and inclusion’.</p>

<b>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the <a href="#">Public Sector Equality Duty</a>?</b>	<p>As corporate parents we have high aspirations for our children and young people and encourage them to have high aspirations for themselves. We want them to transition to adulthood with a sense of achievement and security, looking forward to a future where they can develop resilient community and family networks, enjoy employment, further education and training, and achieve personal goals.</p> <p>The strategy is linked to the Cared for Children and Care Leavers strategy and the Children and young people’s plan 2022-2026.</p>
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	The Sufficiency Strategy Policy does not discriminate and applies equally to Children in the care and care leavers in Cheshire East.
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What do you know?	What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to commission/change/decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?																																																																																																														
Information you used	<p>The development of the sufficiency strategy has been overseen by the Children and Families Directorate. The group has had representation from key stakeholders from children social care, business and finance, commissioning, Finance and Legal services.</p> <p>The Strategy has been informed by what we know locally, and provides guidance, practice and processes and clearly sets out the responsibilities for people accessing children services.</p> <p>The below table shows the number of children in different services.</p> <table><tr><th colspan="5">Gender</th></tr><tr><th>Placement Type</th><th>Female</th><th>Male</th><th>Indeterminate</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>Relative/Friend</td><td>34</td><td>27</td><td>0</td><td>61</td></tr><tr><td>CE Foster Care</td><td>57</td><td>69</td><td>0</td><td>126</td></tr><tr><td>External Foster Care</td><td>50</td><td>67</td><td>1</td><td>118</td></tr><tr><td>CE Home</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Independent Home</td><td>15</td><td>27</td><td>0</td><td>42</td></tr><tr><td>Placed with parents</td><td>14</td><td>22</td><td>0</td><td>36</td></tr><tr><td>Independent living / Friends</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>NHS/health Trust</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Residential School</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Supported Accommodation</td><td>15</td><td>61</td><td>1</td><td>77</td></tr><tr><td>Secure / YOI</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Parent &amp; Child</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Adoption</td><td>8</td><td>12</td><td>0</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Foster to Adpt / Concurrency</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Section 38 (6) placement</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>0</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>Schedule 6</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Regulation 24 placement</td><td>10</td><td>27</td><td>0</td><td>37</td></tr><tr><td>Missing</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Other - relative / friend</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>212</td><td>327</td><td>2</td><td>541</td></tr></table>	Gender					Placement Type	Female	Male	Indeterminate	Total	Relative/Friend	34	27	0	61	CE Foster Care	57	69	0	126	External Foster Care	50	67	1	118	CE Home	0	0	0	0	Independent Home	15	27	0	42	Placed with parents	14	22	0	36	Independent living / Friends	0	0	0	0	NHS/health Trust	1	1	0	2	Residential School	0	1	0	1	Supported Accommodation	15	61	1	77	Secure / YOI	0	1	0	1	Parent & Child	1	1	0	2	Adoption	8	12	0	20	Foster to Adpt / Concurrency	1	2	0	3	Section 38 (6) placement	6	7	0	13	Schedule 6	0	0	0	0	Regulation 24 placement	10	27	0	37	Missing	0	0	0	0	Other - relative / friend	0	2	0	2	Total	212	327	2	541
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	Information and data provided by regional arrangements for adoption and commissioning frameworks (Placements North West) have been included as well as local LA specific data.
<b>Gaps in your Information</b>	<p>Since October 2023 the 16+ accommodation market has been formally regulated by Ofsted for the first time, and the effect this will have on the sector is not yet clear. Information on the numbers of providers that have applied and will be inline with new regulations will become apparent over the coming months. Contract management of providers should continue to ensure there is minimum impact on Cheshire East young people, and we currently do not use any unregulated placements for young people in this group.</p> <p>Cheshire East's 2023 review of the Local Offer has been completed but not yet published; information is currently being collated and will be included into the action plan when released.</p>

## 2. What did people tell you?

<b>What did people tell you</b>	<b>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?</b>
<b>Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities</b>	To ensure the strategy is robust we have drawn on a wide range of available data and evidence. This includes historical trends and data; we have also drawn on evidence around best practice both nationally and from those who have a detailed knowledge of our local services. Through 2024 we will engage further with Cared for young people and Care Leavers to ensure the Strategy and emerging actions reflect the voices and views of young people with experience of the Care system. Whilst the Strategy for 2024 does include the result of this engagement a dedicated section of the 2025 Strategy will be given to this element, under the title 'You said, we did'.
<b>Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback</b>	<p>Young people should be consulted on an individual basis for placements. Further consultation with young people to engage about what types of placement they want should take place through the young peoples forum.</p> <p>Provider engagement will continue to happen through Placements Nort West and Cheshire East contract management.</p>

### 3. Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the <a href="#">Equality Act 2010</a></b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of information used to inform the proposal	<b>What did people tell you?</b> Summary of customer and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential). These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.
<b>Age</b>	This is a Borough wide strategy to meet the needs of all children and young people in care from 0-25 years.	<i>Staff have been engaged across all teams within Cheshire East to ensure the best possible option/outcomes for young people</i>	<i>Developing our care capacity will enable us to meet needs, risks and circumstances in a more child centred manner, including where age is a factor.</i>
<b>Disability</b>	The strategy will support children and young people in care who have a disability of additional need, ensuring services are inclusive and accessible.	More placement options and effective community based support to prevent, reduce or delay additional need is needed for children with disabilities.	Developing our care capacity will enable us to meet needs, risks and circumstances in a more child centred manner, including where disability is a factor.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Individual children looked after and care leavers may have experienced or be in the process of gender reassignment.	Positive impact of increasing placement choice within Cheshire East for children looked after, including those who may undergo gender re-assignment	Cheshire East will continue to monitor trends and projected demand to plan provision in county to meet identified needs specific to this group
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Provision will be needed for both looked after young people and care leavers who are parents or pregnant, as well as children in parenting assessment placements and parent and child foster or residential placements.	A small proportion of looked after young people may be pregnant or parents themselves and our current mother and baby placement options in-Borough are limited.	Provision that caters for young people must meet the needs of cared for children who are parents or parents-to-be.



<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	Positive impact on children looked after from black and minority ethnic backgrounds	Published research has noted the importance of culturally appropriate placements, particularly for children in foster care (Ofsted, 2019)	Work to enhance placement choice across fostering, supported accommodation and residential children's homes placements. Matching considerations in homes with more than one Cared for child always considered prior to placement, as well as matching considerations with carers in relation to faith, gender and ethnicity.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Positive impact on children looked after from all religions and beliefs.	Appropriate placements for children that meet their religious beliefs are needed across Cheshire East.	Work to enhance placement choice across fostering, supported accommodation and residential children's homes placements. Matching considerations in homes with more than one Cared for child always considered prior to placement, as well as matching considerations with carers in relation to faith, gender and ethnicity
<b>Sex</b>	This is a Cheshire East strategy to meet the needs of all children and young people in care, including positive strategies to support work with all young people. Carers and home providers for Cared for Children need to help support young people to understand healthy and appropriate relationships with others, and recognise the signs of unhealthy, abusive or risky	We need to develop placements and support to meet the needs of all young people. Matching considerations in homes with more than one Cared for child should always considered compatibility in relation to faith, gender and ethnicity	<p>Developing our care capacity will enable us to meet needs, risks and circumstances in a more child centred manner, including support young people in care.</p> <p>Young people in our care are safe and protected from harm</p> <p>Young people in our care are supported to understand the importance of safe, age-appropriate relationships with other</p>

	relationships, including safeguarding concerns.		young people and adults, and care/home providers understand their duties in relation to safeguarding.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	This is a Cheshire East strategy to meet the needs of all children and young people in care, including positive strategies to support work with all young people	We need to develop placements and support to meet the needs of all young people.	Developing our care capacity will enable us to meet needs, and manage risks and circumstances in a more child centred manner, including support young people in care.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	This does not really impact the development of the strategy.	If young people in care are Married or in Civil partnerships this will be looked at on a case-by-case basis, though any safeguarding concerns will of course be paramount.	Individual teams will look at this on a case-by-case basis.

#### 4. Justification, Mitigation and Actions

<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>What can you do?</b> 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>The Sufficiency Strategy Policy does not discriminate and applies equally to Children in the care and care leavers in Cheshire East.</p> <p>There are clear actions within the strategy, which will be reviewed by the Directorate Senior Leadership team on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>There aren't alternative options to the Sufficiency Strategy – under the Children At 1989 we have a Statutory Duty to publish and update the Strategy annually.</p>


## 5. Monitoring and Review -

<b>Monitoring and review</b>	<b>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</b>
<b>Details of monitoring activities</b>	Please see the actions within the strategy which set out the actions to be undertaken in 2024 to meet areas where we are currently under resourced or lack enough suitable options, as well as actions to develop new provisions to meet new and emerging needs.
<b>Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA</b>	Delivery against the actions in the Strategy for individual officers within Cheshire East will be overseen by the Executive Director of Children and Families and Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help, supported by the Head of Integrated Commissioning, Children, Families and Adults with Complex Needs.

## 6. 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.

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Martyn Baggaley; Head of Integrated Commissioning, Children, Families &amp; Complex Needs</b>
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	04.01.2024

## 7. Help and Support

For support and advice please contact [EqualityandInclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:EqualityandInclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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