



Derby City Council

Equality impact assessment form

Directorate Peoples

**Service area Early Intervention and
Safeguarding**

**Name of policy, strategy, review or function
being assessed Children's Centre
Reconfiguration**

Date of assessment 17/06/16

Signed off by

**Cabinet, Personnel Committee or Chief Officer
Group's decision**

Equality impact assessment – please read this section first before you do the assessment

This is our equality impact assessment form to help you equality check what you are doing when you are about to produce a new policy, review an older one, write a strategy or plan or review your services and functions. In fact you need to do an equality impact assessment whenever a decision is needed that affects people and **before** that decision is made.

So why do we need to do equality impact assessments? Although the law does not require us to do them now, the courts still place significant weight on the existence of some form of documentary evidence of compliance with the **Public Sector Equality Duty** when determining judicial review cases. This method helps us to make our decisions fairly, taking into account any equality implications, so yes we still need to do them.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is part of the Equality Act 2010 and this Duty requires us as a public body to have '**due regard**' to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act. It requires us to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a '**relevant protected characteristic**' and people who don't.

Having 'due regard' means:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where the participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity

Classification: OFFICIAL

- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This completed form should be attached to any Chief Officer Group, Cabinet or Personnel Committee report to help elected members make their decisions by taking the equality implications into account. Equality impact assessments **must be done before** decisions are made. Include the Cabinet or Personnel Committee's decision on the front sheet when you know it.

You'll find that doing these assessments will help you to:

- understand your customers' and communities needs
- develop service improvements
- improve service satisfaction
- demonstrate that you have been fair and open and considered equality when working on re-structuring
- make sure you pay due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Don't do the form by yourself, get a small team together and make sure you include key people in the team such as representatives from our Diversity Forums and employee networks and you could invite trade union representatives too – the more knowledge around the table the better. You also need to decide how and who you will consult with to help inform the equality impact assessment. Our Lead on Equality and Diversity can help with useful contacts – we have a team of people who are used to doing these assessments and can help with information on barriers facing particular groups and remedies to overcome these barriers.

You'll need to pull together all the information you can about how what you are assessing affects different groups of people and then examine this information to check whether some people will be negatively or positively affected. Then you'll need to look at ways of lessening any negative effects or making the service more accessible – this is where your assessment team is very useful and you can also use the wider community.

Agree an equality action plan with your assessment team, setting targets for dealing with any negative effects or gaps in information you

may have found. Set up a way of monitoring these actions to make sure they are done and include them in your service business plans.

When you have completed the assessment, get it signed by your Head of Service or Service Director and send it to our Lead on Equality and Diversity for checking and to publish on our website. It is a public document so must not contain any jargon and be easy to understand.

Remember, we need to do these assessments as part of our everyday business, so we get our equality responsibilities right and stay within the law –Equality Act 2010.

Equality groups and protected characteristics

These are the equality groups of people we need to think about when we are doing equality impact assessments and these people can be our customers or our employees and job applicants...

- Age equality – the effects on younger and older people
- Disability equality – the effects on the whole range of disabled people, including Deaf people, hearing impaired people, visually impaired people, people with mental health issues, people with learning difficulties and people with physical impairments
- Gender reassignment – the effects on trans people
- Marriage and civil partnership equality
- Pregnancy and maternity equality - women who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby, including breast feeding mothers
- Race equality – the effects on minority ethnic communities, including newer communities, gypsies and travellers and the Roma community
- Religion and belief or non-belief equality – the effects on religious and cultural communities, customers and employees
- Sex equality – the effects on both men and women and boys and girls

- Sexual Orientation equality – the effects on lesbians, gay men and bisexual people

In addition, we have decided to look at the effects on families and people on low incomes too as we feel this is very important.

Contact for help

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The form

We use the term ‘policy’ as shorthand on this form for the full range of policies, practices, plans, reviews, activities and procedures.

Policies will usually fall into three main categories...

- Organisational policies and functions, such as recruitment, complaints procedures, re-structures
- Key decisions such as allocating funding to voluntary organisations, budget setting
- Policies that set criteria or guidelines for others to use, such as criteria about school admissions, procurement methods, disabled facilities grants, on street parking bays

If in doubt - do one! You never know when we may get a legal challenge and someone applies for Judicial Review.

What’s the name of the policy you are assessing?

Children’s Centre Reconfiguration

The assessment team

Team leader's name and job title – Fiona Colton

Other team members

Name	Job title	Organisation	Area of expertise
Andrew Kaiser	HOS	City Council	Early Help
Donna Brooks	HOS	City Council	Early Help
Hedia Aslam	CC Manager	City Council	Children's Centre Services
Sarah Cadle	CC Manager	City Council	Children's Centre Services
Sarah Goodman	CC Manager	City Council	Children's Centre Services
Maureen Darbon	Service Director	City Council	Sponsor
Kelly Smith	Consultation Officer	City Council	Consultation expert
Fiona Colton	HOS	City Council	Strategic Lead

Step 1 – setting the scene

Make sure you have clear aims and objectives on what you are impact assessing – this way you keep to the purpose of the assessment and are less likely to get side tracked.

- 1 What are the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy? How does it fit in with the wider aims of the Council and wider Derby Plan? Include here any links to the Council Plan, Derby Plan or your Directorate Service Plan.**

Children’s Centres are an integral part of the Early Help offer for the city. Centres offer a range of universal and targeted services for children under 5 and their families. This includes support for School Readiness, Parenting support and child and Family health services. Children’s centres are a key mechanism for improving outcomes for young children while reducing inequalities between the poorest children and their peers, as well as helping bring an end to child poverty.

The Government has demonstrated its commitment to children’s centres by legislating to give them a statutory basis. The Childcare Act 2006 imposed duties on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them, and to make arrangements to secure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated way in order to improve access and maximise the benefits of those services to young children and their parents.

Local authorities continue to have duties under the Childcare Act 2006 to consult before opening, closing or significantly changing children’s Centre’s, and to secure sufficient provision to meet local need so far as is reasonably practicable.

Derby City Council is proposing to reconfigure children’s Centre’s services, reducing the number of buildings it is responsible from 17 to 10 for but not reducing the level of frontline services by handing over the management responsibilities for the identified buildings located on school sites. The focus of this assessment is to identify the equality issues relating to these proposed changes.

2 Who delivers/will deliver the policy, including any consultation on it and any outside organisations who deliver under procurement arrangements?

Children's Centres are implemented and delivered as part of the Early help offer in the city. Strategic lead sits with Fiona Colton Head of Service for Early Help.

Statutory Guidance suggests that delivery should be supported by Health and DWP and other partners.

In Derby, centres have formed partnerships with a variety of organisations in order to help them fulfil the core offer and meet local needs, including ;

- Health including (Midwifery, Health Visitors, School Nurses)
- Family Nurse Partnership
- Speech and Language service
- Job Centre Plus
- Voluntary sector organisations such as (Nacro, Barnardoes and Home Start)
- Local Childminders and Private Childcare partners

3 Who are the main customers, users, partners, employees or groups affected by this proposal?

Residents of Derby, specifically parents / carers with children under 5, are the external customers / service users of the Children's Centres. Families are encouraged to use the centre closest to them but are not turned away from other centre's, however, services are prioritised for the most in need.

Local authorities are required by the Childcare Act 2006 to make 'sufficient provision' of children's centres to meet local need.

Local authorities try to ensure that universal access to children's centres is achieved, with children's centres configured to meet the needs of local families especially the most vulnerable.

Services are accessed by a range of targeted groups and communities across the city including;

- Parents and carers, including fathers
- teenage parents
- children in need / and on a child protection plan
- unemployed or economically inactive parents and families on low incomes
- parents and carers with long term illness or disability (including mental health issues)
- asylum seekers, refugees and new arrivals to Derby
- black and minority ethnic families
- victims of domestic violence
- geographically isolated families

Services are delivered in partnership with the agencies listed above, usually from a purpose built children's centre, or from other key bases where centres are split sites or local need dictates it. Partner agencies use the centres to deliver services that were previously delivered elsewhere, such as Stay and weigh baby clinics, counselling, and contact meetings.

Step 2 – collecting information and assessing impact

4 Who have you consulted and engaged with so far about this policy, and what did they tell you? Who else do you plan to consult with? – tell us here how you did this consultation and how you made it accessible for the equality groups, such as accessible locations, interpreters and translations, accessible documents.

A formal consultation which met Children’s Centre Statutory Guidance and the recommended consultation period for the LA, ran from the 6th March 2016 until the 27th May 2016 in the form of an on line survey, questionnaires in all centres, locality offices and public buildings.
 The questionnaires were available in English and four other languages which were Urdu, Polish, Punjabi and Slovak.
 Focus groups have taken place with partners and service users and staff were able to take part on line. In addition telephone conversations were held with identified survey users
 Individual consultation has taken place with the heads and Governors of those schools where we intend to reconfigure buildings.
 There have been 477 responses 81% were users of the service

5 Using the skills and knowledge in your assessment team, and from any consultation you have done, what do you already know about the equality impact of the policy on particular groups? Also, use any other information you know about such as any customer feedback, surveys, national research or data. Indicate by a tick for each equality group whether this is a negative impact, a positive one or if you are not sure

Equality groups	What do you already know?	No impact	Positive impact	Negative impact	Not sure
Age	71% of service users with children under 5 are between the ages of 25-44		x	x	
Disability	91% do not have an identified disability		x	x	

Gender reassignment - trans	No data collected				
Marriage and civil partnership	No data collected				
Pregnancy and maternity	Specific data not collected				
Race	64% were whitebritish,8% Asian Pakistani, 3% Asian Indian				
Religion or belief or none	No data collected				
Sex	84% Female 14% male				
Sexual Orientation	No data collected				
Families and people on low income	50% were working within a range of a few to 30 hours a week, 50% are not in work or training				

Important - For any of the equality groups you don't have any information about, then make it an equality action at the end of this assessment to find out. This doesn't mean that you can't complete the assessment without the information, but you need to follow up the action and if necessary, review the assessment later. You can get lots of information on reports done from organisations' websites such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Stonewall, Press for Change, Joseph Rowntree Trust and so on. Please don't put down that the impact affects 'everyone the same' – it never does!

6 From the information you have collected, how are you going to lessen any negative impact on any of the equality groups? How are you going to fill any gaps in information you have discovered?

The current government direction in relation to children’s centres is to target services to those most vulnerable whilst we are reconfiguring the use of buildings it is our intention to continue front line delivery just in a different way to the current delivery model. The core purpose of centre’s remains the same that they will support children to be school ready families, to access health and Family Support and provide access to services to support return to education and the workforce.

Step 3 – deciding on the outcome

7 What outcome does this assessment suggest you take? – You might find more than one applies. Please also tell us why you have come to this decision?

Outcome 1	No major change needed – the EIA hasn’t identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to advance equality have been taken
Outcome 2	Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?
Outcome 3	Continue the policy despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact • mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts • plans to monitor the actual impact.
Outcome 4	Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination

Our Assessment team has agreed Outcome number(s)

Outcome 3

Why did you come to this decision?

It is not our intention to reduce frontline service delivery but to focus the delivery in a different way, there could be the potential for more access to services as the schools will be increasing their childcare for two year olds and 30 hours for 3 & 4 year olds. There is clearly data that we currently do not keep such as Sexual orientation, religion and pregnant women although both the EH system and Connect + should record pregnancy's more accurately

If you have decided on **Outcome 3**, then please tell us here the justification for continuing with the policy. You also need to make sure that there are actions in the Equality Action Plan to lessen the effect of the negative impact. This is really important and may face a legal challenge in the future.

If you have decided on **Outcome 4** then if the proposal continues, without any mitigating actions, it may be likely that we will face a legal challenge and possibly a Judicial Review on the process - it is really important that the equality impact assessment is done thoroughly, as this is what the Judge will consider.

Step 4 – equality action plan – setting targets and monitoring

8 Fill in the table (on the next page) with the equality actions you have come up with during the assessment. Indicate how you plan to monitor the equality impact of the proposals, once they have been implemented.

Make sure you include these actions in your Directorate service business plans.