

# Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

**NB:** The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Durham County Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Assessing impact on equality and recording this is one of the key ways in which we can show due regard.

## Section One: Description and Screening

<b>Service/Team or Section</b>	CYPS
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Karen Robb Strategic Manager Looked After Children and Care Leavers
<b>Title</b>	Regionalisation of Adoption Services
<b>MFTP Reference (if relevant)</b>	None
<b>Cabinet Date (if relevant)</b>	
<b>Start Date</b>	January 2019 (EIA start date November 2018)
<b>Review Date</b>	July 2019

## Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal or practice as appropriate (a copy of the subject can be attached or insert a web-link):

The Council has responded to the Government requirements for all Local Authorities to move to providing adoption services via Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA). The Governments` aspiration is to have fewer organisations recruiting and assessing adopters and having organisations that are operating at much greater scale to provide a greater choice of adopters for those children who require them. This intention was set out in the Education and Adoption Act 2016 which introduced power in March 2018 for the Secretary of State to require local authorities to carry out their adoption functions jointly.

In December 2016 Durham County Council, Cumbria County Council and Together for Children/Sunderland City Council began working together with assistance from the Department for Education (DfE) to consider how they could develop a RAA. Durham successfully led the bid to ensure that the three Local Authorities would comply with the DfE requirements. This was approved by the DfE and another two Local Authorities in principle in March 2018. Since then the Corporate Director of Children's Services for Durham County Council has chaired

the Governance Board which was awarded a grant from the DfE of £670,000 to establish the new organisation by October 2019.

Who are the main stakeholders? (e.g. general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users):

Staff within Durham CYPS Adoption Service and Childrens Care Planning Teams  
 Members of the public who are interested in adopting a child  
 Birth parents of looked after children  
 Adopted adults

### Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics?

Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Y = Yes, N = No, ? = unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Y = Yes, N = No, ? = unsure
Age	?	?
Disability	?	?
Marriage and civil partnership (workplace only)	?	?
Pregnancy and maternity	?	?
Race (ethnicity)	?	?
Religion or Belief	?	?
Sex (gender)	?	?
Sexual orientation	?	?
Transgender	?	?

Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause adverse impact. Record full details and analysis in the following section of this assessment.

The move towards a Regional Adoption Agency may cause some disruption to the delivery of adoption services to children, adopters and birth families. It will also have an impact on staff. It could cause a drop in the performance of Durham CYPS in relation to the adoption of looked after children which could have an adverse impact on the Ofsted outcome for adoption services which is currently good. Any drop in performance could also have an impact on the overall outcome of Durham CYPS with Ofsted under the ILACS Framework.

How will this policy/proposal/practice promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The intention behind the RAA is to increase the number of available adoptive families for children who need them and to provide increased choice. Working as a regional service is intended to reduce the delay in children being adopted by having more adopters who are local to meet the needs. Pooling resources across the three LA's and utilising increased resources of the VAA's is intended to also provide a more effective and efficient service to children and their families by collectively approaching the recruitment of adopters and the provision of placements.

The RAA will also ensure a consistent and high quality service is provided to all children, adopters and birth families across the 3 Local Authorities.

## Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your findings?

Please **outline** your data sets and/or proposed evidence sources, highlight any gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record greater detail and analysis in the following section of this assessment.

When a decision is made on the proposal to form a Regional Adoption Agency, equality data relating to staff within Durham CYPS Adoption Service Children's Care Planning Teams, members of the public who are interested in adopting a child and the birth parents of looked after children will be analysed to identify any potential impacts on protected characteristics.

A full impact assessment will begin following the decision. However, we do not have evidence to suggest there will be a significant impact on service users, as the proposals are intended to improve the consistency and quality of service for all of those who may be affected by adoption.

## Screening Summary

On the basis of this screening is there:	Confirm which refers (Y/N)
Evidence of actual or potential impact on some/all of the protected characteristics which will proceed to full assessment?	Yes as the proposal develops
No evidence of actual or potential impact on some/all of the protected characteristics?	

## Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Strategic Manager Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Date: November 2018
Service equality representative sign off: Equality and diversity officer	Date: November 2018

If carrying out a full assessment please proceed to section two.

If not proceeding to full assessment please return completed screenings to your service equality representative and forward a copy to [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)

If you are unsure of potential impact please contact the corporate research and equalities team for further advice at [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)