

# Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

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. Completion of this template allows us to provide a written record of our equality analysis and demonstrate due regard. It must be used as part of decision making processes with relevance to equality.

Please contact [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk) for any necessary support.

## Section One: Description and Screening

<b>Service/Team or Section</b>	Children and Young People Service, Early Help Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
<b>Lead Officer name and job title</b>	Karen Davison, Strategic Manager One Point Service, Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children, Children and Young People's Service
<b>Subject of the impact assessment</b>	County Durham's Early Help Strategy 2024-2026
<b>Report date (Cabinet/CMT/Mgt team etc)</b>	Staring Well Partnership – 28/3/24 CYPSMT Business Meeting – 11/4/24 CMT – 15/4/24 Cabinet – 19/6/24
<b>MFTP Reference (if relevant)</b>	N/A
<b>EIA Start Date</b>	March 2023
<b>EIA Review Date</b>	March 2024

## Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal or practice which is the subject of this impact assessment.

A review of the County Durham's Strategic Partnership Approach 2019-2022 was undertaken to develop the new County Durham Early Help Strategy 2024-2026.

The new Strategy outlines a system wide approach to supporting County Durham children and families with early help needs. The Strategy describes County Durham's vision for early help, how services supporting County Durham's children and families will practice, their 'approach' in working with families, our shared

commitments, priorities, and measures of success that will be used to know if we have delivered on the Strategy.

Based on our current data and intelligence of children and family need, we will focus on the following priorities over the next three years:

- **We will promote children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing.** We will develop and implement a robust, graduated response to children and young people’s emotional wellbeing which ensures children, and their families are offered the right support at the right time. Support will focus on building resilience and promoting the 5 ways to wellbeing.
- **We will promote good school attendance.** We will support children to get the most out of their educational opportunities, especially those most disadvantaged, by attending school regularly.
- **We will co-produce and embed our Family Hub and Start for Life offer.** We will ensure that all babies and children have the best start in life by providing a robust support offer for families with children aged 0-19 years and 25 years with SEND. The Start for Life offer will focus on a robust universal and targeted offer from the early antenatal period through to a child reaching two years of age aimed at reducing inequalities both now and in the future.
- **We will promote healthy family relationships and protect children from the harm of domestic abuse.** We will offer a range of support aimed at promoting healthy family relationships from the antenatal period, through early years and into adulthood. We will provide support to families impacted by Domestic Abuse using a range of evidence-based interventions such as Domestic Abuse Recovery Together (DART), Inspire and Respect Young People’s Programme where CAPVA is a presenting issue.
- **We will promote positive and nurturing parenting.** We will promote positive and nurturing parenting, identify and address neglectful parenting at the earliest opportunity.
- **We will promote financial stability\*.** We will promote financial stability by ensuring all families have access to information and support to improve their financial wellbeing.

\*Post consultation changes were made to the priority to ‘promote financial stability’, to reflect the feedback of explicitly referencing supporting children’s aspirations into adulthood which would include those not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Who are the main people impacted and/or stakeholders? (e.g., general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users, community representatives):

County Durham’s children and families in receipt of early help support.

County Durham Families looking for early help support.

Partners from across the Early Help System who are committed to deliver on this new Strategy.

## Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>?

Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure
Age	No	Yes
Disability	No	Yes
Gender reassignment	No	Yes
Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')	No	Yes
Pregnancy and maternity	No	Yes
Race	No	Yes
Religion or Belief	No	Yes
Sex	No	Yes
Sexual orientation	No	Yes

Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause discrimination or negative impact. Record full details and any mitigating actions in section 2 of this assessment.

There are no identified actual or potential negative impacts for any of the protected characteristics, and the Early Help Strategy is inclusive of all children, parents and carers living in County Durham.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

Please provide **brief** details of positive impact. How will this policy/proposal 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?

Implementation of the strategy will have a positive impact on a number of protected characteristics, for example, relating to age – the development of a network of Family Hubs will provide a range of local support and services to parents from pregnancy to children as they grow from babies into young adults. Also, relating to disability/SEND, including mental health and emotional wellbeing, children and families will be offered support that is accessible and delivered in a way which meets their needs. In terms of gender, the approach is likely to have a greater beneficial impact overall for women who are more likely to be the main carer in families. There are also specific targeted measures to improve the involvement of men (male carers and dads) which is positive.

County Durham's Early Help Approach is founded on a relationship based culture, building valued and trusted relationships with families and amongst services and organisations supporting children and families. Our approach is to tailor support to individual families as all families are unique and this in turn underpins an inclusive approach.

## Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your data analysis and any findings?

Please **outline** any data you have and/or proposed sources (e.g., service user or census data, research findings). Highlight any data gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record your detailed analysis, in relation to the impacted protected characteristics, in section 2 of this assessment.

The new Early Help Strategy has undergone a robust 3 stage consultation.

**Stage 1:** involved coproduction sessions with children, parents, carers and partners via the Strategy Development Group to establish the vision for the strategy and the priority areas that the strategy should focus on.

16 different focussed workshops took place and consultation activities included work with the Youth Council, Family Hub Parent and Carer Panel, a range of children, families and parent/carers groups which incorporated children and parent/carers from different backgrounds via Voluntary and Community Sector groups, Youth Groups, One Point (LA Early Help Service), Harrogate District Foundation Trust (0-25 Family Health Service), Family Hubs, Gypsy Roma Traveller Communities and Harbour.

230 children and young people, parents, carers and partners participated in stage 1 of the consultation ranging from 6 years old to adults.

**Stage 2:** took place between October and December 2023 and involved the Prevention and Early Help Partnership and LA Senior Managers reviewing the feedback from stage 1 of the consultation. It was agreed that the 'approach' to early help for families, as identified above, needed to be accompanied with identified commitments and priorities for the next 3 years. The Prevention and Early Help Partnership commitments were already well understood due to the self-assessment that was undertaken as part of the National Supporting Families Programme in July 2023 using the Early Help Systems Guide.

**Stage 3:** consultation on the draft strategy with the general public and wider stakeholders, which ran from 19 January 2024 to 16 February 2024, via an online survey. The survey was promoted by stakeholders through their networks and channels established in stage 1 of the consultation and there were 76 responses to the on-line survey. Paper copies of the survey were also made available, and these responses are included in the 76.

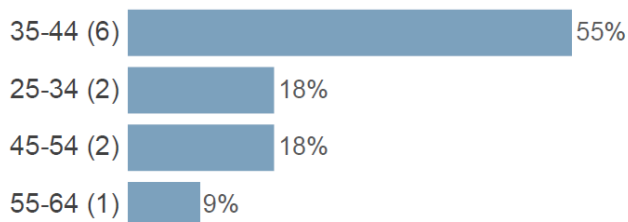
Below sets out analysis the survey participation and feedback (Stage 3 of consultation only) as broken down by Parent/Carers, Children and Young People, Members of the Family Hub Parent/Carer Panel and Professionals from across the Early Help System as follows:

### **Parent/Carer Responses**

11 Responses

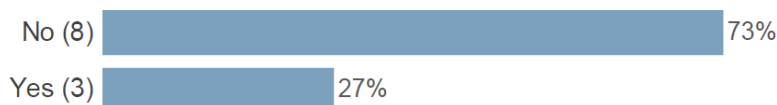
100% of female respondents to the on-line survey; however, Dad/Male Carer responses were obtained during stage 1 of the consultation and informed the first version of the proposed strategy.

#### **What is your age?**

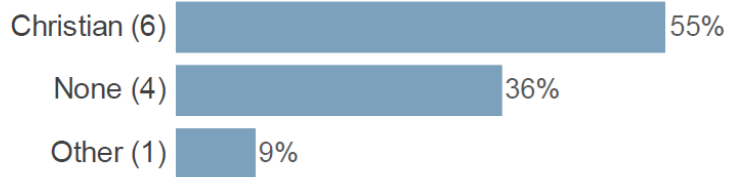


#### **Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?**

(This may include any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which has a substantial effect on your day-to-day life. Long standing means it has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least a year).



### What is your religion or belief?



### What is your ethnicity?



### How would you describe your sexual orientation?



82% of Parent/Carers agreed with the vision and approach. The feedback from the 'approach' page of the strategy was that it was 'too wordy'. This has informed the final strategy and words were reduced where appropriate without losing meaning.

100% of Parents/Carers did not feel there was anything missing for the proposed 'approach' and 100% agreed with the commitments. 82% agreed there was nothing missing from the commitments however a couple of comments included the need to work with 'broken' families and to put more onus on parents/carers to take responsibility. The Strategy Development Group felt these comments were already addressed due to the Signs of Safety/Wellbeing practice approach and commitment to better engage with Dads/Male Carers.

100% of Parents/Carers agreed with the priorities and a couple of comments made to include diet/exercise and an acknowledgement that school attendance is an area of concern. Both of these comments are addressed by the strategy as school attendance is a priority and healthy lifestyles incorporated in the integrated Family Hub offer to families.

### **Children and Young People Responses**

Only 1 male young person completed the online survey. They regarded themselves as not having a disability, were Christian, White-British and chose not to provide a response to their sexual orientation.

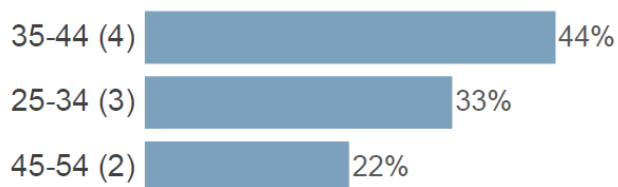
This young person agreed with the proposed Strategy vision, approach, commitments and priorities.

Albeit there was only 1 young person response, extensive consultation took place via stage 1 of the consultation process with a range of youth groups including the Youth Council, Youth Groups, Harrogate District Foundation Trust (0-25 Family Health Service) Youth Groups and Harbour Youth Group which informed the initial version of the new strategy which focussed on the vision and approach. Although the wording of the vision has changed to be more concise, it has not lost the essence of the original vision that young people contributed to the development of. The approach to the strategy, in essence and meaning, remains the same as what was developed by the range of Youth Groups that were consulted.

### **Members of the Family Hub Parent/Carer Panel**

9 responses to the on-line survey were made by Parent/Carer members of the Family Hub Parent/Carer Panel, 89% female and 11% male.

#### **What is your age?**



#### **Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?**

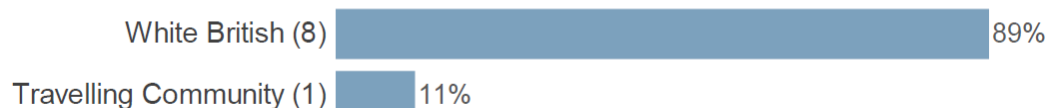
(This may include any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which has a substantial effect on your day-to-day life. Long standing means it has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least a year).



#### **What is your religion or belief?**



#### **What is your ethnicity?**



#### **How would you describe your sexual orientation?**



100% of Family Hub Parent/Carer Panel Members agreed with the vision, 89% said that the approach was clear. Similarly, to the Parent/Carer responses above, there was a comment that some of the approach was 'too wordy' and as a result, where appropriate to avoid losing meaning, words have been reduced in the final strategy.

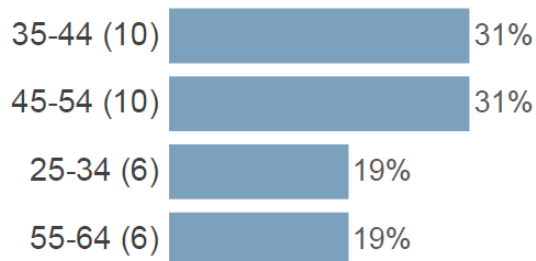
100% responded that there was nothing missing from the approach and 100% agreed with the commitments and priorities. There was one comment relating to 'breaking down barriers for school attendance', which the Strategy Development Group felt is addressed through the 'We will promote good school attendance' priority.

### **Professional from across the Early Help System**

There were a number of professional workshops which took place during Stage 1 and 2 of the Consultation which informed the draft Strategy that was consulted on in stage 3 of the consultation.

There were 36 responses to the on-line survey by professionals working across the Early Help System in stage 3 of the consultation. 84% were female and 16% male.

#### **What is your age?**



#### **Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?**

(This may include any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which has a substantial effect on your day-to-day life. Long standing means it has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least a year).



#### **What is your religion or belief?**





100% of those who responded to the following question regards themselves as White British. 14% (5) chose not to respond to this question.

#### What is your ethnicity?

White British (31)  100%

#### How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual/straight (30)  97%

Gay or lesbian (1)  3%

100% of professionals who responded to the survey agreed with the vision. 94% agreed with proposed approach being clear however there were two comments stating they were 'too wordy' which is consistent to the other respondents and was addressed in the final strategy. 94% of professional respondents did not feel there was anything missing from the approach however there was a comment relating to the importance of prevention and educating children about the importance of good parenting in school. This was considered by the Strategy Development Group and felt that the Family Hub offer, and existing school curriculum adequately addresses this.

100% agreed with the commitments with a comment about strengthening the definition of Parental Conflict which has been addressed in the final strategy to provide clarity.

97% agreed with the priorities with one comment, mirroring that of other responses, regarding education for young people about how to be a good parent, which was addressed as outlined above. 78% did not feel that there was anything missing from the priorities. For those that did and left comments, these informed the final strategy and included:

- Where feedback referenced commitments and priorities not being SMART, there is a detailed delivery plan that underpins the Early Help Strategy therefore, to keep the strategy concise, the decision was made not to include timeframes other than the overarching 2024-2026 timeframe given for the strategy.
- 'Crime Prevention and Tackling Crime' (including anti-social behaviour) is one of the 10 Headline Outcomes within the County Durham Family Outcome Framework providing the partnership framework to evidence how effective the Early Help System is in supporting families achieve positive and sustained outcomes. This, coupled with the initial principles of how the development of the new strategy would be undertaken to avoid unnecessary duplication with other strategies, it was decided not to have 'reducing crime' as a key priority outlined in the Early Help Strategy albeit

the actions of the Prevention and Early Help Delivery Plan will contribute to this.

- References to supporting children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) were unchanged as it was felt that the Early Help Strategy 'approach' was inclusive of all children and families including those with SEND.
- Changes were made to the priority to 'promote financial stability', to reflect the feedback of explicitly referencing supporting children's aspirations into adulthood which would include those not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Within the Early Help 'approach' and within the Strategy's 'financial stability' priority, an emphasis was made on ensuring basic needs were met and what this could include e.g., food, warmth (fuel bills).
- Consideration was given to explicitly reference 'appropriate housing' in the Strategy however, due to a commitment to keep the strategy succinct and avoid duplication and for the same reasons outlined for not explicitly referencing crime and anti-social behaviour, it was felt that 'appropriate housing' is captured within the Family Outcome Framework under Headline Outcome 9, 'Secure Housing'.

The Strategy Development Group and Prevention and Early Help Partnership, who directed this review, feel the 3-stage consultation process was robust and feedback is a good reflection of the views across a range of parent, carers, children, young people and professionals.

## Screening Summary

On the basis of the information provided in this equality impact screening (section 1), are you proceeding to a full impact assessment (sections 2&3 of this template)?	Please confirm No
---	----------------------

## Sign Off

Lead officer sign off:  Karen Davison, Strategic Manager One Point Service, Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children, CYPS	Date: 06/03/24
Equality representative sign off (where required):  Mary Gallagher, E&D Team Leader, Corporate Affairs	Date: 06/03/24

If carrying out a full assessment please proceed to sections two and three.

If not proceeding to full assessment, please ensure your screening record is **attached to any relevant decision-making records or reports**, retain a copy for update where necessary, and forward a copy to [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)

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

## Section Two: Data analysis and assessment of impact

Please provide details of impacts for people with different protected characteristics relevant to your screening findings. You need to decide if there is or likely to be a differential impact for some. Highlight the positives e.g., benefits for certain groups and advancement of equality, as well as the negatives e.g., barriers or exclusion of particular groups. Record the evidence you have used to support or explain your conclusions, including any necessary mitigating actions to ensure fair treatment.

Protected Characteristic: <b>Age</b>		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to age?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?

Protected Characteristic: <b>Disability</b>		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to disability?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?

Protected Characteristic: <b>Gender reassignment</b>		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to gender reassignment?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?

Protected Characteristic: **Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')**

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership?

Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.

What further action or mitigation is required?

--

--

--

Protected Characteristic: **Pregnancy and maternity**

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity?

Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.

What further action or mitigation is required?

--

--

--

Protected Characteristic: **Race**

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to race?

Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.

What further action or mitigation is required?

--

--

--

Protected Characteristic: **Religion or belief**

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to religion or belief?

Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.

What further action or mitigation is required?

--

--

--

Protected Characteristic: **Sex**

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sex?

Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.

What further action or mitigation is required?

--

--

--

Protected Characteristic: **Sexual orientation**

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sexual orientation?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?

**Section Three: Conclusion and Review**

**Summary**

Please provide a brief summary of your findings; a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts across the protected characteristics, links to the involvement of different groups and/or public consultation, mitigations and conclusions made.

--

Will this promote positive relationships between different communities? If so how?

--

**Action Plan**

Action	Responsibility	Timescales for implementation	In which plan will the action appear?

**Review and connected assessments**

Are there any additional or connected equality impact assessments that need to be undertaken? (If yes, provide details)

--

When will this assessment be reviewed? Please also insert this date at the front of the template	
---	--

### Sign Off

Lead officer sign off:	Date:
Equality representative sign off (where required):	Date:

### Please ensure:

- The findings of this EIA are carefully considered and used to inform any related decisions and policy development
- A summary of findings is included within the body of any relevant reports or decision-making records
- The EIA is attached to reports or relevant decision-making records and the report Implications Appendix 1 is noted that an EIA has been undertaken

Please retain a copy for review and update where necessary, and forward a copy to [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)