

Equality Impact Assessment

EIA of

Reunification Support Service (RSS), Looked After Children

Did you use the EIA Screening Tool? (Delete as applicable)

No

1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Is this a:

Other: A new service or function launched in Oct 2022

Summarise the strategy, policy, service(s), or function(s) being assessed. Describe current status followed by any changes that stakeholders would experience.

The service to be assessed is called the Reunification Support Service, which was launched in late October 2022. An EIA is required to identify and mitigate potential equality impacts for key stakeholder groups:

- Look After Children (ALL)
- Families of Looked After Children
- Foster Carers

Reunification is when a looked after child or young person (referred to as a child in this document) returns home to live within their birth family network following a period of being in the care of the local authority. Returning home is the most common outcome for children in care; the Department for Education state that between 2018 and 2022, 20% of children who cease to be looked after, return to their parents or other persons with parental responsibility. Reunification is most successful when it is well planned, based on robust assessment of need and where there are risks identified. When appropriately planned, children return to the care of their families at a pace that accords with their needs with relevant services identified to support the family for as long as they are needed.

The overall aims of

Reunification Support Service (RSS) are to:

Equality Impact Assessment

2. Service Users / Residents

Equality Impact Assessment

Impacts of all protected characteristics: Age, disability, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, Marriage/Civil partnerships

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

The Reunification service is open to all Surrey County Council Looked After Children. Any social protected characteristics and all requests will be assessed with the same set of criteria.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

Provision of the service depends on the suitability of the children returning to their parents and the readiness of their parents to care for the children. Managers and social workers will consider all children in supervision discussions who may be eligible for the service to ensure there is equitable consideration of the circumstances of all Looked After Children.

Any additional needs of the child or young person will be considered and addressed during the planning process to make sure their needs are met and these will not prevent reunification.

3. Staff

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

There are no impacts on the staff group.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

Not applicable.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

Not applicable.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

Identify _____ and explain why, together with evidence.

No.

4. Recommendation

Based on your assessment, please indicate which course of action you are recommending to decision makers. You should explain your recommendation below.

Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required. This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken.

Outcome Two: Adjust the policy/service/function 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 Three: Continue the policy/service/function 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:

Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact

Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact.

Outcome Four: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the

[Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).

Equality Impact Assessment

5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

Insert your action plan here, based on the mitigations recommended.

Involve you Assessment Team in monitoring progress against the actions above.

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
1	17-NOV-2022	Managers will use monthly RSS performance review meetings to review handling of service requests, including how additional needs have been considered.	Jason Project manager	N/A	Recurring task monthly during review meeting	Open
2						

6a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	Reviewed and approved version by Assistant Director, Service manager and Reunification manager	Jason Yip	17/11/2022
2	Reviewed and approved by Assistant Director, Service manager and Reunification manager for the year 2023/2024	Jason Yip	10/07/2023
3	Reviewed and approved by Chief of Staff	Rebecca Neate	25/10/2023

The above provides historical data about each update made to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Equality Impact Assessment

Please include the name of the author, date and notes about changes made so that you can refer to what changes have been made throughout this iterative process.

For further information, please see the EIA Guidance document on version control.

Equality Impact Assessment

6b. Approval

Secure approval from the appropriate level of management based on nature of issue and scale of change being assessed.

Approved by	Date approved
Assistant Director	31/08/2023
Executive Director	25/10/2023
Cabinet Member	15/12/2023
Directorate Equality Group	

Publish:

Please send approved EIAs to: **INSERT SHARED EMAIL ACCOUNT ADDRESS**

EIA author:

6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Team Role

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, on CD or in another language please contact us on:

Tel: 03456 009 009

Textphone (via Text Relay): 18001 03456 009 009

SMS: 07860 053 465

Email: contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk