

## BUDGET SETTING 2024-25 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

<b>Title of EIA</b>		<b>Residential Childrens Homes Strategy</b>
<b>EIA Author</b>	Name	<b>Tim Green</b>
	Position	<b>Operational lead for Residential.</b>
	Date of completion	<b>26.11.23 Updated 08.02.24</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	Name	<b>Angela Whitrick</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Name	<b>Cllr Seaman</b>
	Portfolio	<b>Lead Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</b>

PLEASE REFER TO [EIA GUIDANCE](#) FOR ADVICE ON COMPLETING THIS FORM

### SECTION 1 – Context & Background

#### 1.1 Please tick one of the following options:

This EIA is being carried out on:

- New policy / strategy
- New service
- Review of policy / strategy
- Review of service
- Commissioning
- Other project (*please give details*)

#### 1.2 In summary, what is the background to this EIA?

In line with our sufficiency duty, it has been identified that Coventry is in need of additional residential provision for both disabled, looked after children and those looked after children who have been identified as having emotional behavioural difficulties. It is hoped that this will reduce the number of children and young people that are placed out of city due to a lack of available provision within the city. This will mean less disruption to the child/young person in terms of access to education, health and other services and enable them to be close to family, friends and their local community. There are also significant financial benefits to be made by using internal placements as opposed to external ones.

### SECTION 2 – Consideration of Impact

*Refer to guidance note for more detailed advice on completing this section.*

In order to ensure that we do not discriminate in the way our activities are designed, developed and delivered, we must look at our duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conflict that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

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- Advance equality of opportunity between two persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

### 2.1 Baseline data and information

The additional homes for looked after children with disabilities will be purpose built and therefore will allow the children to experience living in a fully accessible environment. The environment will enable them rather than disable them, giving them maximum independence. Because the home will be accessible, it will give the children living there more opportunities to have similar experiences to their non-disabled peers.

Establishing new homes for disabled children in a community environment will allow the children to become part of that community and will allow the community to have positive interactions with disabled children and young people which will enable them to make a positive contribution. This will help to dispel any myths or prejudices about disabled people.

The four homes for looked after children who have been identified as having emotional, behavioural difficulties, will provide for up to 12 children, across the homes, the opportunity to live as a 'family' within a community location as their non Looked After peers do. This can again give them the opportunity to make a positive contribution to their community and help to integrate them with their peers. Two of the homes, will only care for up to two children, reflecting higher levels of needs and that for some children, living with their peers can be difficult.

Children who are looked after by their very nature are disadvantaged. Being able to stay within the city they and their family come from eliminates a further disadvantage. Being placed out of Coventry city would mean living in potentially an unfamiliar environment away from important family members and friends. Evidence tells us that being placed at distance from family, can cause not only emotional distress for both the child and their family but can also become a barrier to family time.

The Government's Children's Social Care Market Study report, 22/3/22 says;

*First, and most importantly, it is clear that the placements market, particularly in England and Wales, is failing to provide sufficient supply of the right type so that looked-after children can consistently access placements that properly meet their needs, when and where they require them. This means that some children are being placed in settings that are not appropriate for their own circumstances, for instance where they are:*

- *far from where they would call 'home' without a clear child protection reason for this, thereby separated from positive friend and family networks: 37% of children in England in residential placements are placed at least 20 miles from their home base*

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, May 2022, quoted care experienced young people as follows;

*"It is scary going to new places and moving away. Its new schools and new faces so kids often run away to something familiar."*

*"I think people assume that children are getting their basic needs, it's enough. Like you know they've got food and shelter... OK, they're better off than where they used to be, and you as a child you do have that mindset you're like, oh, I'm better than where I used to be, so it's OK, but those basic needs aren't necessarily enough."*

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All of the proposed new homes will help to address these issues.

The majority of looked after children have additional needs which require interventions from support services such as education, health and social care. This can be particularly prevalent amongst disabled children who often need a large amount of additional support services. Moving children out of city can often mean that there is a hiatus in them receiving crucial support whilst new services are found.

A significant number of looked after children have autism spectrum disorder and nearly all have attachment issues. Both conditions mean that any change in those caring for them will have a significant impact on those looked after children. Having continuity of care and support is of the upmost importance and this would be possible if children are placed within the city.

Coventry is a very ethnically and culturally diverse city which has well established community groups, places of worship and services which meet ethnic and cultural needs within the city. Placing children with ethnic and cultural needs in placements which are not as well served as Coventry with provisions that address these needs, put them at a disadvantage.

In addition, for those children that remain in our care until they transition to adulthood, will have established support networks and meaningful relationships with carers who live close by, providing them with 'Staying Close' opportunities.

### 2.2 On the basis of evidence, complete the table below to show what the potential impact is for each of the protected groups.

- Positive impact (P),
- Negative impact (N)
- Both positive and negative impacts (PN)
- No impact (NI)
- Unknown impact (UI)

Protected Characteristic	Impact type P, N, PN, NI, UI	Nature of impact and any mitigations required
Age 0-18	<b>P</b>	Looked after children aged 10 –18, who have been identified as having emotional, behavioural difficulties, will be able to live in Coventry near to their families, friends and communities and received continuity of care and services.
Age 19-64	<b>P</b>	Through the work of the Staying Close Project, care leavers will receive continuity of care and support from the same carers who looked after them until the age of 18. This supports a better transition into adult services. Additional jobs will be created within the city, recruiting carers that reflect the diversity of the children we care for and in the communities they live in.
Age 65+	<b>NI</b>	

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Disability	<b>P</b>	Looked after disabled children will have the opportunity to reside in Coventry close to family, friends, communities and support services. This ensures a continuity of care and support.
Gender reassignment	<b>P</b>	Those who wish to go through, or are going through gender reassignment, will be fully supported to do so. Remaining in Coventry city may reduce any disruption to services that can support with gender reassignment.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<b>NI</b>	
Pregnancy and maternity	<b>NI</b>	
Race (Including: colour, nationality, citizenship ethnic or national origins)	<b>P</b>	Children from ethnically, racially and culturally diverse backgrounds will be able to stay connected to their families, friends and communities and will be able to continue to access places of worship, groups and support services.
Religion and belief	<b>P</b>	Children are supported to practice the religion of their choice if they wish to do so. Carers support children to explore belief systems and understand the advantages and disadvantages to these.
Sex	<b>P</b>	Homes are of mixed gender and children will be supported in relation to gender identity.
Sexual orientation	<b>P</b>	Carers support children to explore their sexual orientation if they wish to do so and they are supported in whatever choices they make in this respect.

### 2.3 Will there be any potential impacts in relation to health and/or digital inequalities?

Many looked after children have suffered poverty, neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence and substance misuse. Nearly all looked after children have attachment difficulties. Due to these issues, looked after children often have developmental delay, ADHD, ASD, ODD, poor mental and emotional wellbeing, low self-esteem and can be prone to self-harm. Some looked after children self-medicate through the use of alcohol and drugs and a large number of them smoke and vape.

Children who live in poverty can suffer malnutrition and poor dental hygiene. Those who suffer neglect can miss crucial childhood immunisations, malnutrition, poor dental hygiene, poor personal hygiene, recurrent headlice, recurrent infections, missed developmental and physical health checks. Children who suffer physical abuse can have unhealed or badly healed bone fractures and breaks, and psychological problems such as PTSD. Children who suffer sexual abuse can suffer enuresis and encopresis as well as psychological issues. Children who have suffered emotional abuse and have witnessed domestic violence and parental substance misuse will often have psychological issues and behavioural problems. All exposure to toxic stress in babies and children causes brain development to be affected negatively.

Disabled looked after children can experience all of the above in addition to underlying medical and neurological developmental conditions.

The children our provisions are intended for will most likely come from areas of deprivation within the city and poor socio-economic households, as we know from research that the numbers of looked after children is disproportionately high from deprived areas and that these factors do contribute towards family breakdowns. Equally, the numbers of disabled children from these areas and backgrounds are also disproportionately high. Our

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proposed services will impact these children and their families positively. They will be able to live safely in near proximity to their families, friends and communities. This will enable continuity of services, regular family time, no disruption to education, CAMHS, health, voluntary and short breaks interventions. Being placed locally may also allow for additional interventions, such as, family therapy, to take place. It would also support the work of the reunification team, Life long Links and the Staying Close project.

### Digital

There is no assumption made about children’s access to digital skills and devices. Where appropriate children are given a phone and a monthly top up allowance. We will tutor them in IT skills if needed and we will also complete online safety work with them. All the homes have Wi-Fi access and we will ensure that all children have access to a laptop

### 5.0 Will there be any potential impacts on Council staff from protected groups?

Although, the home for disabled children may be fully accessible, the other homes may not be suitable for wheelchair users.

Additional posts/jobs will be created, recruitment will seek to appoint staff from across the communities we work with and reflect key priorities of the Council in relation to:

1. Increasing the economic prosperity of the city and region
2. Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities

### 6.0 How will you monitor and evaluate the effect of this work?

Feedback from children, young people, their families and the professional networks that support them.

- Our work is extensively scrutinised and monitored in the following ways:
- Regulation 44 visits once a month by an independent person who produces a Regulation 44 report which is then sent to Ofsted.
- Ofsted inspections, at least once a year that are unannounced. We are inspected and judged against the SCIFF and the Children’s Homes Quality Standards.
- Internal QA by Children’s commissioning
- Internal QA by Managers – Monthly
- Oversight of practice and performance by the Operational Lead for Residential, Strategic Lead for looked after children (corporate parenting) who is also the Responsible Individual to the children’s homes.
- Via Corporate Parenting Board and as appropriate Scrutiny Board 2.

<b>6.1</b>	<b>Action Planning</b>	
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Planned Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
n/a		

### 7.0 Completion Statement

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**As the appropriate Head of Service for this area, I confirm that the potential equality impact is as follows:**

- No impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- Positive impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- Negative impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- Both positive and negative impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- The potential impact of this proposal on protected groups is not yet known

### 8.0 Approval

<b>Signed: Head of Service:</b>  	<b>Date: 26.11.23 / 08.02.24</b>
<b>Name of Director:</b> <b>Neil MacDonal</b>	<b>Date sent to Director: 26.11.23 / 08.02.24</b>
<b>Name of Lead Elected Member:</b> <b>Cllr Seaman.</b>	<b>Date sent to Councillor: 26.11.23 / 08.02.24</b>