

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA445127341

Submitted: 17 August 2022 17:37 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Adoption Placements Services Agreement

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: To enter into a formalised agreement, spanning 3 years, with seven other local authority adoption agencies, forming the Adopt East Regional Adoption Alliance. The Adopt East Adoptive Placements Services Agreement aims to create one pool of children and adopters for all partner local authorities within Adopt East. This will create a larger pool of adopters to promote more choice and timely matching for children who need adoption. It is expected that a larger matching pool will be more efficient in promoting sufficiency, particularly for the harder to place children

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: It is expected that a larger matching pool will be more efficient in promoting sufficiency, particularly for the harder to place children. In addition prospective adoptive families living in Essex will have opportunity to be matched, more speedily, with a wider pool of children.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Helen Lincoln (Children, Families and Education)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Beverley Egan (Children's Services and Early Years)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: Through the Adopt East Governance Board

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: No

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Outcomes for vulnerable children

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: None

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Sex

Nature of impact: None

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Children who require adoption are vulnerable, and often have additional needs and/or protected characteristics i.e, disabled children, or those with BAME heritage sometime wait longer to be placed for adoption than white British, or non-disabled children. This agreement enables children waiting to be adopted to be considered and potentially matched with a wider, more diverse pool of adoptive families. The earlier children are placed the greater their opportunity to develop stable relationships and fulfil their potential.

Children are already frequently matched with families approved by other authorities, and a fee is exchanged. The agreement removes the fee, which can sometimes be perceived as a barrier, to inter-agency matching.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts: No negative impacts are foreseen. This agreement formalises existing practice and removes the perceived barrier of the inter-agency fee; thus fulfilling the statutory requirements of a Regional Adoption Agency.

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Working families

Nature of impact: None

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: None

Harlow

Nature of impact: None

Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: None

Harwich

Nature of impact: None

Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: None

Canvey Island

Nature of impact: None

Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: None

Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: N/A

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts: N/A

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: None

Looked after children

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Veterans

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: None

People on low income

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: All children placed for adoption are looked after children so this policy will have a direct positive impact.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts: None foreseen

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: None

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: None

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: None

People living in urban or over-populated areas

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: N/A

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts: N/A

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Prospective adopters approved to adopt by ECC Adoption Agency will have an increased opportunity to be well matched with a child/ren

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts: None foreseen

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to the built environment / energy?: No

Does your decision / policy involve designing service provision and procurement to minimise freight and staff travel and enable use of active and public transport options?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to waste?: No

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 17/08/2022

Name of person completing the ECIA: Sarah Carter

Email address of person completing the ECIA: Sarah.Carter@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Children, Families and Education

Your service area: Placements

Your team: Adoption

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: sarah.carter@essex.gov.uk