

Equality Impact Assessment

Context

1. under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Essex County Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - gender and sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. The EqIA will be published at:
<http://cmis.essexcc.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Home.aspx>
8. All **Cabinet Member Actions, Chief Officer Actions, Key Decisions** and **Cabinet Reports must be** accompanied by an EqIA.
9. For further information, refer to the EqIA guidance for staff.
10. For advice, contact:
Shammi Jalota shammi.jalota@essex.gov.uk
Head of Equality and Diversity
Corporate Law & Assurance
Tel 0330 134592 or 07740 901114



Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Commissioning Delivery

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: Simon Harniess, Head of Commissioning for Vulnerable People

Title of policy or decision: HRS Post 16 Accommodation Support re-commissioning & tender

Officer completing the EqlA: Sally Hughes Tel: 03330136313 Email: sally.hughes@essex.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 04/01/2016

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? This will support the decision to recommission the Housing Related Support (HRS) Post 16 accommodation service during 2016.
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): ECC intends to recommission the HRS Post 16 accommodation support service in 2016 to ensure that the most appropriate support services are available for young people in need of this type of support.</p> <p>The key groups of young people are vulnerable teenage parents up to 19yrs; young people aged 16-17 year olds at risk of homelessness; care leavers 18 - 21 (up to 25 year olds in special circumstances).</p> <p>These young people are often the very vulnerable and have experienced poor parenting and/or may have been in local authority care for some of their lives. Those young people whose experiences mean that they find it difficult to remain within their own family home and young teenage parents who may have additional needs of their own which may mean that they struggle to effectively parent their own children who therefore may be known to childrens social care.</p> <p>Current provision is not meeting the needs of the right young people with many of the places being taken up by older young people who may not be as complex or disadvantaged as these key groups.</p> <p>The needs of young people in these groups have become more complex which takes a different set of skills and experiences to manage them effectively, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health issues• Substance Misuse• Challenging behaviours (including threats of violence to family members)• Involved with the criminal justice system• Having been in the care system• Vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)



- Being more vulnerable to being bullied, coerced into negative behaviours and violence from peers
- Being able to easily access employment, training or education opportunities
- Ability to financially sustain accommodation

We understand that the best place for most young people is within the family home and this is the aspiration for Essex, however some young people will need support and therefore we need to ensure that the new service is able to manage these cohorts of young people.

By re-commissioning this service ECC will ensure the right young people in accommodation will receive the right support they need to gain the skills that enable them to be emotionally and physically healthy, manage their money, continue to access education, training or employment and to become independent and resilient.

Access to accommodation and support is currently through district panels which has forced delays in decision making for young people or denied accommodation because young people's needs may be too complex and difficult to manage.

The re-commissioning will also secure between 800k - 1 million pounds savings for ECC; commissioners and family operations are confident that the future service model will deliver the necessary outcomes for young people by building their resilience and independent living.

The current provision has been in place since 2011 with 1 year extension until April 2016, however a further extension has been requested to allow for recommissioning; the new service will be in place from 30th November 2016.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?

By re-commissioning we can ensure the new service outcomes and key performance indicators will include:

- Support the wider system to prevent young people presenting as homeless
- Young people remain in a family environment where possible
- Prevent homelessness in the short and long term (young people should stay in alternative accommodation for the least length of time)
- Young people feel safe
- Young people have good or improving emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Young people improve their resilience and independence
- Direct and support young people to re-engage and maintain their education up to the age of 18 years of age
- Direct young people to access training and employment opportunities
- Young people are able to keep themselves safe and make good choices
- Young people have positive and supportive family/friendship networks that are maintained and/or developed
- Budget management: supporting young people to maximise their income, improve budgeting and reduce debt ensuring they have adequate life skills to successfully live independently
- Support young people to access further specialist provision (e.g. substance misuse support or Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) service) to reduce substance misuse or improve their emotional wellbeing and mental health



	<p>The new service will target the provision at the young people who need the support most. It will be flexible to the changing needs and will, where possible, follow the young people if they move accommodation to ensure continuity of support and where this is not able to happen a transition plan and handover will be put into practice.</p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users • employees • the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? <p>Young people in the 3 key groups will receive the support that will meet their needs to build their independence and resilience. It will be provided in a flexible way meaning that they will have more control of it.</p> <p>Workers will be experienced and have a range of skills to best support young people and in some cases recognise when a referral needs to be made to specialist services.</p> <p>It will also be available 24 hours a day including a helpline.</p> <p>Employee's working in Family Solutions, Youth Offending Services and Divisional Behavioural Intervention Team (D-Bit) teams will welcome the change in provision as a service with easier access routes and quicker decision making processes will ensure that the young people they work with will have somewhere safe to live .</p> <p>The wider community including district councils and incumbent providers will welcome the majority of the changes to provision but are concerned about the changes in age range. They will also be worried about the potential welfare reforms, changes to benefits and the impact on overall cost of delivery to this group of young people.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p>The Commissioning of the HRS Post 16 Accommodation Support services will allow them to become compliant with ECC procurement regulations and also provide the opportunity to engage with contract management to support the implementation and ensure ongoing delivery meets the requirements set out in the specification.</p> <p>The new service will also need to build relationships with district councils, family and adult operations and wider partnership organisations to ensure that the needs of young people are managed effectively.</p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</p> <p>Yes in that the budget is being reduced by up to £1m, however the service will be more targeted and focused on the cohorts and age groups described in the specification. The service is also being developed with the presumption that the number of care leavers will be reducing in coming years based on the Essex children in care number having reduced over the last 2 years.</p>



2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>The HRS Post 16 Accommodation Support service will contribute to the outcomes in four of the 2014 - 2018 Commissioning Strategies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in Essex enjoy good health and wellbeing • People have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and life-long learning • People in Essex can live independently and exercise choice and control over their lives • People in Essex live in safe communities and are protected from harm
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Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified?								
	Quadrant	Teenage Parents			YP at Risk			Care Leavers	
		16-17	18-21	22-25	16-17	18-21	22-25	16-17	18-21
	Mid								
	Braintree	7	27	5	1	7	3	6	5
	Chelmsford	3	8	3	3	4	2	1	9
	Maldon	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	1
	North								
	Colchester	3	11	0	10	44	2	0	9
	Tendring	4	6	1	1	3	0	0	0
	South								
	Basildon	5	21	0	4	26	3	0	6
	Brentwood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Castle Point	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	1
	Rochford	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
	West								
	Epping	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
	Harlow	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
	Uttlesford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL	24	82	12	21	87	11	7	38
	The above data shows the number of young people in accommodation and receiving support in October 2015. The data provides the evidence that the main age groups accessing HRS Post 16 Accommodation Support are older than what the existing contract states therefore with a much tighter specification alongside effective contract management in place will mean that the right young people will be able to be supported.								
	District	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 17/18		
	Braintree	2	1	5	2	1	2		
	Chelmsford	3	3	1	1	1	2		
	Maldon	1	0	2	1	0	0		
	Colchester	8	3	5	5	3	2		
	Tendring	6	4	2	6	5	3		
	Basildon	4	7	16	3	3	6		

¹ Data sources within EEC. Refer to Essex Insight:
<http://www.essexinsight.org.uk/mainmenu.aspx?cookieCheck=true>
 with links to JSNA and 2011 Census.



	<p>Castle Point 0 1 2 1 0 2</p> <p>Rochford 0 1 0 1 0 0</p> <p>Brentwood 0 0 3 0 0 1</p> <p>Epping 2 1 0 2 1 2</p> <p>Harlow 5 2 3 1 1 0</p> <p>Uttlesford 0 0 1 1 0 0</p> <p>The above table shows the predicted numbers of care leavers on a quarterly and district level which support future planning for provision across each district e.g. Colchester has the highest number of care leavers so the future providers need to consider how support is configured and what the skills mix of the teams look like in north Essex.</p>
3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p>Yes. Consultation and engagement has taken place with district councils who welcome the opportunity to change the provision as they have seen the complexity of young people increase over the last 2 years. They would like provision in place that can support young people in a way that will prevent young people from being evicted for antisocial behaviour.</p> <p>The social work teams have completed a number of surveys and case audit tools for the project team to consider the future model. They need to have one access route in place as managing 12 districts has been problematic in decision making and the time it takes to go through the process.</p> <p>Young people have been engaged through focus groups and 1 -1 interviews to tell us what they want from support in the future. They would like support workers to be more experienced and able to better manage young people with complex issues such as substance misuse and mental health problems.</p>
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p> <p>Have engaged and plan to continue to consult and engage with district councils, providers and service users to support the development and implementation of the HRS Post 16 Accommodation Support provision.</p>



Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Adverse: No longer prioritising 18 year olds homeless young people unless they are Care Leavers aged 18 years old	H
Disability	Positive	L
Gender	Positive	L
Gender reassignment	Neutral: We don't know if any of the young people being supported are gender reassigned as we don't appear to capture this information, however, we are supporting a particular cohort of young people and if a person meets that criteria we expect them to be supported	L
Marriage/civil partnership	Neutral: Couples have not and will not be supported by this service	L
Pregnancy/maternity	Positive: We provide support to vulnerable teenage parents	L
Race	Positive	L
Religion/belief	Positive	L
Sexual orientation	Neutral: We don't know the sexual orientation of the young people being supported as we don't appear to capture this information, however, we are supporting a particular cohort of young people and if a person meets that criteria we expect them to be supported	L
Cross-cutting themes		
Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)



Socio-economic	<p>Provision will support young people to remain in stable accommodation and access or continue to access education, training or employment that will help them become independent, resilient and economically viable in the future.</p> <p>The new provision may be impacted on by the impending new welfare changes to benefits. This may affect decisions made by providers and district councils who own property to change who they provide accommodation to if housing benefit is removed for young people, meaning that their accommodation costs are not fully covered.</p>	M
Environmental, eg housing, transport links/rural isolation	<p>Provision will support young people to access stable accommodation in an area that they know and in a place where other young people live so they can be supported to build positive relationships with their peers.</p>	L



Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If ' YES ', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.



Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.
New legislation - potential welfare benefit changes will make providing accommodation for young people not cost effective.	ECC will continue to work with district councils and HRS Post 16 Accommodation Support to understand the impact of the welfare changes if and as they come into action.	Potential changes come into action in 2017 but the discussions have begun and will continue through 2016.
Age - Due to ECC savings, the new service (s) will not be funded for young people up to the age of 18 unless they are leaving care	ECC is working with District Councils and providers to understand the impact. ECC HRS floating support is currently being re-commissioned and there is an opportunity to use some of the support dedicated for young people no longer being supported through the new HRS accommodation support services (e.g. 18+ to help support move-on)	Discussions will continue with District Councils and providers. The new floating support contract is due to start 1 st April 2017.
Unavailable data on protected characteristics	The new service will be expected to record data on the protected characteristics and satisfy ECC that no discrimination has taken place	1 st October 2016 when the new service starts



Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Simon Harniess

Date: 28/02/16

Signature of person completing the EqlA: Sally Hughes

Date: 28/02/16

Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqlA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqlA for your records. If this EqlA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.

