

## Residential Children's Homes Development in Surrey

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

Yes (please attach upon submission) / ~~No~~

### 1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Is this a:

- Change to an existing strategy or policy

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

All local authorities have a statutory duty to provide care and accommodation for children looked after in the local area (the 'sufficiency duty'). Surrey County Council (SCC) operate nine in-house children's homes in Surrey (as of November 2022). In addition, a number of independent children's homes providers operate children's homes in the county. Overall, sufficiency of residential children's home placements remains low in Surrey with the majority of children placed outside of the county. This is in the context of national challenges for local authorities to secure residential children's home placements. To address sufficiency and increase capacity in Surrey, SCC plan to develop new children's homes. Property will be developed in-house with care to be delivered in-house and/or via strategic partnerships with trusted providers. In addition, SCC proposes to explore block contracts with high-quality external providers of children's homes in Surrey, to secure more of the capacity that is in county for Surrey's looked after children.

Key stakeholders include:

- children looked after and their families and peers;
- residential staff, social workers, corporate parenting and children's services staff;
- professionals from health, education and third sector organisations working with children looked after;
- professionals from SCC and local Districts & Boroughs involved in the property planning for new children's homes;
- professionals from SCC and local Districts & Boroughs involved in the operational planning for additional children's homes;
- select committee and cabinet members of SCC and Surrey's 11 local District and Boroughs;
- local communities in Surrey;
- independent providers of residential children's homes in Surrey.

How does your service proposal support the outcomes in [the Community Vision for Surrey 2030](#)?

# Equality Impact Assessment

The children's homes development programme supports the ambitions for 'people' as set out in the Community Vision 2030, namely:

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident.
- Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life.
- Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing.
- Everyone gets the health and social care support and information they need at the right time and place.
- Communities are welcoming and supportive, especially of those most in need, and people feel able to contribute to community life.

It also directly addresses a number of ambitions for 'place', in particular that:

- Everyone has a place they can call home, with appropriate housing for all.
- Businesses in Surrey thrive.
- Well-connected communities, with effective infrastructure, that grow sustainably.

## **Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make an impact?**

- County-wide:
  - Elmbridge
  - Epsom and Ewell
  - Guildford
  - Mole Valley
  - Reigate and Banstead
  - Runnymede
  - Spelthorne
  - Surrey Heath
  - Tandridge
  - Waverley
  - Woking

**Assessment team** – A key principle for completing impact assessments is that they should not be done in isolation. Consultation with affected groups and stakeholders needs to be built in from the start, to enrich the assessment and develop relevant mitigation.

## **Detail here who you have involved with completing this EIA:**

Consultation on the sufficiency needs and on residential development has included the following key stakeholders at various stages of the planning:

- Corporate Parenting Commissioning Team
- Corporate Parenting – Children's Resources
- Gateway to Resources – Allocations
- Gateway to Resources – Resource Review
- Land and Property Team
- Social Work Teams including Children with Disabilities
- SEND Commissioning Team

# Equality Impact Assessment

- User Voice & Participation Team - sought feedback from young people in the ATLAS Participation Group regarding the development of a new children's home with an autism specialism and we have reviewed ongoing feedback and insight collated by the UVP Team in Surrey linked to children's homes.
- Provider questionnaire and regular market engagement with independent providers of residential children's homes

## 2. Service Users / Residents

### Who may be affected by this activity?

There are 9 protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) to consider in your proposal. These are:

1. Age including younger and older people
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
6. Religion or belief including lack of belief
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Marriage/civil partnerships

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: AGE

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

The development of residential children's homes will impact on Surrey's children looked after aged 0 - 17. Of Surrey's children in residential children's homes 72% are aged 14+, 23% are aged 10-13 and 4% are aged 8 – 9 (as of October 2022).

The development of additional residential children's homes in Surrey is expected to have a positive impact on children looked after in these age-groups, by enabling a higher proportion of children to remain living in Surrey where they can better maintain relationships with family, friends and communities as appropriate, continue in their education placements and access health-care provision and other support services in-county.

There is also a potential positive impact for young people once they reach 18. Having been placed in county allows for smoother transitions to adulthood and leaving care support services as well as housing support in the communities and neighbourhoods that young people are familiar with and have established links in.

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

A small proportion of children looked after will be placed outside Surrey intentionally where this is in their best interest, for example to break links where these are causing harm and to keep children safe. Children and young people who are placed outside Surrey will not benefit directly from additional provision in county for the period of time that they remain out of the local area. A continued focus on quality assurance and reviewing placements will be required to ensure that children and young people placed outside of Surrey are in the best placement to meet their needs and that wrap-around support services are provided where children are placed.

The positive impact for children looked after in residential placements in Surrey will be enhanced by ensuring that there is a structured approach to understanding identified needs and that new provision is developed to meet these needs - including specific age-groups.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

### **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?**

As well as developing residential provision, there is a focus on increasing sufficiency of foster placements in Surrey. SCC are committed to enabling children looked after to live in a family environment as a first choice for all children looked after, particularly for younger children. This includes a focus on enabling children to move from residential placements to foster placements where this is the right choice for the child. The development of additional residential provision in Surrey will enable smoother transitions for children moving from residential children's homes to foster care or other placement types in-county.

# Equality Impact Assessment

Established in-house children's homes are registered for ages 11 - 17. New residential children's homes are likely to reflect these age-groups, with precise age-ranges for each new home to be guided by evidence from our children looked after data and identified needs.

SCC are also working to identify children looked after placed out of county where a move back to Surrey is in their best interest. The development of additional children's homes will support this work in the medium to long term.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: DISABILITY

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

A significant proportion of children looked after placed in residential children's home placements have a disability recorded (39% as of October 2022). Of these children 76% are allocated social workers from the children with disabilities social work teams, the remainder have disabilities recorded but are under the care of other social work teams. Of these children, the predominant needs are: learning disabilities (76%), communication needs (60%), autism (47%) and behavioural needs (47%) as of October 2022. In addition, 73% have an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Approximately 50% of children with disabilities placed in residential children's homes are in county, however for children placed in residential schools only 18% are placed in county (as of October 2022).

The development of additional children's homes in Surrey is expected to have a positive impact on children looked after with disabilities by providing a wider choice of placements in the local area, closer to family, friends and communities and where children are able to access education, health and support services in-county.

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

SCC will maximise the positive impact for children looked after with disabilities by ensuring that new provision is planned carefully to meet existing and emerging needs, that staff receive specialist high quality training to meet the children's care needs and providers and services work closely together to ensure the best possible outcomes for children.

There will also be a focus on ensuring that the physical buildings are designed, built and refurbished to meet the needs of the children who will be placed. In addition the locations will be considered alongside the specialisms of the homes to reflect education and healthcare services in the local area.

Should children or young people experience discrimination, support will be provided by residential children's homes staff and other professionals to ensure that any incidents are appropriately responded to, and that the young person is supported emotionally and practically.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

SCC are also focussed on increasing foster care placements for children with disabilities and enhanced foster care placements. In addition, short breaks services for Surrey's children looked after were re-commissioned in October 2022. These services will further improve the availability and choice of placements and support services to meet the needs of children with disabilities in Surrey.

# Equality Impact Assessment

SCC are working to increase the provision of school places for children with disabilities and with additional educational needs. This will further improve provision for children and young people to be able to access both care placements and education placements in-county.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

Although additional residential children's homes in Surrey will have a positive impact on children looked after with disabilities, the capacity will likely still not be sufficiency for all children with disabilities to be placed in county. A continued focus on sufficiency by increasing both in-house and external/independent provision will contribute to achieving the aim for all children to have the choice to live in Surrey.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: PREGNANCY & MATERNITY

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

The residential development plans are not currently focussed on provision for older children looked after who are pregnant or parents, and the development of additional children's homes is not expected to have a negative impact on looked after young people who are pregnant or parents.

Time-limited placements in residential parenting assessment units are at times agreed in court or requested by social work teams prior to court proceedings and to inform care planning. These placements tend to be for parents with very young children, often in the first weeks or months of life. The capital development plans currently do not include the development of this type of provision.

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

If a young person placed in a new residential children's home does become pregnant, SCC would ensure that the individual circumstances and needs of the mother and baby are prioritised and ensure that they are in a placement that ideally suits their care needs.

SCC work closely with providers of independent (external) children's homes and residential parenting assessment units to ensure that the needs of the children looked after, and their children or unborn children are cared for to the highest standards.

If a young person experiences discrimination, they will be supported by residential children's homes staff and other professionals to ensure that any incidents are appropriately responded to, and that the young person supported emotionally and practically.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

### **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?**

Alongside work on residential sufficiency, SCC are focussed on increasing sufficiency of fostering placements including specialist parent and child placements. SCC also commission placements from Independent Fostering Agencies with specialist parent and child foster carers. These placements may be commissioned via the SouthCentral framework or directly by SCC.

### **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

There may be instances where a young person is required to move placement as a result of the current residential placement not being suitable for a parent and child to be placed in. SCC would ensure that the individual circumstances and needs of the mother and baby are prioritised and ensure that they are in a placement that ideally suits their care needs.

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: RACE INCLUDING ETHNIC OR NATIONAL ORIGINS, COLOUR OR NATIONALITY

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

Of Surrey's overall children looked after population, 67.61% are White British, 7.78% Any Other Asian Background, 5.35% Black African, 3.99% Any Other White Background, 3.21% Any Other Mixed Background, 2.33% Any Other Ethnic Group, 1.85% White and Black Caribbean, 1.65% White and Black Africa, 1.56% Any Other Black Background, 0.88% Any Other Black Background, 0.68% Gypsy/Roma, 0.58% Pakistani, with a number of other ethnic groups each making up less than 0.5% of the population (as of October 2022).

For children in residential children's homes the demographics are as follows: 79.05% White British, 4.76% Any other White Background, 2.86% Any Other Mixed Background, 2.86% Any Other Asian Background, 1.90% White and Black Caribbean, 1.90% Black-African, 1.90% Any Other Black Background, 0.95% White and Black African, 0.95% White and Asian, 0.95% Pakistani (as of October 2022).

All residential children's homes will be developed to meet each child's needs and promote their welfare, taking into account the child's race, ethnicity, colour and nationality. As stipulated in the Children's Homes Quality Standards (2015), children's home staff should take every step to make sure that individual children and young people are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation or bullying from their peers by virtue of their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability or for any other reason.

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

Whilst SCC do not foresee negative impact for children resulting from new homes being developed, SCC recognise that a continued commitment and focus on ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is paramount across the workforce and communities including in the children's homes. Tackling inequality so no-one is left behind is SCC's guiding principle, ensuring that all children feel valued and that their race, colour and nationality are celebrated.

SCC must ensure that any potential impact for children looked after who may not be placed with staff or peers of their own ethnic group, colour or nationality are recognised, and that children are supported to positively identify with their ethnic and cultural background.

Children's home residential staff will also ensure that they are familiar with the cultural and religious services on offer for each child, and support them to access and encourage them to participate in activities in the community and wider as appropriate.

If a child or young person experiences discrimination, they will be supported by residential children's homes staff and other professionals to ensure that any incidents are appropriately responded to, and that the young person supported emotionally and practically.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

# Equality Impact Assessment

**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?**

SCC are focussed on recruiting a high-quality diverse workforce in residential children's homes and across children's services, as well as providing training, developing skills and instilling SCC's ethos of tackling inequality.

**Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A

# Equality Impact Assessment

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: RELIGION OR BELIEF INCLUDING LACK OF BELIEF

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

All residential children's homes will be developed to meet each child's needs and promote their welfare, taking into account the child's religion or belief, including lack of belief. Negative impacts are not anticipated as a result of the development of new children's homes in Surrey.

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

As stipulated in the Children's Homes Quality Standards (2015), children's home staff should take every step to make sure that individual children and young people are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation or bullying from their peers by virtue of their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability or for any other reason. Children should be able to maintain and develop their cultural or religious beliefs as far as practicable and where appropriate, through participation and instruction, and by observing religious requirements including dress and diet.

Children's home residential staff will also ensure that they are familiar with the cultural and religious services on offer for each child, and support them to access and encourage them to participate in activities in the community and wider if appropriate. Care will meet each child's needs and promote their welfare, taking into account their individual religion or belief (including lack of belief).

SCC must ensure that any potential impact for children looked after who may be placed with staff or peers who do not share their own religious belief are recognised, and that children are supported to positively explore and identify with their belief. This includes a recognition of and respect of other religious beliefs including lack of belief that others may hold.

Should a child or young person experience discrimination, they will be supported by residential children's homes staff and other professionals to ensure that any incidents are appropriately responded to, and that the young person supported emotionally and practically.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

SCC are focussed on recruiting a high-quality diverse workforce in residential children's homes and across children's services, as well as providing training, developing skills and instilling SCC's ethos of tackling inequality.

**Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: SEX

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

There is a relatively even split of 52% male and 48% female in Surrey's children looked after population who are placed in residential children's homes, although there are variations by age-group with 67% of 14 - 15 year olds being male, but only 40% of 16 – 17 year olds being male (as of October 2022).

The development of additional residential children's homes in Surrey is expected to have a positive impact on children looked after of all genders, by enabling a higher proportion of children to remain living in Surrey where they can better maintain relationships with family, friends and communities as appropriate, continue in their education and access health-care provision and other support services in-county.

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

SCC's existing residential children's homes are for males and females rather than single gender. The majority of new homes being developed will be for males and female, therefore the overall impact of additional homes being developed is expected to be positive for both males and females, with more placement choice in Surrey.

There may be children who would benefit from being placed for a set period of time in a single gender home. This will be considered at the point of placement-matching into children's homes.

It was also identified in 2020 that there is an increase in the proportion of females requiring residential care, including an increase in females with mental health needs. The needs of Surrey's children look after and the type of provision required to best meet their needs are under regular review, if it is identified that single gender provision is required then SCC will ensure that provision is created that best meets children and young people's needs.

If a child or young person experiences discrimination, they will be supported by residential children's homes staff and other professionals to ensure that any incidents are appropriately responded to, and that the young person supported emotionally and practically.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

### **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?**

As well as developing residential provision, there is a focus on increasing sufficiency of foster placements in Surrey. SCC are committed to enabling children looked after to live in a family environment as a first choice for all children looked after. This includes a focus on enabling children to move from residential placements to foster placements where this is the right choice for the child. The development of additional residential provision in Surrey will enable smoother transitions for children moving from residential children's homes to foster care or other placement types in-county

### **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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

All residential children's homes will be developed to meet each child and young person's needs and promote their welfare. For older young people this includes taking into account a young person's sexual orientation as appropriate.

The development of additional residential children's homes in Surrey is expected to have a positive impact on looked after young people of any sexual orientation, by enabling a higher proportion of in-county placements where young people can better maintain relationships with family, friends and communities as appropriate, continue in their education and access health-care provision and other support services in-county.

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

As stipulated in the Children's Homes Quality Standards (2015), children's home staff should take every step to make sure that individual children and young people are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation or bullying from their peers by virtue of their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability or for any other reason.

Children's home residential staff will also ensure that they are familiar with cultural and community services on offer for each child and young person, and support them to access and encourage them to participate in activities in the community and wider if appropriate.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

### **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?**

As well as developing residential provision, there is a focus on increasing sufficiency of foster placements in Surrey. SCC are committed to enabling children looked after to live in a family environment as a first choice for all children looked after. This includes a focus on enabling children to move from residential placements to foster placements where this is the right choice for the child. The development of additional residential provision in Surrey will enable smoother transitions for children moving from residential children's homes to foster care or other placement types in-county

### **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

Children and young people may experience discrimination in a community setting. Should this occur, young people will be supported by residential children's homes staff and other professionals to ensure that any incidents are appropriately responded to, and that the young person supported emotionally and practically.

## 3. Staff

### PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: AGE

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

SCC are committed to ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. SCC do not anticipate any negative impacts from the development of additional children's homes and additional employment opportunities in relation to age.

However, due to the nature of residential care work, staff are required to have the maturity to take on a caring role for children and young people who are looked after. Under the previous National Minimum Standards 2001 this had been specified as at least 4 years older than the oldest child accommodated. This may result in some young people not being in a position to work in residential children's homes until they have reached the required age and maturity.

A relatively high proportion of foster carers are older people including carers in retirement age. The demographics for residential care staff is mixed, however the average age of residential care staff is a younger age-group.

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

SCC are committed to ensuring that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.

Surrey County Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We want to be an inclusive and diverse employer of first choice reflecting the community we serve and particularly welcome applications from all underrepresented groups. SCC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion banner with logos such as Disability Confident are also advertised on the advert too to encourage diversity in our applications.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

SCC are developing fairer recruitment and selection processes, including accessible advertising and documentation, fair shortlisting and interview processes.

As an employer, SCC are committed to:

- Develop, promote and review our policies and practices to ensure equality of opportunity is achieved and to work towards eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and

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bullying for our workforce in all areas of employment including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, and disciplinary.

- Ensure that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.
- Work towards attracting and recruiting a more diverse and representative workforce that reflects the local communities of Surrey that we provide services for.
- Develop and promote employment policies that allow for equal access to employment and training.
- Promote an inclusive and supportive environment for staff in all areas of diversity by removing any barriers that may exist in the workplace including training opportunities and career progression.
- Work towards building zero tolerant, preventative cultures that identify, challenge and eliminate any unacceptable behaviours including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.
- Develop a highly skilled and capable workforce on equality and inclusion, able to design and deliver fair and accessible services.

As well as a focus on recruiting residential care staff, SCC are recruiting to increase the number of foster carers and social workers in Surrey.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

Some residents may need to wait until they reach the age at which they could commence work as care staff in a residential children's home.

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: DISABILITY

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

SCC are committed to ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. SCC do not anticipate any negative impacts from the development of additional children's homes and additional employment opportunities in relation to disability.

However, there may be implications for residents with certain disabilities in relation to working as residential care staff with children looked after. The Children's Homes England Regulations (2015) require that residential care staff are mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform.

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

SCC are committed to ensuring that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their disability during their course of employment.

Surrey County Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We want to be an inclusive and diverse employer of first choice reflecting the community we serve and particularly welcome applications from all underrepresented groups. SCC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion banner with logos such as Disability Confident are also advertised for recruitment adverts to encourage diversity in our applications.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

SCC are developing fairer recruitment and selection processes, including accessible advertising and documentation, fair shortlisting and interview processes.

As an employer, SCC are committed to:

1. Develop fairer recruitment and selection processes, including accessible advertising and documentation, fair shortlisting and interview processes
2. Enable our whole workforce to fully participate and be supported with agile working
3. Working with our Employee Reference Groups (ERGs), commission reviews on experiences of LGBTQI+, disabled and minority ethnic staff who work for the Council
4. Enhance our workforce data on protected groups by encouraging staff to report this data on the new My Surrey Enterprise Resource Planning system to inform our priorities for creating a fairer, more compassionate and inclusive workplace
5. Introduce pay gap reporting for ethnicity and disability.

As well as a focus on recruiting residential care staff, SCC are recruiting to increase the number of foster carers and social workers in Surrey.

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## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

There may be roles caring for children looked after within residential children's homes that require certain physical and mental abilities.

## **PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY**

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

SCC are committed to ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. SCC do not anticipate any negative impacts from the development of additional children's homes and additional employment opportunities in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

However, residential children's home staff who are pregnant or with young babies may be affected by the nature of the role and by the working hours. Residential care staff generally work shifts that include regularly sleeping-in, which may have an impact in particular for parents with babies and young children.

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

Risk assessments and potential adjustments may be implemented where appropriate for residential care staff during pregnancy, including to safeguard their health and safety at work.

Recognising the impact of shift work including working at night and on public holidays on caring responsibilities in particular for babies and young children.

### **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?**

SCC are developing fairer recruitment and selection processes, including accessible advertising and documentation, fair shortlisting and interview processes.

As an employer, SCC are committed to:

1. Develop, promote and review our policies and practices to ensure equality of opportunity is achieved and to work towards eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying for our workforce in all areas of employment including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, and disciplinary.
2. Ensure that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.
3. Work towards attracting and recruiting a more diverse and representative workforce that reflects the local communities of Surrey that we provide services for.
4. Develop and promote employment policies that allow for equal access to employment and training.
5. Promote an inclusive and supportive environment for staff in all areas of diversity by removing any barriers that may exist in the workplace including training opportunities and career progression.

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6. Work towards building zero tolerant, preventative cultures that identify, challenge and eliminate any unacceptable behaviours including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.

As well as a focus on recruiting residential care staff, SCC are recruiting to increase the number of foster carers and social workers in Surrey.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

Residential children's home care staff are required to work shifts as children looked after require care staff to be in the children's home for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Although adjustments may be possible in some circumstances, the impact of the working hours cannot altogether be mitigated during pregnancy, or for parents of babies and young children.

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## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: RACE INCLUDING ETHNIC OR NATIONAL ORIGINS, COLOUR OR NATIONALITY

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

SCC are committed to ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. SCC do not anticipate any negative impacts from the development of additional children's homes and additional employment opportunities in relation to race, ethnicity, nationality or colour.

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

SCC are committed to ensuring that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.

SCC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We want to be an inclusive and diverse employer of first choice reflecting the community we serve and particularly welcome applications from all underrepresented groups.

SCC are also introducing pay gap reporting for ethnicity and disability.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

SCC are developing fairer recruitment and selection processes, including accessible advertising and documentation, fair shortlisting and interview processes.

As an employer, SCC are committed to:

1. Develop, promote and review our policies and practices to ensure equality of opportunity is achieved and to work towards eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying for our workforce in all areas of employment including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, and disciplinary.
2. Ensure that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.
3. Work towards attracting and recruiting a more diverse and representative workforce that reflects the local communities of Surrey that we provide services for.
4. Develop and promote employment policies that allow for equal access to employment and training.
5. Promote an inclusive and supportive environment for staff in all areas of diversity by removing any barriers that may exist in the workplace including training opportunities and career progression.

# Equality Impact Assessment

6. Work towards building zero tolerant, preventative cultures that identify, challenge and eliminate any unacceptable behaviours including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.

As well as a focus on recruiting residential care staff, SCC are recruiting to increase the number of foster carers and social workers in Surrey.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: RELIGION OR BELIEF INCLUDING LACK OF BELIEF

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

SCC are committed to ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. SCC do not anticipate any negative impacts from the development of additional children's homes and additional employment opportunities in relation to religion or belief including lack of belief.

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

SCC are committed to ensuring that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.

SCC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We want to be an inclusive and diverse employer of first choice reflecting the community we serve and particularly welcome applications from all underrepresented groups.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

SCC are developing fairer recruitment and selection processes, including accessible advertising and documentation, fair shortlisting and interview processes.

As an employer, SCC are committed to:

1. Develop, promote and review our policies and practices to ensure equality of opportunity is achieved and to work towards eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying for our workforce in all areas of employment including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, and disciplinary.
2. Ensure that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.
3. Work towards attracting and recruiting a more diverse and representative workforce that reflects the local communities of Surrey that we provide services for.
4. Develop and promote employment policies that allow for equal access to employment and training.
5. Promote an inclusive and supportive environment for staff in all areas of diversity by removing any barriers that may exist in the workplace including training opportunities and career progression.
6. Work towards building zero tolerant, preventative cultures that identify, challenge and eliminate any unacceptable behaviours including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.

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As well as a focus on recruiting residential care staff, SCC are recruiting to increase the number of foster carers and social workers in Surrey.

**Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A

# Equality Impact Assessment

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: SEX

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

SCC are committed to ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. SCC do not anticipate any negative impacts from the development of additional children's homes and additional employment opportunities in relation to sex or gender.

However, the overall SCC workforce has an overrepresented of women working at the Council when compared to the national population average (50.6% versus 73.2%), but this is uneven across different salary quartiles relative to our total workforce. Within the Council, men are underrepresented at the lower quartile (14%) and overrepresented in the upper middle and upper quartiles (32% and 34%, respectively). Thus, despite most of our workforce being women, primarily due to occupational segregation, the salary-level distribution still follows the wider social dynamic of vertical segregation, where women tend to be overrepresented in front-line lower paid roles and men tend to be overrepresented in higher paid managerial and leadership roles. This, in turn, explains why we continue to observe a mean gender pay gap of 13.7% and a median gender pay gap of 12.5%, both in favour of men

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

SCC are committed to ensuring that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.

SCC monitor and report on the workforce gender pay gap. Mitigations to tackle the gender pay gap are outlined in the [Surrey County Council Gender Pay Gap 2021 \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk).

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

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# Equality Impact Assessment

3. Work towards attracting and recruiting a more diverse and representative workforce that reflects the local communities of Surrey that we provide services for.
4. Develop and promote employment policies that allow for equal access to employment and training.
5. Promote an inclusive and supportive environment for staff in all areas of diversity by removing any barriers that may exist in the workplace including training opportunities and career progression.
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As well as a focus on recruiting residential care staff, SCC are recruiting to increase the number of foster carers and social workers in Surrey.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC: SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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

SCC are committed to ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. SCC do not anticipate any negative impacts from the development of additional children's homes and additional employment opportunities in relation to sexual orientation.

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

SCC are committed to ensuring that individuals are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their race, colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital status and caring responsibilities during their course of employment.

Where SCC works with independent providers, their equality and inclusion plans will need to be evidenced and considered.

**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?**

SCC are developing fairer recruitment and selection processes, including accessible advertising and documentation, fair shortlisting and interview processes.

As an employer, SCC are committed to:

1. Develop, promote and review our policies and practices to ensure equality of opportunity is achieved and to work towards eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying for our workforce in all areas of employment including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, and disciplinary.
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As well as a focus on recruiting residential care staff, SCC are recruiting to increase the number of foster carers and social workers in Surrey.

**Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

N/A

## 4. Recommendation

Based 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 and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).

### Recommended outcome:

**Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required.** Overall, these proposals will create positive benefits for looked after children in Surrey, with a range of protected characteristics, as well as supporting key statutory duties. This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact that cannot be appropriately mitigate, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken.

### Explanation:

#### Service users/Residents:

Surrey County Council is committed to expanding the existing residential development to increase the proportion of children looked after who can remain living in, and return to living in Surrey, with children's home that provide care that fully meets their individual needs.

Throughout this document, it is clearly evidenced that there are policies, procedures and expectations in place that children are cared for ensuring that they are not negatively impacted and their protected characteristics are consistently considered, children and young people are supported to gain their independence skills and become contributing members of the community. There are relevant mitigations in place and risk assessments are continuously conducted to ensure that children are protected and best interests are addressed appropriately.

The expected outcomes from the residential children's home development will be positive for children looked after, for whom the protected characteristics may or may not apply. The actions set out under each characteristic and in the action plan highlight how positive impacts will be enhanced further, and potential negative impacts mitigated.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## Staff:

Surrey County Council has a plethora of policies and procedures in place that satisfy the protected characteristics as highlighted within this EIA.

Through experience of supporting an in-house service, Surrey policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, staff receive appropriate and timely supervision to ensure that they are being fully supported in their roles and training to ensure that they are skilled in completing their roles.

There are minor restrictions that apply for staffing when considering the care and support of children within the care of Surrey Council. While we apply best practice wherever possible to support staff, there are requirements that would restrict certain roles being fulfilled by a person protected under the listed characteristics.

These main areas are:

**Age** – There is an appropriate age expectation for staff supporting children within our care, it is acceptable that the youngest staff member should be a minimum of 4 years older than the oldest young person being supported within the service.

**Disability** – Due to the nature of the service being provided, Surrey Council needs to adhere to the Children's home regulation 2015 guidelines which clearly state that staff supporting children need to be mentally and physically fit to perform their role.

**Pregnancy and Maternity** – Due to the nature of the service being provided, Surrey Council need to ensure that staff who are pregnant receive regularly updated risk assessments to physically protect themselves and their unborn child at work. This is covered under Surreys standard staffing policies and procedures, though would review additional risks that would potentially arise due to the nature of the role within a residential children's home.

## 5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/Team Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
1	November 2022	Plan and implement phase 2 of capital development programme for Children's homes from Jan 2023, following Cabinet decision.	Chris Tisdall, Commissioning  Jo Rabbitte, Assistant Director Children's Resources	Capital programme structure to be established by January 2023	This is now in place, with additional Capital Steering Group established to oversee finalisation of new children's homes proposals, reporting into the Placement Value and Outcomes Transformation Board (Jan-Apr 2023) and Corporate Parenting Transformation Board from May 2023 onwards, as well as CFLL Capital Board. Proposals for 24-beds expected to receive final capital sign-off at Corporate Programme Panel on 18 July 2023.	Open
2	November 2022	Residential Implementation Group to ensure best practice in children's homes, supporting improved outcomes for children with protected characteristics.	Jo Rabbitte, Children's Resources	Throughout the implementation period	Working through the residential sufficiency group we have completed a thorough needs analysis and this has informed the development of a clear set of Children's homes development proposals.	Open
3	November 2022	A continued focus on quality assurance of homes (in and out of county) and ensuring that children and young people are in the best placement to meet their needs.	Sarah Foster, Gateway to Resources	Continuous	GtR continues to take a robust approach to quality assurance of children's homes, working closely with the Children's Cross-Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG) and the South Central Framework.	Open

# Equality Impact Assessment

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/Team Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
4	April 2022	Structured approach to understanding identified needs and developing new provision to meet these needs.	Chris Tisdall, Commissioning	April 2023, with continued review of data throughout to inform specialisms of new homes	Robust needs assessment completed by CFLL Commissioning Team in April 2023, with input from key operational colleagues and GtR Service, and signed-off via the PVO Transformation Board. This has informed final capital development plans.	Closed
5	January 2023 onwards	Review of equality and inclusion plans of independent providers Surrey works with.	Chris Tisdall, Commissioning	Review during tender process prior to commencement of strategic partnership(s)	This is reviewed as part of routine contract management via GtR Service and will be built into SCC's planned new Children's Residential Dynamic Purchasing System, which will be launching late in 2023.	Open
6	September 2022	Implementation of regular provider forums with in-house and external providers of children's homes in Surrey	Sara Foster, Gateway to Resources  Jo Rabbitte, Children's Resources  Chris Tisdall, Commissioning	Continuous (termly)	This is now happening, with the first two forums held. This will continue as part of BAU, but has now been marked as closed for the purposes of this EIA.	Closed
7	Ongoing	Staff receive specialist high quality training to meet the children's care needs	Jo Rabbitte, Children's Resources	Continuous	SCC Children's Homes have been working to strengthen their training offer and are developing longer-term proposals to support the growth of staff capacity needed alongside our capital plans	Open

# Equality Impact Assessment

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person/Team Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
8	January 2023 onwards	Focus on ensuring that the physical buildings are designed, built and refurbished to meet the needs of the children who will be placed.	Philip Roche, Land and Property	2025	Three new SCC Children's homes (on two sites) are going live during summer 2023. These have been delivered in partnership between Land and Property and Children's Resources, to ensure the build and fit-out meets high operational standards. Learning from this will be applied to future homes.	Open
9	January 2022 onwards	The locations will be considered alongside the specialisms of the homes to reflect education and healthcare services in the local area.	Chris Tisdall, Commissioning  Jo Rabbitte, Children's Resources	2024	As part of need assessment and development of new proposals, priority and secondary search locations have been identified for the proposed new homes, which considers the location of appropriate schools within Surrey. This will be monitored throughout the programme.	Open

## 6a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1.0	First complete version completed for publication	Jessica Sendler	18/11/2022
1.1	Update made to action plan and monitoring arrangements	Chris Tisdall	21/06/2023

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
Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children Families and Learning	18/11/2022
Chris Tisdall, Head of Commissioning - Corporate Parenting	21/06/2023 (please note changes relate to action plan updates)

### Publish:

It is recommended that all EIAs are published on Surrey County Council's website.

### EIA author:

## 6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Jessica Sendler	Senior Commissioning Officer	Surrey County Council
Jenine Brister	Commissioning Manager	Surrey County Council
Chris Tisdall	Head of Corporate Parenting Commissioning	Surrey County Council

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