

EIA of Reunification Support Service (RSS)

Did you use the EIA Screening Tool? No

1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Is this a:

(Delete the ones that don't apply)

- A new service or function

Summarise the strategy, policy, service(s), or function(s) being assessed.

This new service to be assessed is called the Reunification Service Support (RSS), which launched in October 2022 following a year-long pilot.

Reunification is when a looked after child or young person (referred to as a child in this document) returns home to live within their family network following a period of being in Local Authority Care. Reunification is most successful when it is well planned, based on robust assessment of risks considering the child and birth family. If planned well, children go home slowly and where appropriate, services are put in place to support the family for as long as they are needed.

The overall aims of the reunification service support are to:

- Ensure that children can return to the care of their parent(s) [or other person within the family network] at the earliest opportunity, if safe to do so and in their best interests
- Ensure that when reunification occurs, it is successful [with the child remaining at home, and not needing to return to Care within a 6-month timeframe]
- Reduce the overall cost to Children's Services by investing in the support required for successful reunification to occur, knowing this will save in the longer-term.

RSS contains 5 distinct phases which will be bespoke to each child and family. We will invest in the support required once a child returns home, knowing that this is very much an 'invest to save' intervention with the costs being recuperated by successful reunification. In addition, this will be a countywide approach therefore reaching every child at the time that is right for them, rather than a quadrant pilot.

The 5 phases are:

- 1.) Identification: where social workers identify and request service
- 2.) Planning: RSS consider and plan the reunification
- 3.) Implementation: services are provided to the family in the areas needed to support positive reunification
- 4.) Review: evaluate results
- 5.) Reunification: Reunification is achieved and discharge/revocation of orders/care arrangements are progressed

Equality Impact Assessment

How does your service proposal support the outcomes in [the Community Vision for Surrey 2030](#)? Specify which of the ten Vision outcomes this work is linked to.

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident.
- 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.
- Everyone has a place they can call home, with appropriate housing for all.

Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make a particular impact?

- No. This applies county-wide

Detail here who you have involved with completing this EIA. For each include:

- Jason Yip, Polices Plannings and Programs, Project Manager
- Elaine Andrews, North West Looked After Children's Service, Service Manager
- Natasha Gunner, Reunification Support Service for Children Looked After, Team Manager
- Fiona Wraith, North West Assistant Director and lead on Looked After Children.

Equality Impact Assessment

2. Service Users / Residents

Who may be affected by this activity?

The following stakeholder groups will be impacted by the reunification service:

- Look after children
- Families of looked after children
- Foster Carers

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy

The reunification service is a service for all SCC-looked after children and their carers/families irrespective of any protected characteristic(s).

Provision of the service is based on the suitability of the children returning to their parents/family networks care and the readiness of their parents/family networks to care for the children independently of care arrangements.

Any social worker for a looked after child can request the service and all requests will be assessed with the same sets of criteria.

No protected characteristics are a criterion of whether reunification can proceed.

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

Any special or additional needs of children, foster carers and families will be considered and addressed during the planning process for each specific reunification.

Social workers will be invited as part of ongoing performance review meetings to report on reunification requests and discuss how they have approached them, to ensure quality assurance and consistency of practice.

Aggregated data on the protected characteristics of those supported by the service will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, to consider whether reunification has led to any disproportionate benefits or impacts on particular groups.

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

Not applicable.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

No.

Equality Impact Assessment

3. Staff

Not applicable

4. Recommendation

Recommended outcome: 1

Confirm which outcome you are recommending

Explanation:

This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken

Equality Impact Assessment

5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

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

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

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
1	17-NOV-2022	Adding an agenda item in monthly performance review meeting to report on reunification requests and discuss how they have been approached, to ensure quality assurance and consistency of practice.	Jason – Project manager	First performance meeting will be hold in early December	Recurring task monthly during review meeting	Open
2	17 Nov 2022	Aggregated data on the protected characteristics of those supported by the service will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, to consider whether reunification has led to any disproportionate benefits or impacts on particular groups.	Jason – Project manager	First review in early December	Recurring task monthly	Open

6a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	Reviewed and approved version by Assistant Director, Service manager and Reunification manager	Jason Yip	17-11-2022

Equality Impact Assessment

The above provides historical data about each update made to the 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
Head of Service	Elaine Andrews 17/11/2022
Executive Director	Rachael Wardell 06/01/2023
Cabinet Member	16/01/2023
Directorate Equality Group	23/11/2022

Publish:

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

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

EIA author:

6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Team Role

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