



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

Name of Proposal - Children's Residential Services

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment No
(B) If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment **Yes**
Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment No

(i) Lead Directorate/Service:

Children, Families and Justice Directorate

(ii) Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

- Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968; Children (Scotland) Act 1995; Children & Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014
- Independent review of the children's care system 'The Promise' and the 'Plan 21-24' to drive improvements in the delivery of care to children and young people.

(iii) What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

- The proposal is seeking approval for expansion of the children's residential estate, to increase current Angus Council in-house placement availability by 8 beds, over two children's houses, developed on a sequential basis over the next 3 years.

(iv) Is it a new proposal? ~~Yes/No~~ Please indicate **OR**

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? **Yes/No** Please indicate:

- Proposal sets strategic direction to increase capacity within our in-house children's residential estate, and to thus reduce reliance on external residential care for children.

Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees	Yes
Job Applicants	Yes
Service users	Yes
Members of the public	No

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

- Looked After Children data returns over the last three years show an increased use in external foster care placements and external residential placements for children and young people from Angus being placed outside Angus due to lack of local placements. This has budgetary effect of increasing the unit cost of provision and reducing the overall reach of the available resource.

Internal consultation (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

- internal feedback from teams responsible for sourcing placements for children in need reflects substantial challenges identifying suitable placements locally and nationally.

External data (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

- a range of research and reflection from those with lived experience supports our understanding that better outcomes can be achieved for children by retaining local family and community links and promoting safe continuity of care
- Our care experienced engagement work replicates this feedback at the local level

External consultation (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

- Findings of the Care Review resulting in the Promise Plan 2021-24 highlight the need for children to stay locally within their own communities to support relationships with family, peers and their wider community to improve long-term outcomes for children. Children and families with care experience are clear children and young people need to be cared for locally when they are not able to be cared for at home.

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? No

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups? Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

- Following the relaxation of Covid restrictions, we have seen an increase in referrals for children and young people to children's social work services where there is a need for support, increased identification of children at risk and children requiring to be cared for away from home.
- the development of further internal local residential capacity is intended to reduce the likelihood of compounding these differential impacts on children and young people who are looked after, including those who have a disability and other complex needs.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Age **Impact** - Positive

The increase in availability of placements will not be restricted by age of children but will offer the opportunity to consider the current use of two houses (Brambles) alongside two new facilities and better match the needs of young people taking account of age and stage of children.

Disability **Impact** – Positive

The growth of our residential estate will support us to better meet the needs of children and young people, including those with a disability/ies both through the availability of additional places and the added resilience of having a wider staffing resource pool.

Gender reassignment – **Impact** - Neutral

Although the proposal has potential to be considered positive as placements will be based on the needs of the individual young people and the placement's ability to meet those needs without discrimination based on protected characteristic of any groups.

Marriage and Civil Partnership **Impact** - Neutral
no specific impact

Pregnancy/Maternity **Impact** - Neutral
no specific impact

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers) **Impact** - Neutral
no specific impact

Religion or Belief – **Impact** - Neutral
no specific impact

Sex – **Impact** – Positive

Placements will be based on needs of individual children, no discrimination based on protected characteristic of any groups. Increased number of placements will allow

improved consideration of matching children to the right environment taking account of protected characteristics like age, sex and disability.

Sexual orientation – **Impact** - Positive

Increased flexibility and choice when placing children will allow for improved scope for individual needs of children to be better met taking account of sexual orientation ensuring they feel safe and protected.

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

- See below there has been discussion with the staff impacted through their leadership relating to the design and delivery of the extended service provision

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

- Subject to approval of the proposals, care experienced children and young people and families will be invited to actively participate in the project development, starting with the first new children's house during 2023/24. This will include a series of activities to capture their views so that any new home meets their needs. As with our approach to the design of Brambles, young people will contribute to detailed accommodation specifications.
- There will be engagement with relevant local communities (once identified) to support successful delivery, should the proposals be approved.

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

- As above

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

- None

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

- Provides increased opportunities for children and young people to be cared for within their locally communities. Supports children's rights and the rights of families by design. Particular development of the design specification and implementation will take account of the different needs of children through a children's rights lens so as not to disadvantage those with protected characteristics.

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

- The voice of children and young people will be key in insuring buildings and environments are inclusive and accessible for those who require to be cared for away from home.

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

- review through service oversight and external scrutiny and inspection.

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

- online with committee papers

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Peter McDonnell

Reviewed by: Karen Ross

Approved by: Kathryn Lindsay, Director CFJ, 24 November 2022