

EIA Feedback Form: Contract Cessation / Non-Renewal - WCF

Considering the potential, anticipated, probable and definite impacts of **negative, neutral, and positive** outcomes – when known - and evidencing our due regard on each of the protected characteristics listed below; as per our Public Sector Equality Duty, in line with The Equality Act 2010. Additional factors such as those likely to impact on wellbeing and other categories held within a Public Health assessment detail can be provided upon request* and the below meets the requirements for compliance.

General themes or considerations: impact on children and families, impact on wider community / county, impact on staff, impact on strategic level business planning, delivery of services / operational activity.

WCF services include fostering, education, social care, early help, SEND. Further Equality Impact Assessment may be developed or added to following decision sign off, and this document is intended to provide an evidence of due regard to each of the protected characteristics, prior to informing a proposal or decision.

Age: children and families will remain a priority and service provision for statutory duty delivery of services will continue. The nature of the proposal means that children are the main audience and highest impact. The impacts could be negative and positive dependent on this protected characteristic and children (and their families) will feel the largest impact, as well as staff being transferred (via TUPE regulations). Statutory services will continue, however the potential negative impact of a change in delivery and standards of care, support etc during a change over period or longer term, could mean that children and families receive an inconsistent approach to services (short term), are concerned about changes to care plans, change of social worker or family support (and frontline staff) etc. Assurance will be made that children should not receive changes in care. Reputation from a family and stakeholder perspective may be negative about the proposed cessation / non-renewal of contract, due to historic issues with provision and service, however staff, strategies and care should be minimally disrupted and positive changes will be apparent if managed through effective communication with stakeholders and partners (including families).

Mitigation: having strong and effective leadership across service areas will aim to reduce any negative impacts felt by children and families. Learnings from historic key development areas will be considered at every stage of change, and positive approach to continuous improvement methods will be taken into account and best practice shared at senior levels, to ensure a consistent leadership continues and drives the current levels of service. Communication and effective engagement will be prioritised to inform and support children and families across this change period. If / when further impacts are identified, these will be managed at a strategic and service area level. Strategies and business plans that are valid will remain in place until their natural expiry, and subsequently will benefit from a wider input of specialist areas within WCC when renewed. Option of renewing contract may also mitigate some of the potential impacts, such as consistent provision. "...children's outcomes have improved as a result of family focussed, child centred early help and proportionate statutory intervention when in the best interests of children" within the current contract and this will aim to be continued and further improved under WCC. The main positive impact for this proposal is that there will be a positive financial impact and subsequently better provision for children and families across the county.

Disability: children and families will remain a priority and provision for statutory duty delivery of services will continue. The nature of the proposal means that children are the main audience. The impacts could be negative and positive dependent on this protected characteristic of disability, and disabled children (and their families whether disabled or non-disabled) may experience negative impacts, some high level potential impacts may be; changes to delivery of services for SEND children, changes to communication method or style, new / additional information being requested due to system changes, staff learning and accessing new systems.

There may be concerns that children and young people requiring support and / or an EHCP may be delayed in an already lengthy and often stressful process of receiving support, in addition to the noted potential impacts within the 'age' category above.

The duties the council will be responsible for, will align and comply with all statutory requirements, and The Equality Act 2010 outlines what local authorities, educational settings and early help should do for, and to, support disabled children.

Mitigation: similarly to the age category above, having strong and effective leadership across service areas will aim to reduce any negative impacts felt by children and families. Learnings from historic key development areas will be considered at every stage of change, and positive approach to continuous improvement methods will be taken into account and best practice shared at senior levels, to ensure a consistent leadership continues and drives the current levels of service. Communication and effective engagement will be prioritised to inform and support children and families across this change period. If / when further impacts are identified, these will be managed at a strategic and service area level. Strategies and business plans that are valid will remain in place until their natural expiry, and subsequently will benefit from a wider input of specialist areas within WCC when renewed. Communication can be provided in multiple / varied formats, as well as the option for 'Easy Read' for families. Option of renewing contract may also mitigate some of the potential impacts, such as consistent provision. "...children's outcomes have improved as a result of family focussed, child centred early help and proportionate statutory intervention when in the best interests of children" within the current contract, and this will aim to be continued and further improved under WCC. The main positive impact for this proposal is that there will be a positive financial impact and subsequently better provision for children and families across the county.

Accessibility to engagement sessions, online access for information and physical access to infrastructure will remain at the forefront of any new development, and priorities for positive action relating to disability is paramount to providing an inclusive service. Due to the varying and personal nature of disability, there may be individual impacts unknown and undetermined, and therefore unable to provide evidence, understand potential impact or mitigate each requirement, however the professional staff, support services and stakeholders are on hand to provide adequate effective support at individual levels and as and when negative impacts occur, we aim to understand them and where possible and practical implement new ways of working, in conjunction with offering reasonable adjustments.

Gender reassignment: children and families will remain a priority, and provision for statutory duty delivery of services will continue. The nature of the proposal means that children are the main audience. The impacts should be neutral based on this sole category and protected characteristic of gender reassignment, and children (and their families) should / would not feel a differential impact

based on their gender identity or reassignment status. Provision and delivery of all services will remain positively respectful and inclusive of all gender identities, regardless of transition journey.

Marriage & civil: neutral or no impact based on marriage or civil partnership status. (Protected characteristic covered only in employment law). Provision and delivery of all services will remain positively respectful and inclusive of all family make-ups and settings.

Pregnancy & mat: children and families will remain a priority and service provision for statutory duty delivery of services will continue. The nature of the proposal means that children are the main audience. The impacts could be negative and positive dependent on this protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity (up to 6 months post birth), as well as staff being transferred (via TUPE regulations) who will be subject to the same terms and conditions within WCC policy. Statutory services will continue, however the potential negative impact of a change in delivery and standards of care, support etc during a change over period or longer term, could mean that children and families receive an inconsistent approach to services (short term), are concerned about changes to care plans, change of social worker or family support (and frontline staff) etc. Assurance will be made that children should not receive changes in care.

Reputation from a family and stakeholder perspective may be negative about the proposed cessation / non-renewal of contract, due to historic issues with provision and service, however staff, strategies and care should be minimally disrupted and positive changes will be apparent if managed through effective communication with stakeholders and partners (including families).

Based on being pregnant or in a period of maternity, the impact will be neutral – dependant on each individual, the service will be equitable and in a way that is right for them. With significant home changes likely due to pregnancy and or birth, an approach that is balanced to the needs of the family unit will be developed in any service delivery or support plans, with them and understanding of their time, requirements and level of support needed, or requested. This can be changeable and the service will aim to be flexible and adaptive of new family situations.

Mitigation: having strong and effective leadership across service areas will aim to reduce any negative impacts felt by children and families. Learnings from historic key development areas will be considered at every stage of change, and positive approach to continuous improvement methods will be taken into account and best practice shared at senior levels, to ensure a consistent leadership continues and drives the current levels of service. Communication and effective engagement will be prioritised to inform and support children and families across this change period. If / when further impacts are identified, these will be managed at a strategic and service area level. Strategies and business plans that are valid will remain in place until their natural expiry, and subsequently will benefit from a wider input of specialist areas within WCC when renewed. Option of renewing contract may also mitigate some of the potential impacts, such as consistent provision. "...children's outcomes have improved as a result of family focussed, child centred early help and proportionate statutory intervention when in the best interests of children" within the current contract and this will aim to be continued and further improved under WCC. The main positive impact for this proposal is that there will be a positive financial impact and subsequently better provision for children and families across the county.

Race: neutral or no impact based on race. Provision and delivery of all services will remain positively respectful and inclusive of all family make-ups and settings. In this Equality Impact Assessment we will additionally clarify that we acknowledge and value cultural, national and ethnic diversity across the service for children, families and communities in Worcestershire, and this is also notable within the section relating to the protected characteristic of religion and or belief, where there are often overlaps in impact.

Based on race or ethnic, cultural or national background, the impact will be neutral – dependant on each individual child and family, they will be able to use and access the service equitably and in a way that is right for them. In the instance that a translator is required for individuals or families who can't / don't communicate in English, a translator can be sought. Acknowledging there could be differences in the home, type of care, support requirements, based on cultural identity, WCC aims to value and support this on an individual level based on needs. This can be changeable and WCC will aim to continue to be flexible and adaptive of family situations.

Strategies and business plans that are valid will remain in place until their natural expiry, and subsequently will benefit from a wider input of specialist areas within WCC when renewed. Option of renewing contract may also mitigate some of the potential impacts, such as consistent provision. "...children's outcomes have improved as a result of family focussed, child centred early help and proportionate statutory intervention when in the best interests of children" within the current contract and this will aim to be continued and further improved under WCC. The main positive impact for this proposal is that there will be a positive financial impact and subsequently better provision for children and families across the county.

Religion & belief: neutral or no impact based on religion and or belief, including no belief. Provision and delivery of all services will remain positively respectful and inclusive of all families and settings. In this Equality Impact Assessment we will additionally clarify that we acknowledge and value cultural and religious diversity across the service for children, families and communities in Worcestershire, and this is also notable within the section relating to the protected characteristic of race, where there are often overlaps in impact.

Based on a child and or families religion or belief, the impact will be neutral – dependant on each individual, the service will be equitable and delivered in a way that is right for them. Acknowledging there could be differences in home settings, type of care, support requirements based on cultural or religious beliefs or identity, the service aims to value and support this on an individual level based on needs. This can be changeable and WCC will aim to continue to be flexible and adaptive of family situations.

Strategies and business plans that are valid will remain in place until their natural expiry, and subsequently will benefit from a wider input of specialist areas within WCC when renewed. Option of renewing contract may also mitigate some of the potential impacts, such as consistent provision. "...children's outcomes have improved as a result of family focussed, child centred early help and proportionate statutory intervention when in the best interests of children" within the current contract and this will aim to be continued and further improved under WCC. The main positive impact for this proposal is that there will be a positive financial impact and subsequently better provision for children and families across the county.

Sex: neutral or no impact based on biological sex. Provision and delivery of all services will remain positively respectful and inclusive of all family make-ups and settings, and individual identities.

Sexual orientation: neutral or no impact based on sexual orientation. Provision and delivery of all services will remain positively respectful and inclusive of all family make-ups and settings, and individual identities and orientation.

*Either via adding in to this document for consideration, or as a separate assessment from Public Health or EDI Lead