

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

CS16267 – Procurement of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) Framework

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Department: Children's Services

Date of assessment: 10/06/2021

Description of current service/policy

The Council has the duty, provided for in section 22(3) of the Children Act 1989, to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children. To fulfil this duty, the Council commissions fostering placements. The Council has its own Fostering Service with in-house foster carers. Where in-house carers cannot accommodate all referrals for children looked after who require a foster placement the Council enters into contracts with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). At the moment, the Council has around 1,200 looked after children in foster care. About 250 are fostered by relatives or friends of the family, about 480 are fostered by HCC foster carers, about 460 are placed with IFAs.

Geographical impact: All
Hampshire

Description of proposed change

The Council has a currently two frameworks with Independent Fostering Agencies, which will expire end of March 2022. The Council will re-procure the services and will tender for a new framework (or frameworks) within the next months. The new framework/s will allow looked after children to be placed individually, with siblings, or in parent & child placements.

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out?

Planned

The Council has set up a working group, which includes its own Social Workers and Fostering Service to create the appropriate requirements for the service, it will engage with Independent Fostering Agencies and their umbrella organisation, it will also engage with neighbouring Local Authorities that also commission foster services through Independent Fostering Agencies. The Council will also involve care experienced young people to inform requirements for quality and services of Independent Fostering Agencies.

Statutory considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Age: Neutral		
Disability: Neutral		
Sexual orientation: Neutral		
Race: Neutral		
Religion and belief: Neutral		
Gender reassignment: Neutral		
Gender: Neutral		

Marriage and civil partnership: Neutral		
Pregnancy and maternity: Neutral		
Other policy considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Poverty: Neutral		
Rurality: Neutral		

Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

The new framework/s will allow looked after children to be placed individually, with siblings, or in parent & child placements.

The religion and beliefs of the child or young person and their families would be considered as part of any placement, where required.

Services provided by Children's Services are required to meet assessed need, regardless of a family's income.

Any other information