



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Tori Lynch

Directorate: Children and Families

Name of lead person for this activity:

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Ellie Jenkins – Commissioning Officer

Date assessment completed: 21/07/2026

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Recommissioning of the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service and Independent Visitor Service

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

To recommission the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service and Independent Visitor Service through an open procurement process to ensure the continued provision of high-quality, independent statutory services for eligible children and young people in Herefordshire. The recommissioning will strengthen the operational independence of advocacy, maintain statutory compliance and improve outcomes for children and young people through accessible, person-centred services. The Children's Rights and Advocacy Service is currently provided in-house and the staff are expected to TUPE to the new provider.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Service users | ☐ Visitors to the county |
| ☒ Communities | ☒ Carers |
| ☒ Children | ☐ Patients |
| ☐ All staff | ☐ All part-time staff |
| ☒ Staff at a particular location | ☐ Other: |

Is this:

- ☒ Review of an existing activity/policy
- ☐ New activity/policy
- ☐ Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Children Act 1989
 Children and Social Work Act 2017
 Statutory Guidance on Advocacy
 Statutory Guidance on Independent Visitors
 Procurement Act 2023
 Herefordshire Council Plan
 Herefordshire Children's Services and Partnership Improvement Plan
 Ofsted Inspection findings

Current contract monitoring information
 Current service performance data
 Feedback from children and young people
 Market engagement
 Equality Act 2010

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

The Children's Rights and Advocacy Service was restructured in early 2026 to acknowledge changes in the actual demand for the service. Staff were consulted as part of that process and were keen to see the service provided externally from the council to promote greater independence of the service from Children's Services, as is required by national best practice and guidance. The staff have also been consulted in the development of the service specification.

Consultation has been undertaken with operational Children's Services colleagues, Procurement, Legal Services and Finance during the development of the recommissioning proposal.

Children and young people will be consulted at the Children in Care Event on 23 July 2026 through direct engagement with the Commissioning Team and an anonymous QR code survey seeking feedback on current services and priorities for future delivery.

The proposal will also be considered by the Political Group Consultation . Any feedback received will be considered and, where appropriate, reflected within the final procurement documentation.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

The assessment has identified that the recommissioning is expected to have an overall neutral impact on children and young people by maintaining access to statutory advocacy and independent visitor services. The move to an externally commissioned advocacy service strengthens operational independence and aligns with national guidance and recognised best practice. No adverse equality impacts have been identified that cannot be mitigated through the procurement process, service specification and ongoing contract management.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	☐	☒	☐
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	☐	☒	☐
Foster good relations between different groups?	☐	☒	☐

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

The recommissioning of the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service and Independent Visitor Service is expected to have an overall positive impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty. The services support eligible children and young people, including those with protected characteristics, to understand and exercise their rights, participate in decisions that affect them and access independent support where required. The move to an externally commissioned advocacy service will strengthen the operational independence of advocacy, providing additional assurance that children and young people can access representation without discrimination or disadvantage.

The procurement will require providers to deliver services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of children and young people. Equality considerations will be embedded within the service specifications, procurement evaluation and ongoing contract

management to ensure services continue to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and support positive outcomes for all eligible children and young people. Ongoing engagement with children and young people, including those with protected characteristics, will help inform continuous service improvement and ensure services remain responsive to their needs.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group. Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	☐	☒	☐	The recommissioning will maintain statutory Independent Visitor and Advocacy services for looked after children and eligible care leavers. As the service is specifically designed to meet the needs of children and young people, it is expected to improve their ability to participate in decisions, access independent support and have their views heard. No adverse impacts have been identified.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	☐	☒	☐	The service specification requires providers to deliver person-centred services that respond to individual needs, including making reasonable adjustments where required to enable disabled children and young people to access advocacy and independent support on an equal basis with others. This is expected to reduce barriers to participation and improve equality of opportunity.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	☐	☒	☐	The recommissioned service will be required to provide services fairly and without discrimination, ensuring that children and young people are treated with dignity and respect regardless of gender identity. No adverse impacts have been identified.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	☐	☒	☐	Not applicable for these services
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	☐	☒	☐	Pregnant young people and young parents who meet the eligibility criteria will continue to have access to the service.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	☐	☒	☐	The recommissioned service will be available irrespective of race or ethnicity. Providers will be expected to communicate effectively with children and young people and respond to individual communication or cultural needs where these are identified, helping to remove barriers to participation.
Religion & Belief	☐	☒	☐	Providers will be expected to respect children's and young people's religion or belief and take account of individual needs where relevant to service delivery. No adverse impacts have been identified.
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of "sex")	☐	☒	☐	The service is available to eligible children and young people regardless of sex. It provides independent support based on assessed need and is expected to improve participation and outcomes for all eligible children.
Sexual Orientation	☐	☒	☐	The recommissioned service will be delivered in a way that promotes dignity, respect and equality for

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
				all eligible children and young people regardless of sexual orientation. No adverse impacts have been identified.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	☐	☒	☐	The service particularly benefits groups who may experience disadvantage, including looked after children, care leavers, children living in poverty, children with multiple vulnerabilities and young carers where eligible. The recommissioning is intended to maintain equitable access to independent support and improve participation for these groups.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	☐	☒	☐	Although not a healthcare service, independent advocacy and independent visitors can contribute to improved emotional wellbeing, resilience and access to wider support services. By helping vulnerable children to have their voices heard and overcome barriers to participation, the service is expected to contribute positively to reducing wider health inequalities.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

Equality impacts will continue to be monitored through procurement, contract management and ongoing engagement with children and young people.

When will you review this EIA?

The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed throughout the procurement process and updated if any significant changes are made to the proposal. A further review will be undertaken during contract mobilisation and implementation to ensure equality considerations have been appropriately reflected within the service specification, procurement outcomes and contract management arrangements. The EIA will also be reviewed if there are significant changes to legislation, policy or service delivery during the life of the contract.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.

- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

EllieJenkins

Date signed

21/07/26

9. Make this EIA available (and delete this section)

- Attach your EIA as an appendix to any decision reports so that decision-makers have all the equality data they need in order to make robust and fair decisions.
- Upload your EIA to the shared Teams site: [Equality Impact Assessment | General | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Staff, trade unions, service users or members of the public may want to see this EIA, so it must be published on our website along with the decision report.