



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Service Director for activity being assessed: Tori Lynch

Directorate: Children and Young People

Name of lead person for this activity: Jess Davies

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Jess Davies and Sandra Griffiths

Date assessment completed: July 2026

2. What is being assessed

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

Commissioning and delivery of a local overnight short breaks service with outreach support for children with disabilities.

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

The aim is to increase local sufficiency and ensure equitable access to high-quality short breaks services for children with disabilities and their families. This will address gaps in current provision and support Herefordshire's Improvement Plan for Children and Families, as well as the Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children and Young People.

The purpose is to ensure children's assessed needs are met, families have access to high-quality, local short break care that promotes family resilience, and reduces reliance on external providers thus avoiding out-of-county placements.

The council has purchased a 3 bed bungalow within 10 miles of Hereford city, from which a single provider, commissioned through a competitive tender exercise, will deliver a registered overnight service with outreach support.

This partnership will provide a local registered two-bed short breaks service, which at full capacity, will provide a maximum of 720 bed-nights a year; for avoidance of doubt this excludes Christmas and Easter bank holiday periods.

In addition to the overnight support, the service will also provide outreach support within the child's family home and or the community. This arrangement will reduce the need for out of county care and increase access to short breaks for children and their families.

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)

The aim, in line with Herefordshire's Improvement Plan for Children and Families, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy (2023-26), is for all children and young people, including those with SEND, to have the best start in life. We want all children and young people to be happy, prepared for adulthood and able to achieve their potential, and for families to feel supported, confident and resilient.

The inability to fully meet a child's assessed needs increases the risk of their family reaching crisis and may contribute to the child being unable to remain in their family home. The Council is also at risk of legal challenge for not meeting its statutory duties. It also results in a negative impact on the child and their family, as it limits opportunity for them to have the same experiences as their peers.

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

Despite previous extensive market engagement, attempts to stimulate the market to develop local overnight care provision has not achieved the required outcomes for either the families or the council. Therefore, a new approach was required, resulting in approval to re-purpose capital funds to enable the council to purchase a property.

In March 2025, the council issued a call for interest via its electronic procurement portal, to explore whether providers would be willing to develop a local care service. Five providers responded positively, on the condition that suitable accommodation could be made available.

In October, a "Request for Information" was issued via the portal, with the purpose of seeking clarification that the council's proposal was aligned to providers expectations. Six providers responded, and their feedback has informed the service specification.

During November, two market engagement / meet the buyer events were held; one in-person and the other via Teams. Eight providers were represented, who were all positive about the approach and reinforced feedback from earlier engagement.

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)

There is a significant market challenge for overnight short breaks across England (Ofsted 2020) and despite extensive market engagement sourcing local overnight short breaks services for children with disabilities and their families has been a continual challenge, so a new approach is required.

All providers who responded to market engagement conducted this year, confirmed that if suitable accommodation was provided, this would make it a more attractive opportunity for them to develop a local overnight short break service.

In March 2026, a competitive procurement exercise was conducted, in line with the council's Contracts Procedure Rules; that resulted in four compliant bids. Following confirmation of the evaluators' scores and completion of the due diligence checks, the recommendation was that PCA Dom 1 Ltd be awarded a contract to deliver Overnight Short Breaks with Outreach Support for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

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)

This service will increase local access to specialist overnight short breaks and outreach support for children with disabilities, helping to address the current gap in local registered provision and reduce reliance on external or out-of-county arrangements.

It will support the elimination of discrimination and disadvantage by developing a service specifically for children and young people with disabilities whose assessed needs require overnight and/or outreach short breaks. The property is being adapted to support accessibility and sensory needs, and individual planning will take account of each child's developmental stage, communication needs, cultural background, personal care needs and family circumstances. This will help ensure that children are supported in a way that is inclusive, personalised and responsive to their individual needs.

The service will also advance equality of opportunity by increasing the availability of local, planned short breaks that support children to have positive experiences, build confidence, develop independence and spend time away from their main carers in a safe and supportive environment. This is consistent with Herefordshire's Short Breaks Statement, which states that short breaks should enable children and young people with SEND to have fun, spend time with friends, take part in activities, develop life and social skills, become more independent or confident, prepare for adulthood and be safe. It also recognises the benefit for parents and carers, including having time away from caring responsibilities and feeling confident that their child is safe and supported by skilled carers.

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 <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	☒	☐	☐	The care service to be developed and delivered will meet the specific needs of the children and young people, assessed as requiring overnight and or daytime short breaks. As the service will be registered, it must comply with the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and Ofsted National Minimum Standards, by ensuring that all staff actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in their practice. Support, resources and activities will be tailored not only to the individual child's chronological age but also their development stage, which is especially

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
				important for children with disabilities who may have different developmental trajectories.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	☒	☐	☐	The council is undertaking adaptations to ensure the property is fully accessible. Adaptions to the property will be led by Occupational Health and ensure it is fully accessible and sensory-friendly environment. The service will work closely with each child's family and Children with Disabilities allocated worker, to ensure communication is effective and inclusive, using strategies such as PECS, visual schedules, and other tailored approaches that reflect the child's individual needs and preference. The Service Provider (identified through a competitive tendering process), Children with Disabilities team representative and occupational therapist, where required, will jointly assess whether a child requires specialist equipment, such as a specialist seating. There will be a clear process to identify where responsibility for purchasing the equipment will lie, depending on whether it is for a named child or used by multiple children.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	☐	☒	☐	Having opportunities to develop new friendships and relationships, supports to ensure the young person can talk about such issues with someone beyond their immediate support network. As the service must comply with Ofsted's national standards, there are clear requirements that staff must actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects. Staff must also adapt care and support to meet the individual's diverse needs.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	☐	☒	☐	Access to new experiences and activities can help disabled young people prepare for adulthood and become confident individuals living fulfilling lives.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	☐	☒	☐	To date, this has not been arisen, however if this did arise, the young person and their parents, would be supported by the council's Children with Disabilities team.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	☒	☐	☐	Children with disabilities are part of all families, communities, faiths, and cultures. The setting will be fully inclusive, accessed through specialist assessment, and will provide support to children and young people with disabilities from diverse backgrounds.
Religion & Belief	☒	☐	☐	Only children who have been assessed by the council's Children with Disabilities team, as requiring specialist short breaks support will be eligible for the service. No child will be refused access based on religion and belief. The Service Provider will be required to outline how they will demonstrate cultural competence for

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
				children and young people from religious backgrounds, where their culture would require additional resources.
Sex (consider issues of safety and sexual violence, part-time work)	☒	☒	☐	The service will consider each child's assessed needs, wishes and preferences, including any requirements relating to sex, privacy, dignity, personal care and safety. Where a child or young person expresses a preference for same-sex support, this will be considered through individual care planning and matching arrangements. Where the provider is unable to meet a preference due to workforce availability, the Children with Disabilities Team will work with the provider, child and parent/carer to agree the safest and most appropriate approach. This may include additional safeguards, revised staffing arrangements, or considering an alternative service where needs cannot be met safely
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	The service will provide a welcoming and inclusive environment where children and young people feel safe and supported to express their sexual orientation without fear of discrimination. Accessing the service will create opportunities to build trusting relationships, enabling young people to feel confident discussing their identity.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	☒	☐	☐	The council's Equality Policy (2023-2027) recognises the difficulties experienced by parents/carers of young children, or those with caring responsibilities. Short breaks is beneficial for parents/carers with a disabled child, as it provides time away from their caring duties. Having a break not only provides parents/carers with opportunity to have some "me" time whilst confident that their child is safe and having fun, but also to; • attend to their own physical and psychological wellbeing, • spend time quality time with other children, • attend regularly training, education or leisure activity. • develop and maintain their social network.
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)	☒	☐	☐	The Service Provider will be an integral part of the team around the child, working in partnership with families, social care and health professionals to ensure health equality and that every child's health needs are fully met. The service will support the delivery of the vision and objectives contained within Herefordshire's Children's Services and Partnership Improvement Plan, Herefordshire's Special educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy (2023-2026), and is informed by the principles of Early Help.

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
Limited availability of staff matching all criteria (sex, religion, belief).	Work collaboratively with the Service Provider and family to identify the most appropriate alternative solutions.	Commissioning Manager	ongoing

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

Contract monitoring will be undertaken at least every quarter, to ensure the contracted provider is compliant with all aspects of the relevant service specification. However, if parents, children or professionals raise any concerns, meetings will be convened outside of the contract monitor schedule. The contracted service provider will be required to submit regularly submit data on the service performance, which will form the main focus of the six monthly (minimum) monitoring meetings.

When will you review this EIA?

This EIA should be revisited regularly throughout the development, implementation and monitoring of the service.

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

S Griffiths

Date signed

17/08/2026