

Equality Impact Assessment

NB: The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Sunderland City Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Assessing impact on equality and recording this is one of the key ways in which we can show due regard.

Section One: Description and Screening

Service/Team or Section	Adoption Team
Lead Officer	Kathryn McCabe
Title	Service Manager, Together for Children
Cabinet Date (if relevant)	17 th November 2020
Start Date	20/10/20
Review Date	29/01/21

Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal or practice as appropriate (a copy of the subject can be attached or insert a web-link):
The full business case for the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) – Adopt Coast to Coast sets out the Partnership Model agreement reached by Durham, Cumbria and Together for Children/Sunderland to work collaboratively to develop and deliver their respective adoption services under the leadership of the Regional Adoption Agency, Head of Service, whose joint appointment all have agreed.

Who are the main stakeholders? (e.g. general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users):
Current adoptive families Prospective adopters currently in process with each children's service Adoption Social Workers and wider team members National representative groups General public

Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics?

Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Y = Yes, N = No, ? = unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Y = Yes, N = No, ? = unsure
Age	N	?
Disability	N	Y
Marriage and civil partnership (workplace only)	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	N	N
Race (ethnicity)	N	Y
Religion or Belief	N	Y
Sex (gender)	N	Y
Sexual orientation	N	Y
Transgender	N	Y

Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause adverse impact. Record full details and analysis in the following section of this assessment.

Adopt Coast to Coast will not cause adverse impact on approved adoptive families currently receiving a service or likely to need a service in the future. Nor will it cause adverse impact on the birth families or children with a plan of adoption.

How will this policy/proposal/practice promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups?

Adopt Coast to Coast will act as a central hub for the recruitment of prospective adopters on behalf of the 3 children's services from Sunderland/TfC, Durham and Cumbria. It is intended and hoped that acting as one recruitment agency will increase the number of successful adopters as it will make approaching an adoption agency simpler and more attractive. Consequently it is more likely that

children who need a forever family will be matched and placed more quickly and achieve permanence successfully.

The hub will welcome and support applications from all prospective adopters and in doing so identify the strengths in their uniqueness and the lifelong commitment they wish to make to a child. In recruiting through a central point, the specific needs of children e.g. ethnicity, disability etc who have a plan of adoption will be given more focus within the recruitment activity undertaken on behalf of the 3 children's services. The RAA will also be able to undertake adoption campaigns to attract adopters from specific demographic groups, with protected characteristics (for example, race or sexuality) therefore improving the impact of the RAA on children and adopters with protected characteristics.

Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your findings?
Please **outline** your data sets and/or proposed evidence sources, highlight any gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record greater detail and analysis in the following section of this assessment.

As part of the development work prior to the formal launch of the RAA in April 2021, the Head of Service will take the lead in developing and maintaining the active participation of stakeholder groups who are affected by Adoption which will assist in providing qualitative intelligence. The RAA business case has been developed over several years however and takes account of current best practice and the collective experience and expertise of the 3 children's services. As such there is reasonable confidence that potential gaps have been accounted for.

As part of ongoing development and regular reviews of practice, equality monitoring data will be regularly reviewed to identify if there are any potential gaps in Adopt Coast to Coast's engagement with adopters with protected characteristics.

Screening Summary

On the basis of this screening is there:	Confirm which refers (Y/N)
Evidence of actual or potential impact on some/all of the protected characteristics which will proceed to full assessment?	Y
No evidence of actual or potential impact on some/all of the protected characteristics?	N

Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Kathryn McCabe	Date: 23/10/2020
Service equality representative sign off: Jill Colbert	Date: 25/10/2020

Section Two: Data analysis and assessment of impact

Please provide details on impacts for people with different protected characteristics relevant to your screening findings. You need to decide if there is or likely to be a differential impact for some. Highlight the positives e.g. benefits for certain groups, advancing equality, as well as the negatives e.g. barriers for and/or exclusion of particular groups. Record the evidence you have used to support or explain your conclusions. Devise and record mitigating actions where necessary.

Protected Characteristic: Age		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Record of evidence to support or explain your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
None	Adopt Coast to Coast will continue to welcome and support applications from prospective adopters regardless of age as long as they meet the statutory requirement to be over 21 years of age.	Monitor data to identify potential gaps.

Protected Characteristic: Disability		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
None	Adopt Coast to Coast will continue to welcome and support applications from prospective adopters who have a disability. Where appropriate recruitment campaigns will be undertaken to target adopters with disabilities to improve the ability of the service to match children with adopters with disabilities.	Monitor data to identify potential gaps.

	The 3 Local Authority Adoption Agencies take a strengths-based approach to applications from prospective adopters who identify themselves as having a disability. In doing so support services are considered holistically when considering a match with a child.	
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Protected Characteristic: Marriage and civil partnership (workplace only)		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
N/A		

Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy and maternity		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
N/A		

Protected Characteristic: Race (ethnicity)		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
Positive	Adopt Coast to Coast will continue to welcome and support applications from prospective adopters from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Though the practice of adoption agencies is not to delay children so a match with an adoptive family who share their ethnicity can be achieved, the centralised recruitment activity will support a wider engagement with a wide range of communities to increase the	Monitor data to identify potential gaps.

	<p>knowledge and understanding of adoption with the hope that this increases interests in adoption from members of these communities.</p> <p>On behalf of the national pool of adopters Adopt Coast to Coast will actively encourage and assess applicants who wish to adopt a child who is not represented in the children who wait across the 3 children services partners.</p>	
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Protected Characteristic: Religion or belief		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
Positive	<p>Adopt Coast to Coast will continue to welcome and support applications from prospective adopters from a wide range of religions and belief systems.</p> <p>As part of future recruitment activity Adopt Coast to Coast will share and develop best practice around engagement with faith groups to highlight the need for adoptive parents from specific faith groups and encourage applications.</p>	Monitor data to identify potential gaps.

Protected Characteristic: Sex (gender)		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
Potentially positive	Adopt Coast to Coast will continue to welcome and support applications from prospective adopters regardless of their gender.	Monitor data to identify potential gaps.

	Through recruitment the lived experiences of single adopters are highlighted to give single prospective adopters the confidence to apply. Post adoption support needs are recognised and Adopt Coast to Coast will be looking at regional support opportunities for single adopters.	
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Protected Characteristic: Sexual orientation		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
Positive	Adopt Coast to Coast will continue to welcome and support applications from prospective adopters with different sexual orientations. Each of the Local Authority Adoption Services actively encourages applications through highlighting that sexual orientation is not a bar to adoption within recruitment campaigns, and uses adopter voice in information sessions, training and ongoing service delivery. Through the Hub model it is hoped more adopters from different sexual orientations will be attracted to apply.	Monitor data to identify potential gaps.

Protected Characteristic: Transgender		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
Potentially positive	Adopt Coast to Coast will continue to welcome and support applications from prospective adopters who identify as transgender. Each of the children services Adoption Services are regular	None required

	attendees at regional events that champion issues of LGBTQ+ and enhancing these opportunities will be a key aspect of the recruitment and marketing strategy for Adopt Coast to Coast.	
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Section Three: Conclusion and Review

Summary

Please provide a brief summary of your findings stating the main impacts, both positive and negative, across the protected characteristics.

The opportunity to work across the region to recruit, assess, approve and support prospective adopters and to match them with the children of the 3 Local Authority partners under the Regional Adoption Agency Adopt Coast to Coast will support the continued positive practice each of the partners already demonstrate.

Will this promote positive relationships between different communities? If so how?
Adopt Coast to Coast will not impact on this.

Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescales for implementation	In which plan will the action appear?
Develop and maintain the active participation of Stakeholder groups who are affected by Adoption.	RAA Head of Service	Will commence in December 2020	Reports to the Governance Board.
Monitor data to identify potential gaps	RAA Head of Service	Will commence in early 2021	Reports to the Governance Board.
Should any identity gaps be identified then Adopt Coast to Coast will increase engagement work with groups that may not have been engaged with utilising the lived experience of adopters.	RAA Head of Service	Will follow monitoring activities.	Reports to the Governance Board.

Review

Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken? (Y/N)	N
When will this assessment be reviewed? Please also insert this date at the front of the template	Pre shadow go live which is 1 st February 2021.

Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Kathryn McCabe	Date: 23/10/2020
Service equality representative sign off: Jill Colbert	Date: 23/10/2020

