

Associated guidance for this document can be found [here](#). Each section has a link to the relevant section within the guidance document.

1 Details of the activity (i.e. the policy, strategy, service, project or function)

1.1 Directorate	Together for Children Sunderland
1.2 Service	Foster with North East – Establishment of a North East Pathfinder

1.3 Title of the activity (i.e. the policy, strategy, service, project or function):
<p>The North East Pathfinder has three components that together create a holistic package of intervention to boost foster carer numbers.</p> <p>A regional support hub – to improve the journey from foster carer enquiry to application and approval. Individual Local Authorities will retain responsibility for assessing and approving foster carers. Foster with North East hub will seek to ensure that prospective applicants are given high quality, relevant and consistent messaging to help them make an informed decision about fostering and lead on developing a consistent fostering narrative and package across the region. The hub is intended to also provide improved support through the application process, minimising dropout rates at various key points in the process. This will run in parallel to all Local Authorities within the region assessing and attempting, as far as is feasible, to harmonise their terms and conditions for foster carers as well as assessment and approval processes to provide an improved and consistent model that prospective carers experience alongside the enhanced support offer.</p> <p>A regional foster carer recruitment communications campaign – This is to direct prospective carers to the support hub and;</p> <p>Retention support – to enhance the offer to new applicants and boost retention of existing carers through further roll out of the “Mockingbird” project.</p>

1.4 Brief description of the activity:
<p>The establishment of a regional support hub will replace activity that individual North East Local Authorities currently undertake. The hub will receive enquiries from all prospective foster carers within the region and ensure their Expressions of Interests are collated in a consistent and supportive manner. Once these enquiries are received and collated they would be passed on to the receiving Local Authority to progress with the assessment process.</p>

1.5 If the activity involves working with other directorates, partners or joint commissioning please state who is involved:
<p>The service is North East England regional project and several workstreams are included within this project. These include data and performance, ICT and HR support.</p>

1.6 Will all or part of the activity be delivered through a provider external to the Council? If Yes, please refer to the Corporate Procurement Processes
No

1.7 If Yes, please explain what element(s) of the activity will be delivered through an external provider:
N/A

1.8 Which areas of the city will be impacted?	
Whole City	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Coalfield	<input type="checkbox"/>
East	<input type="checkbox"/>
North	<input type="checkbox"/>
Washington	<input type="checkbox"/>
West	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Council Activity – Impact on employees	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.9 Is the activity targeted at protected characteristics or any other key groups?	
All of the below	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age (e.g. older people, younger people/children, a specific age group)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability (e.g. mobility, long term health conditions, sensory impairment or loss, learning disability, neurological diversity or mental health)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief (including no belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care Experienced People	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other vulnerable groups and people with complex needs (e.g. veterans, children and young people who are cared for or care experienced, carers, domestic abuse victims and survivors, ex-offenders etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
People vulnerable to socio-economic deprivation (e.g. unemployed, low income, living in deprived areas, poor/no accommodation, low skills, low literacy etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Completed by: Daniel Kenny

Version	Status	Author	Comments	Date Issued
1		Daniel Kenny		07/06/2023

2 Data and Intelligence

[Guidance for this section](#)

2.1 What data and intelligence has informed the activity?

In terms of data, from the Department of Education point of view, data is collected annually by Ofsted <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fostering-in-england-1-april-2021-to-31-march-2022>. In the year 21-22, there was 1300 initial enquires which ultimately led to 125 applicants received and 130 approved households.

More widely, in terms of recent evidence base that offers further information, foster carer related issues around recruitment and retention can be found in:

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care' – foundation for this work in the North East.

<https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/final-report/>

Government response to the above review: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/independent-review-of-childrens-social-care>

<p>2.2 Summary of data / intelligence / consultation outcomes to inform understanding of differences in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the way people use, access or experience your activity; how the activity may impact; and/or outcomes for different groups?
<p>Further information is detailed below in respect of further background information to the need for the establishment of this work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition and Markets Authority - Children’s social care market study final report - https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/childrens-social-care-study ‘Foster Care in England’ - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foster-care-in-england Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers's independent review of the fostering system in England with recommendations to the government about improving foster care. And government response to that: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-better-outcomes What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care: https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WWCSC_sufficiency_report_Final_March22.pdf (study found that a recent increase in the demand for children’s residential care was attributed to a lack of fostering capacity and that children who were eligible or better suited for fostering ended up in residential care because of insufficient fostering capacity) Ofsted research: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/why-do-children-go-into-childrens-homes/why-do-children-go-into-childrens-homes#main-findings (children who could and should be in foster care being placed in expensive residential care).

3 Equality and Human Rights

[Guidance for this section](#)

<p>3.1 Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p> <p>What impact will the activity have?</p> <p>Not Applicable</p> <p>Explain how/why:</p> <p>N/A</p>
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<p>3.2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</p> <p>What impact will the activity have?</p> <p>Not Applicable</p> <p>Explain how/why:</p>

<p>3.3 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</p> <p>What impact will the activity have?</p> <p>Not Applicable</p> <p>Explain how/why:</p>

3.4 Age (older ages, children and young people, middle ages, an age range or a specific age)
What impact will the activity have?
Positive
Explain how/why:
The Hub element of the project will look to recruit a range of applicants with differing ages. Whilst there is a minimum age limit from 21 to be considered as a foster carer, this is a regulated national threshold and not one decided by the Hub.
3.5 Disability (mobility, long-term health conditions, sensory, learning disability, neurological diversity or mental health)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
Whilst the activity is not targeted at people with disabilities, the Hub element of the project will look to recruit a range of applicants with different backgrounds. People with disabilities will not be excluded from the application process and will be provided with the necessary support required to actively apply.
Written and website information will be available in alternative format, if it is required as a result of a disability.
3.6 Gender reassignment (the process of transitioning from one sex to another)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
Whilst the activity is not targeted at people who have or are in the process of transitioning, the Hub element of the project will look to recruit a range of applicants with different backgrounds. Applications from trans people will be welcomed and they will be assessed against the foster carer criteria and no discrimination or bias will be tolerated in the applications process.
3.7 Marriage and Civil Partnership
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
Whilst the activity is not targeted those who are married/in a civil partnership or otherwise , the Hub element of the project will look to recruit a range of applicants with different backgrounds. Applications will be welcomed from single people and they will be assessed fairly against the foster carer criteria.
3.8 Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:

3.9 Race (colour, ethnicity, country of origin, culture, etc.)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
<p>Whilst the activity is not targeted at people from minority ethnic communities, the Hub element of the project will look to recruit a range of applicants with different backgrounds. Applications from people from minority ethnic backgrounds will be welcomed and they will be assessed fairly against the foster carer criteria; discrimination will not be tolerated in the application process.</p> <p>Consideration can be given to specialist recruitment drive towards minority ethnic communities to meet the needs of children and young people. In addition communications in alternative languages can be made available.</p>

3.10 Religion / Belief (including no belief)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:

3.11 Sex (male or female)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
<p>Whilst the activity is not targeted at any particular sex, the Hub element of the project will look to recruit a range of applicants with different backgrounds. Applications will be welcomed from both men and women and they will be assessed fairly against the foster carer criteria.</p>

3.12 Sexual orientation
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:
<p>Whilst the activity is not targeted at LGBT+ people, the Hub element of the project will look to recruit a range of applicants with different backgrounds. Applications will be welcomed from LGBT+ people and they will be assessed fairly against the foster carer criteria; discrimination will not be tolerated in the application process.</p>

3.13 Will the activity impact on an individual's Human Rights as enshrined in UK law?
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:

3.14 Other vulnerable groups and people with complex needs (e.g. veterans, children and young people cared for and care experienced, carers, domestic abuse victims and survivors, ex-offenders, homeless or multiple complexities/characteristics)
What impact will the activity have?
Not Applicable
Explain how/why:

4 Reducing socio-economic and digital inequalities

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

4.1 Impact on residents' financial circumstances?	Positive
4.2 Impact on housing, including type, range, affordability, quality and/or condition?	Not Applicable
4.3 Impact on digital inclusion or access?	Not Applicable
4.4 Impact on education, skills and lifelong learning?	Positive
4.5 Impact on employment, including quality and access?	Positive

4.6 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes
4.1, 4.4, 4.5 – The project will, for a small number of people (in comparison with the city population) improve their financial circumstances by paying a competitive salary for being a foster carer, as well as providing ongoing training and skills in the role.
4.7 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)
A series of targets will be established to review the progress of the project. These will include, but not restricted to, the monitoring of initial enquiries, applications and newly approved households. The initial enquiry to household approval conversion rate, newly approved households and de-registrations and number of Cared for Children living with fostering households.

5 Improving population health and reducing health inequalities

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

5.1 Help promote healthy living?	Not Applicable
5.2 Help promote safe and inclusive environments?	Positive
5.3 Impact on children, young people and families?	Positive
5.4 Impact on natural and built surroundings?	Not Applicable
5.5 Impact on accessibility and active travel encouraging active behaviours?	Not Applicable
5.6 Impact on living independently?	Not Applicable

5.7 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes
Very vulnerable children and young people will be provided with safe and loving homes, free from harm,

5.8 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)

As 4.7

6 Carbon reduction and sustainability

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

6.1 Impact on carbon reduction or the use of renewable energy?	Not Applicable
6.2 Impact on the effects of climate change adaptation?	Not Applicable
6.3 Impact on reducing, re-using and recycling resources?	Not Applicable
6.4 Impact on construction?	Not Applicable

6.5 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes

Not applicable.

6.6 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)

N/A

7 Community wealth building

[Guidance for this section](#)

Will the activity:

7.1 Impact on community wealth and social value?	Not Applicable
7.2 Impact on social inclusion, integration, and fostering good relations?	Positive
7.3 Impact on crime reduction, anti-social behaviour and community safety?	Positive
7.4 Impact on access to services?	Not Applicable

7.5 Outline the impact your activity will have, including how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes

We know that cared for children are disproportionately involved in crime and anti-social behaviour, because of the traumas they have experienced in their young lives. By living in stable and loving homes, that are free from harm, children and young people will be feel more confident to be a part of their local communities and be less likely to be involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

7.6 Outline how you will measure the anticipated impact(s)

N/A

8 Key Actions

Any key actions identified throughout the IIA should be recorded here. This will be the action plan linked to your activity and should be implemented to ensure all inequalities or negative impacts are mitigated.

Key Actions	Timescale	Responsible Officer	Review Date
All communications to be available in alternative formats and languages.			

Responsible officer sign off:

Name Daniel Kenny

Job Title Service Lead – Pathfinder

Responsible officer for reviewing actions:

Name

Job Title

Once the Integrated Impact Assessment is complete, please send to IIA@sunderland.gov.uk.