

# Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact [equality@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rbwm.gov.uk)

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## 1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	<u>AfC Contract</u>
Service area:	<u>Achieving for Children</u>
Directorate:	<u>Children's Services</u>

### **Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:**

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

This report recommends the extension of the Achieving for Children (AfC) Contract for a further five years.

Council officers have undertaken an options analysis to evaluate what the recommended delivery model should be after July 2024. The team has looked at the current performance of AfC in terms of quality and value for money as well as how well it is meeting local priorities.

Council officers are recommending that the existing arrangement with AfC is extended for a further five years. The arrangement is delivering a good standard of service and offers value for money. On balance, an alternative model is unlikely to achieve better quality or value at this time. Extending the existing arrangement will also support stability in the service at a time when there is rising complexity and levels of need for children, young people and families.

**This is not a new proposal or a change to an existing one.** Alternatively this is about continuing with largely the same contract, and this would mean, in practice, that AfC can continue to have a potentially positive impact on those children and young people with the protected characteristics outlined below.

## 2. Relevance Check

**Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?**

- If Yes, state 'Yes' and proceed to Section 3.
- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

Yes and impact on equality will be managed through ongoing monitoring, review and an annual Equality Impact Assessment.

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact [equality@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rbwm.gov.uk)

## 3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

**Who will be affected by this proposal?**

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

The contract with AfC requires compliance with relevant Equalities Legislation. AfC has an 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy' which is governed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board.

AfC publishes an Annual Equalities Report which outlines how it is seeking to support equality, diversity and inclusion as well as how it is looking to achieve continuous improvement. AfC also publishes Equality Impact Assessments for all significant changes or priority programmes.

The service within the scope of this contract includes children and young people who have protected characteristics. AfC works actively to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all children and young people in the borough. AfC offers specialist support to those children and young people who may require additional support and champion their wellbeing and inclusion within the community.

**Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?**

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

**Yes, particularly the following:**

**Age** - Children and Young People (up to the age of 25 in particular situations)

**Disability** - a significant number of children and young people with whom we work will have a learning difficulty or disability.

**Race, ethnicity and religion** - we work with children and young people from a range of backgrounds, including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children and young people.

**Sexual orientation and gender reassignment** - we embrace and work with young people of various sexual orientations and also some young people who are undergoing gender reassignment.

**Pregnancy and maternity** - we work with a number of pregnant women and families.

**Armed forces community** -we work with children and young people from our armed forces community.

**Children in Care and Care Leavers** - we work with Children in Care and Care Leavers.

**Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty** -many of the families with whom we work are in poverty, or experience low incomes.

**(Please see below for more details)**

**What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?**

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

Although we do not need to formally consult on the extension to the AfC Contract, staff and service users are consulted on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion as contained in our annual published equalities report.

**What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?**

Please consult the [EQIA Evidence Matrix](#) for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document (Section 2.3).

**Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.**

**Please also see the Annual AfC Equalities Report.**

#### 4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'.

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the EQIA Guidance document (available on the intranet).

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	<p>AfC works with children and young people from pre birth until the age of 25, where applicable. This includes our Family Hubs, which offer a range of preventative and targeted early help services to children and young people. In the last year, the Family Hubs have provided 1:1 support to 823 children and 3,400 children and young people have attended group sessions on topics such as digital safety, drug and alcohol awareness and self esteem. 92% of schools in the borough are good and outstanding, offering the majority of our children and young people an excellent standard of education.</p> <p>Ways2work is AfC's approved apprenticeship training provider and offers high quality apprenticeships and traineeships, particularly for our more vulnerable young people.</p>	<p>Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.</p>	
Disability	<p>AfC no longer has a written statement of action in relation to SEND and this means that our children and young people are now receiving a higher quality of intervention than previously</p> <p>AfC organises an annual 'Inclusion Summit' which was well attended and advocates for the inclusion of our SEND children and young people.</p> <p>The social emotional and mental health (SEMH) Intervention Project, which was established in 2019 to reduce the risk of permanent exclusion in schools has continued to thrive. Since it began, the</p> <p>The project has worked in 42 schools and supported 91 individual children. Of those children, just three have been permanently excluded and they have been supported in their transition to alternative provision.</p> <p>As part of the project, we trained 873 school staff to help them support children</p>	<p>Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.</p>	

	<p>with challenging behaviours linked to SEMH difficulties, as well as delivering updated training to 140 staff and bespoke training to 115 staff. At the same time, we established 140 SEMH leads in schools and held three SEMH network meetings a year where leads can be signposted to early help services and share learning and feedback.</p> <p>We have also purchased a subscription to the Online Boxall Profile which enables schools to assess the needs of their children quickly, set targets, and monitor progress. Sixty one of our schools are actively using this assessment and tracking tool which will enable us to analyse data to support transitions and target areas of need.</p> <p>AfC successfully submitted a bid for a 100 place new special free school for children and young people aged seven to 16, with EHCPs for SEMH needs. The new school will be located in a new development planned on the western edge of Windsor and we will now move forward to the next stage of planning.</p> <p>In addition, a new SEND provision is opening at South Ascot Village School, for 10 pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. We are also opening an early years readiness hub which will provide interventions to support children who are unable to self-regulate and so are not yet ready to learn in a mainstream school setting.</p> <p>The emotionally related school avoidance (ERSA) project has been established to support those children who experience difficulties attending school, due to a range of factors. Through the project, 28 schools have received training, support and consultation on ERSA, have been given access to a newly created toolkit, and have been provided with additional strategies to help them to effectively support these children. A further 16 schools have been trained during Spring 2023. A multi-agency steering group oversees the project, including the development, dissemination, training and implementation of the ERSA toolkit and further refining the ERSA multi-agency graduated pathway. Feedback from pupils, parents and the schools has been extremely good.</p>		
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Sex	<p>AfC facilitates a Girls Policy Forum in the borough so that young women can be actively involved in local democracy.</p> <p>A 'peer on peer abuse' toolkit has been developed for schools, in order to support enhanced identification, prevention and early intervention, particularly in relation to abuse against girls and young women.</p>	<p>Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.</p>	
Race, ethnicity and religion	<p>The Educational Psychology Service has hosted three workshops for Hong Kongers and met with Hong Kong community leaders for a community building project. The workshops explored how the local authority could support Hong Kong families better in their transitions to life, work, local community, leisure, English language and education in Windsor and Maidenhead. Through funding by the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, we also developed a web page specifically to welcome Hong Kongers, alongside a welcome for Ukrainian refugees.</p> <p>AfC produced and disseminated guidance for schools and colleagues on supporting young people who experience war, conflict and crisis. The guidance sets out how to notice signs of trauma and signposts to available support as well as providing hints for strengthening the cohesion within schools.</p> <p>The SEND Service and Educational Psychology and Wellbeing Service have established English as an Additional Language cluster peer group meetings twice every term to bring SEN coordinators and school staff together to share learning and discuss inclusive practice.</p> <p>AfC staff have supported the 2 hotels in the borough who have asylum seeking residents, offering drop-ins and 1:1 support, as well as supporting our Ukrainian children and young people.</p>	<p>Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.</p>	

	<p>Our Family Hubs offer a range of groups for our local Muslim community.</p> <p>To celebrate cultural diversity at AfC, we created an annual EDI calendar of events that includes key religious festivals and celebrations. Communications go out on our intranet from our directors, associate directors and staff who want to speak about their religion.</p>		
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	<p>During the past 12 months, the Educational Psychology and Wellbeing service provided ongoing assistance to secondary schools in terms of evidence-based good practice about how best to support and include pupils who are LGBTQIA+.</p> <p>We have developed guidance for managers supporting staff who identify as trans that includes practical advice and resources. Although this guidance is to support AfC staff, it reinforces a culture of inclusion at AfC for people choosing gender reassignment, which will also benefit the children, young people and families we work with. Work is currently underway to finalise guidance on supporting service users who identify as trans.</p>	<p>Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.</p>	
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Our Health Visiting Service, which offers all families with a new baby a health assessment within two weeks of birth, received a 'good' Ofsted rating when inspected this year. Our universal offer to all families with a new baby includes an invitation to a nurture group which are held weekly in three venues across the borough. The sessions are an opportunity for parents to access health and parenting advice. Average monthly attendance at these sessions is 136 and feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Support is also given to our Care Leavers who become young parents.</p>	<p>Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.</p>	
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>We provide training to raise awareness on forced marriage through the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), run by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Home Office, for our staff. The course is designed to enable participants to recognise and know how to respond</p>	<p>Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well</p>	

	to children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing harmful practices. Staff have access to the Forced Marriage Unit's public helpline that provides advice and support to victims and potential victims of forced marriage, and to professionals dealing with cases.	as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.	
Armed forces community	AfC Continues to offer support to children and young people from the armed forces community.	Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.	
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty	AfC continues to signpost families to relevant support and runs the FUEL Programme in the school holidays, whereby children and young people, particularly those in receipt of free school meals receive free food and activities.	Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual equalities report.	
Children in care/Care leavers	AfC's Virtual School and Virtual College has provided invaluable support to the educational attainment of our looked after children. In the most recent 2022 examinations, results for key stage 4 improved again. They are now significantly above national averages for looked after children, and our looked after young people with SEND outperformed their national peers at the same level.  At the request of our looked after children, we have been focusing on educational	Extending the AfC Contract will have a Potential positive impact because these services, as well as others, can continue to be delivered and have the positive impact as noted in our annual	



	<p>stability, and held a well-received multi-agency 'Stability Symposium' to bring together a range of stakeholders, including keynote speakers from the Department for Education and Oxford University.</p> <p>As a result of the event, our children and young people have launched their education stability charter which sets out clearly what they expect from the organisations that support them. Similarly, during the year, we were delighted that a number of local businesses signed up to our Care Leavers' Covenant and our Attachment Aware Community Charter at our Better Futures Business Event, which was organised in collaboration with John Lewis.</p> <p>With the expansion of virtual schools nationally to support all children with a social worker, we have grown our Attachment Aware Schools Award. This involves a year-long programme of training and support for schools so they are better able to meet the specific needs of these children and young people. We are now working with 69 schools as part of the award and as a result of this work, we have seen a reduction in the number of exclusions.</p> <p>To further strengthen our support for children with a social worker, we have extended the work of the AfC Virtual School Transition Hub which provides direct support for the children, their families and their school.</p> <p>AfC now has a dedicated specialist team for Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p>	<p>equalities report.</p>	
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## 5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

*If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.*

**What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it?**

For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group

Will be a continuation of what is currently in place.

**Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?**

- For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.

N/A

**How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?**

Via the AfC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board

## 6. Sign Off

<b>Completed by: Lin Ferguson</b>	<b>Date: 28 September 2023</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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