

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT BLOCK CONTRACT FOR INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCY PLACEMENTS - HILLCREST

## 1. Topic of assessment

<b>EIA title:</b>	<b>Block contract for independent fostering agency placements - Hillcrest</b>
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<b>EIA author:</b>	Elaine Malloy, Commissioner, Children's Commissioning Team
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## 2. Approval

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date approved</b>
<b>Approved by<sup>1</sup></b>	Ian Banner	04.02.2014

## 3. Quality control

<b>Version number</b>	2	<b>EIA completed</b>	
<b>Date saved</b>	04/02/2014	<b>EIA published</b>	

## 4. EIA team

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job title (if applicable)</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Angela Whitrick	Care Services Manager	SCC, CSF	Children's Services Placements Group
Anne Dickinson	Assistant Team Manager, Placements Team	SCC, CSF	Children's Services Placements Group
Nick Woodward	Category Specialist - Procurement	SCC,CSF	Children's Services Placements Group
Elaine Malloy	Commissioner	SCC, CSF	Children's Services Placements Group
Anna Tobiasz	Senior Category Specialist - Procurement	SCC,CSF	Procurement Specialist

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### 5. Explaining the matter being assessed

<p><b>What policy, function or service is being introduced or reviewed?</b></p>	<p>The County Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable alternative accommodation for children that become Looked After either under Section 20 or 31 of the Children Act. These placements will be approved Foster Placements or with Residential Care. These placements will be provided within the Council's own in-house resources or via the Independent Sector.</p> <p>In November 2013, there were 841 looked after children in Surrey. 533 of these children were placed in general foster care. The Council has our own fostering-carers and it is our policy to try to place those children and young people who would benefit most from a family-based placement, with a Surrey Foster-carer. Where this is not possible (either because of supply or for specialist needs), we will try to source an independent foster agency (IFA) placement. In November 2013, there were 192 IFA placements of Surrey looked-after children. The yearly budget for IFA placements is £6.5 million per annum. Statistics indicate that children are tending to remain in foster care for longer than previously, and for some, fostering becomes a permanent arrangement.</p> <p>As part of this IFA provision and building on an 8-year positive historical relationship, Surrey County Council (SCC) has a block contract for 20 placements with Hillcrest Care Services Ltd (Hillcrest). Last year Cabinet Member approval was given to extend this Block Contract with Hillcrest for a further year until 31 March 2014.</p> <p>The Council commissions the rest of its Independent Fostering placements requirements through a regional Framework Contract with 11 other Local Authorities. This Contract runs until 31 March 2017.</p> <p>The intention is to negotiate a new Block Contract with Hillcrest building on our positive working relationship, to align the contract with the Regional Framework Contract.</p> <p>Recognising the in-house Foster-Care Recruitment Strategy to recruit and retain foster-carers who live in Surrey, this contract will focus on recruiting foster-carers who live on or just over the county border within our neighbouring areas. This will support our ambition to generate more family-based foster-care placements as close as possible to the homes of looked after children and young people.</p>
<p><b>What proposals are you assessing?</b></p>	<p>The Block Contract with Hillcrest has previously been extended on an annual basis. However in 2013, the Council reviewed the contract with Hillcrest and assessed the options regarding future delivery (post March 2014).</p> <p>The recommendation is to award a new 3-year contract. This will allow us to continue to build a stronger working relationship with the Provider to generate more placement opportunities to meet the needs of our looked after children.</p>

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	<p>Extending the block contract from 1 to 3 years will also align with the regional framework enabling us to plan more effectively as linked to the intentions of the Surrey Looked After Children Commissioning Strategy (2013 – 2015) and the Surrey Placements Strategy for Looked After Children (in draft).</p>
<p><b>Who is affected by the proposals outlined above?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looked after children, young people and their families to whom family based placements are considered most suitable</li> <li>• Foster-carers in Surrey</li> <li>• Providers who currently deliver these services both in and out of County</li> </ul>

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## 6. Sources of information

Engagement carried out
Stakeholder engagement events working with the Regional IFA Collaborative Group - (including Providers and Local Authorities) Cabinet Member engagement Surrey Placements team
Data used
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children's Services Performance Report (December, 2013)</li><li>• South Central Regional IFA Performance Monitoring</li><li>• Surrey Central Placements team placements data</li></ul>

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## 7. Impact of the new/amended policy, service or function

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### 7a. Impact of the proposals on residents and service users with protected characteristics

Protected characteristic <sup>2</sup>	Potential positive impacts	Potential negative impacts	Evidence
<b>Age</b>	Increase in potential family based placements for looked after children and young people – specifically those with more complex needs and or are harder to place.	No identified impact	For children aged 0-9, an average of 95% are either in foster care or placed for adoption. This falls to 81% for those aged 10 – 15 years and 60% for those aged 16+. For those aged 10 – 17 an average of 18% of LAC are living in a residential placement and for those aged 16+, 16% are in independent living.
<b>Disability</b>	Increase in potential family based placements for looked after children and young people – specifically those with more complex needs and or are harder to place.	No identified impact	Traditionally, we have had a shortage of foster-carers to care for teenagers and those with complex needs. This shortage is now across the board for all ages and needs. Within some Surrey localities, such as the North East and North West area, the shortage of foster-carers is even greater.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Increase in potential parent and child-based family placements as part of the Enhanced fostering service.	No identified impact	None
<b>Race</b>	Increase in potential family based placements for looked after children and young people from a specific racial background	No identified impact	There is a need to identify more foster-carers from different racial groups to meet the needs of looked after children from the same racial group.
<b>Religion and belief</b>	Increase in potential family based placements for looked after children and young people from a specific racial	No identified impact	There is a need to identify more foster-carers from different religious groups to meet the needs of looked after children from the same religious group.

<sup>2</sup> More information on the definitions of these groups can be found [here](#).

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	background		
<b>Sex</b>	Increase in potential family based placements for all looked after children and young people.	No identified impact	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Marriage and civil partnerships</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None

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## 7b. Impact of the proposals on staff with protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Potential positive impacts	Potential negative impacts	Evidence
<b>Age</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Disability</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Race</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None

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<b>Religion and belief</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Sex</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None
<b>Marriage and civil partnerships</b>	No identified impact	No identified impact	None

## 8. Amendments to the proposals

Change	Reason for change
Key performance Indicators	<p>We currently meet with Hillcrest to monitor the block contract on a quarterly basis as well as any placements made through the IFA contract.</p> <p>The performance management framework must be reviewed to ensure that we monitor progress against outcomes and key performance indicators to continue to improve the quality and provision of service available complementing the Surrey in-house foster service.</p>

## 9. Action plan

Potential impact (positive or negative)	Action needed to maximise positive impact or mitigate negative impact	By when	Owner
Key Performance Indicators	Providers to sign off on the performance requirements and to be reported on a quarterly basis	14 March 2014	Angela Whitrick and Elaine Malloy
Agree dates for quarterly performance monitoring meetings	Strengthen partnership arrangements via the Supplier Relationship Management programme	14 March 2014	Angela Whitrick and Elaine Malloy

## 10. Potential negative impacts that cannot be mitigated

Potential negative impact	Protected characteristic(s) that could be affected
None Identified	None Identified

## 11. Summary of key impacts and actions

Information and	Discussions and papers to:
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**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - JOINT EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2013 – 2016**

<p><b>engagement underpinning equalities analysis</b></p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Board and Placement Stability Group: Performance monitoring reports</p> <p>Looked After Children Placements Group: Performance monitoring</p> <p>South Central Regional IFA Group: Bi-annual Provider Event</p>
<p><b>Key impacts (positive and/or negative) on people with protected characteristics</b></p>	<p>The proposal is renegotiate a three-year block contract with an existing provider. This will not impact negatively on children, young people and their families currently receiving these services however, the block contract will enable us to have more choice and opportunities for family-based placements to meet the needs of looked after children as effectively as possible from April 2014.</p>
<p><b>Changes you have made to the proposal as a result of the EIA</b></p>	<p>Changes to key performance indicators and performance management framework.</p>
<p><b>Key mitigating actions planned to address any outstanding negative impacts</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Potential negative impacts that cannot be mitigated</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>

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