

# Addressing Inequalities

## Equalities Impact Assessment

# Surrey County Council Equality Impact Assessment Template

## Stage one – initial screening

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<b>What is being assessed?</b>	<b>Admissions policy and coordinated schemes 2016</b>
<b>Service</b>	<b>Admissions and Transport</b>
<b>Name of assessor/s</b>	<b>Claire Potier</b>
<b>Head of service</b>	<b>Peter-John Wilkinson</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>28 October 2014</b>
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	<b>Existing policy under review</b>

**Write a brief description of your service, policy or function. It is important to focus on the service or policy the project aims to review or improve.**

The policies being considered under this EIA set out the processes and criteria for admitting children to community and voluntary controlled schools and how Surrey County Council will coordinate admission applications and outcomes within the County Council and across County borders. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, these policies include processes and criteria that are fair, objective and transparent.

**Indicate for each equality group whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, or no impact.**

<b>Equality Group</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<b>Age</b>	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parents of 4 year olds can ask for their child to defer entry or start Reception full / part-time</b></li> <li>• <b>Requests from the parents of summer</b></li> </ul>

				<p>born children for their child to be admitted to Reception in the year after they turn five will be considered on a case by case basis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older applicants will be prioritised for admission to a three year old nursery place as they will have less time to spend in nursery</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>			X	
<b>Disability</b>	X			<p>Provision is made for SEN children to be admitted to school</p> <p>Provisions made within the policy for priority to be given to medical need</p>
<b>Sex</b>			X	
<b>Religion and belief</b>	X			Provision made within the admissions timetable for faith schools to rank their applicants
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>			X	
<b>Race</b>			X	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>			X	
<b>Carers</b>	X			Potential for child carers to claim for social priority for a school place based on need
<b>Other equality issues – please state</b>	X			<p>Children in care and children who have left care through adoption, a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, receive top priority for a school place by law</p> <p>A translation service is on offer for parents who might find language a barrier to understanding the literature and Surrey's Schools and</p>

				<b>Childcare service acts as a Choice Advice service to help parents understand the process</b>
<b>HR and workforce issues</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Human Rights implications if relevant</b>			<b>X</b>	

**If you find a negative impact on any equality group you will need to complete stage one and move on to stage two and carry out a full EIA.**

**A full EIA will also need to be carried out if this is a high profile or major policy that will either effect many people or have a severe effect on some people.**

<b>Is a full EIA required?</b>	<b>Yes (go to stage two) X</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If no briefly summarise reasons why you have reached this conclusion, the evidence for this and the nature of any stakeholder verification of your conclusion.</b>		
<b>Briefly describe any positive impacts identified that have resulted in improved access or services</b>		

**For screenings only:**

<b>Review date</b>	
<b>Person responsible for review</b>	
<b>Head of Service signed off</b>	
<b>Date completed</b>	

- Signed off electronic version to be kept in your team for review
- Electronic copy to be forwarded to Equality and Diversity Manager for publishing

## Introduction and background

Using the information from your screening please describe your service or function. This should include:

- The aims and scope of the EIA
- The main beneficiaries or users
- The main equality, accessibility, social exclusion issues and barriers, and the equality groups they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every strand)

The policies being considered under this EIA set out the processes and criteria for admitting children to community and voluntary controlled schools and how Surrey County Council will coordinate admission applications and outcomes within the County Council and across County borders. These are statutory policies required by legislation and in accordance with the School Admissions Code, these policies include processes and criteria that are fair, objective and transparent and that comply with equalities legislation and the Human Rights Act.

The main users of the policies will be parents applying for Surrey schools, schools and neighbouring local authorities.

The admission policy allows for SEN children to be admitted ahead of other applicants. SEN admissions fall outside the scope of admissions legislation.

The admission criteria make provision for looked after children and children who have left care through adoption, a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, as a top priority for admission. The second criteria for admission allows for children who have a social or medical need for a place at a particular school to be given priority, this might include a child who has a disability or a parent with a disability, or a child who has caring responsibilities for a parent.

Most children start school in the year after they turn 4 years old but all children must be in school in the term after they turn 5 years old. By law the admission arrangements for entry to Reception allow for a parent of a 4 year old to defer their entry until later in the school year or to ask that their child start school part time. In addition, parents of summer born children may ask for their child to be admitted out of cohort in the following year and these cases are considered on an individual basis according to the circumstances and what is best for the child. However, by law, these applicants would have to reapply for a place in the following year.

The arrangements for admission to a three year old nursery place allow nurseries to give a higher priority to older children who might have less time to

spend in nursery. The proposed admission arrangements for a two year old nursery place provide for a fair allocation of places to children who are entitled to the extended nursery provision.

The policies and application procedure are widely publicised on Surrey County Council's website, in print and through publicity posters throughout the County and the closing dates are broadcast on local radio. Parents are encouraged to apply online and leaflets are sent out widely setting out how parents can apply and how they might obtain a paper copy of the application form. Schools act as a support and advisory point for parents and primary schools are asked to target parents of children in their nursery to make sure they apply for a Reception place. Primary schools are also asked to check the applications made to ensure that all children who are approaching Year 7 transition have made an application. Online application numbers are high at over 96%, which demonstrates that most parents have the access and ability to apply online. However paper forms are readily available for parents who do not have the access or ability to apply online to ensure that these parents have equal access to school places. There is no evidence that would indicate that these families are not currently accessing the service.

The County Council also employs a dedicated translation service for all written material and the Contact Centre is used to support parents who might have difficulty in understanding and applying the policy.

**Now describe how this fits into 'the bigger picture' including other council or local plans and priorities.**

Surrey County Council acts as admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, whilst the governing body of each school acts as the admission authority for academies and foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. The admission arrangements for all schools must be determined by 15 April each year and the arrangements and processes to determine which children will be admitted must be lawful and comply with the School Admissions Code.

Under the Coordination regulations each local authority must coordinate applications for children living in their area and must publish schemes setting out how it will do this.

The over-arching aspect of admission arrangements and coordinated schemes is that they must be fair and objective, give every parent the opportunity to apply for schools that they want for their child, provide parents with clear information and provide support to parents who find it hardest to understand the system.

## Evidence gathering and fact-finding

**What evidence is available to support your views above? Please include a summary of the available evidence including identifying where there are gaps to be included in the action plan.**

**Remember to consider accessibility alongside the equality groups**

Over 96% of parents applied online in 2014 and paper forms were readily available to parents who could not or chose not to apply online

As part of the normal intake to schools in 2014, 52 places were offered at community and voluntary controlled schools to children in care or children who had left care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a residence order.

As part of the normal intake to schools in 2014, 33 places were offered at community and voluntary controlled schools on exceptional grounds (social/medical need)

Sources of evidence may include:

- Service monitoring reports including equality monitoring data
- User feedback
- Population data – census, Mosaic
- Complaints data
- Published research, local or national.
- Feedback from consultations and focus groups
- Feedback from individuals or organisations representing the interests of key target groups
- Evidence from partner organisations, other council departments, district or borough councils and other local authorities

**How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment? Who are they, and what is their view?**

Schools which have changes being proposed have been consulted on the changes. All community and voluntary controlled schools have been sent confirmation of the published admission number that is to be proposed and have been offered the opportunity to query it if they felt it was incorrect or if they had anticipated a change.

The consultation is the opportunity to engage with parents and the wider school community. As part of the consultation process the proposed admission arrangements and coordinated schemes will be widely publicised both on the County Council website and in schools and nurseries. All forms of responses will be accepted including the standard response form, online responses and any other relevant correspondence.

A total of 69 responses were received to the consultation. Of the total responses, only 13 (18.8%) respondents completed the equality monitoring form and as such, little conclusion can be drawn from the responses. This response rate is similar to last year and may be due to the consultation tool that is used. Of those completing a monitoring form:

#### **Age**

84.6% (11) of respondents were aged 18 – 49

7.7% (1) of respondents were aged 50 – 64

7.7% (1) of respondents were aged over 65

#### **Race**

84.6 % (11) of respondents described themselves as White-British

7.7% (1) of respondents described themselves as Chinese

7.7% (1) of respondents described themselves as Other-Japanese

#### **Disability**

No respondents indicated that they had a disability, condition or impairment

#### **Gender**

76.9% (10) of respondents were female

23.1 % (3) of respondents were male

#### **Faith**

76.9% (10) of respondents indicated that they had no religious or faith group

23.1% (3) of respondents indicated that they were of Christian faith (including Protestant, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Evangelical)

#### **Sexual Orientation**

92.3% (12) of respondents stated that they were heterosexual

7.7% (1) of respondents stated that they would rather not answer

### **Analysis and assessment**

**Given the available information, what is the actual or likely impact on minority, disadvantaged, vulnerable and socially excluded groups? Is this impact positive or negative or a mixture of both? (Refer to the EIA guidance for full list of issues to consider when making your analysis)**

Based on the assessment of the policies and the evidence, these policies will have an overall positive equality impact.

**What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts? Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified,**



**and is it lawful?**

No evidence of any negative impact.

**Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made, who are the beneficiaries and how have they benefited?**

### **Recommendations**

**Please summarise the main recommendations arising from the assessment. If it is impossible to diminish negative impacts to an acceptable or even lawful level the recommendation should be that the proposal or the relevant part of it should not proceed.**

### **Action Plan – actions needed to implement the EIA recommendations**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Deadline for action</b>

- Actions should have SMART Targets
- Actions should be reported to the Directorate Equality Group (DEG) and incorporated into the Equality and Diversity Action Plan, Service Plans and/or personal objectives of key staff.

Date taken to Directorate Equality Group for challenge and feedback	
Review date	
Person responsible for review	Claire Potier
Head of Service signed off	Peter-John Wilkinson
Date completed	26 January 2015
Date forwarded to EIA coordinator for publishing	

- **Signed off electronic version to be kept in your team for review**

- **Electronic copy to be forwarded to your service EIA coordinator to forward for publishing on the external website**

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### **EIA publishing checklist**

- Plain English – will your EIA make sense to the public?
- Acronyms – check that you have explained any specialist names or terminology
- Evidence – will your evidence stand up to scrutiny; can you justify your conclusions?
- Stakeholders and verification – have you included a range of views and perspectives to back up your analysis?
- Gaps and information – have you identified any gaps in services or information that need to be addressed in the action plan?
- Legal framework – have you identified any potential discrimination and included actions to address it?
- Success stories – have you included any positive impacts that have resulted in change for the better?
- Action plan – is your action plan SMART? Have you informed the relevant people to ensure the action plan is carried out?
- Review – have you included a review date and a named person to carry it out?
- Challenge – has your EIA been taken to your DEG for challenge
- Signing off – has your Head of Service signed off your EIA?
- Basics – have you signed and dated your EIA and named it for publishing?