

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool

Please ensure you have read the [guidance pages](#) prior to completing this tool

### Document Control

<b>Control Details:</b>	
Title of EIA/ Decision (DDM):	Be-friending and Hosting Service (Children’s Fieldwork)
Budget booklet code (if applicable):	
<b>If this is a budget EIA please ensure the title and budget booklet code is the same as the title used within the budget booklet</b>	
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## Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
NCC	Nottingham City Council
Hosting	Overnight, safe short stay accommodation for children aged 0-17 typically for between two nights and two weeks per hosting occasion and up to a maximum of 28 days per child in any 12-month period.
Early Help	Children/ families who require support from the local authority when problems are emerging, support is usually delivered through a family support worker.
Edge of Care	Children/ families who are at imminent or potential risk of becoming looked after by the local authority, support is usually delivered through a Social Worker.
Soft Market Testing	Early market engagement the process of engaging with potential providers of services before buying the services to inform the service specification and understand the markets capabilities of meeting requirements including enough interested providers to maintain competition.
Edge of Care panel	Seeks to prevent children becoming accommodated (where appropriate to do so through the provision of a robust package of support and intervention. The Panel is the gateway to support services for families on the edge of care and children can only be accommodated once they’ve been through this process.
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the medical name for autism. Asperger’s (or Asperger’s syndrome) is used by some people to describe autistic people with average or above average intelligence.

	In medical terminology autism spectrum disorder is defined as a condition where an individual experiences difficulty in social communication and may show restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour, such as motor mannerisms, insistence on routine, sensory sensitivity and obsessive or unusual interest. Another way of understanding autism is as a natural part of 'neurodiversity'.
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse.
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment

## Section 1 – Equality Impact (NCC staff/ Service users/ Citizen/ Community impact)

### 1. a. Brief description of proposal/ policy/ service to be assessed

The current Be-friending and Hosting service contract ends on the 16 July 2023, the service is being re-commissioned for a new service to commence on the 17 July 2023.

#### **Change to service delivery age of children supported**

There will be a change to the service delivery of the Be-friending and hosting service. The service current contract states that families will be supported with children aged 0-15 (up to 17 on a case by case basis e.g. where other younger siblings are being supported). Instead of stipulating that for families to be supported children need to be aged 15 or below the new service will be open to support families with children aged 0-17. This is a positive change; Children's Services have reported that a high number of children brought to Edge of Care Panel are adolescents (13+) where parents are struggling with their challenging behaviour. There are also increasing concerns around online safety and keeping children safe within the community. Children independently accessing online content and going out into the community without an adult are likely to be adolescents. Expanding the age bracket offers support to adolescents whereas 16- and 17-year olds were previously excluded unless they had a younger sibling being supported.

#### **Change to the service delivery number of families being supported**

When the service was first commissioned in 2018 80 families were being supported per annum. During the contract period, due to budget constraints and increased service provider costs the number of families supported has reduced down to the current number of 42 per annum. The Soft Market Testing questionnaire

which went out to the market asked providers if the current budget envelope was achievable to continue supporting 42 families per annum; if 'no' it asked how many families providers thought it would be viable to support within the budget. The response from service providers ranged from 32- 42 families, the current service provider indicated that for the available budget they would be able to support 36 families. This is a reduction of 7 less families being supported per annum. Until the tender process is complete it will not be known if the number of families being supported per annum will stay the same or reduce, as this will depend on the successful providers response. Once this is known the EIA will be updated.

### **Change to service delivery training**

The current service contract stipulates that volunteers should receive extensive training but does not cite specific types of training required. One of the parents consulted during the commissioning review had Asperger's, she had different volunteers and felt that staff and volunteers could benefit from training around how to interact with people with ASD. The current service provider does not record specific statistics on disabilities but has stated that they can say very confidently that a large proportion of the families that they support would have at least one member with suspected traits of ASD or ADHD. The service also receives referrals from the Whole Life Disability Team, since 2015 they have received referrals for 29 families from this service and have accepted 22 of them for support. Children's services also report that there are concerns around online safety and parents wanting support to keep their children safe in the community being a common theme at Edge of Care Panel.

The new service contract will stipulate that it is a requirement that that staff and volunteers have up to date training in exploitation (recognising and responding to risk), online safety, safeguarding knowledge around substance misuse, ASD, ADHD, mental health, and domestic abuse to enable volunteers to better support families and children.

### **Change to service delivery hosting**

The hosting element of the service has supported a very small cohort of families who do not have robust support networks. The Soft Market Testing (SMT) questionnaire response from the current service provider indicated that 16 bed nights were provided for 6 children across 3 different families in the last year with each family having one instance of hosting. Two of the families supported were women who were single mothers and pregnant with another child, with asylum seeker status coming from the country Eritrea. They required hosting support from the service to look after their children whilst they went into hospital to give birth. One of the family's had children did not speak any English.

The SMT confirmed that it is likely hosting is a niche area of expertise for the current service provider because no other respondents cited having experience in delivering a hosting function. Including hosting as a service requirement and making it a condition that providers who bid for the service must have prior experience delivering hosting may limit the competition in the provider market and mean only the incumbent provider tenders for the service. This may have a negative impact on encouraging Best Value competition and assessing all options to secure the best possible quality support offer for families.

Removing the hosting service element in order to encourage competition with the provider market to deliver this service would have a negative impact upon people with the following protected characteristics: women, people from different ethnic groups and pregnancy/ maternity.

Therefore, considering the negative equalities implications cited around the removal of hosting, hosting will be included in the new service. Providers with no prior experience in delivering a specific hosting function will be permitted to bid, but they must demonstrate that they will develop their business model to incorporate hosting. If a provider without experience delivering hosting wins the tender, they will be allowed additional implementation time beyond the service commencement date of 17 July 2023 to recruit and train hosting volunteers. This will mean that the be-friending service will commence from 17 July 2023 but there may be a short period without a hosting service. Given the number of families accessing hosting support is very small and the contract will run for up to 4 years, the potential of a short period of circa 3 months without hosting support is a small manageable equalities implication. If a provider with experience providing hosting/ runs a hosting service currently is successful there will no equalities implications. Once this is known the EIA will be updated.

### **Background of service**

Nottingham City Council has commissioned a community-based support service from 2018-2023 where volunteers support families at an 'early help' stage of intervention from children's services where problems are emerging or families with children 'at the edge of care' by providing support at a time of crisis. The service aims to provide stabilising support to struggling families, preventing escalation of need, lowering the risk of child abuse and neglect, and reducing the flow children entering the care system on a short-term basis.

The current service has provided volunteer led coaching, be-friending and mentoring support for children, young people, parents, or carers as required. It has also offered 'hosting' for children, hosting is short stay accommodation typically for between two nights and two weeks per hosting occasion, for up to a maximum of

28 days per child in any 12-month period. Support is provided for children aged 0-15 years (and up to age 17 on a case by case basis e.g. where siblings are being supported). Support is available seven days a week with an emergency out of hours contact.

From 2015-2018 this service successfully piloted for three years through the Public Social Partnership Service Agreement between Darlington Social Research Unit, Nottingham City Council and Safe Families for Children part-funded by the Department for Education.

### **1. b. Information used to analyse the equalities implications**

Commissioning review of current service undertaken.

This involved consultations with:

- NCC social care colleagues who refer into the service from Children's Services
- Head of Service Children's Fieldwork (operational lead/ Contract Manager)
- Current service provider, management staff and volunteers
- Service users (5 different parents)
- Contract monitoring reports
- Demographic data on service users from 2015-2023
- Soft Market Testing survey responses

**1. c. Who will be affected and how?**

Impact type (NCC staff/ Service users/ Citizens/ Community)	Equality group/ individual	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your assessment  (Including evidence)	Details of mitigation/ actions taken to advance equality	Details of any arrangements for future monitoring of equality impact  (Including any action plans)
	<b>People from different ethnic groups</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		Negative - In the past year two thirds of families who have accessed the service have been women who are pregnancy and seeking asylum from Eretria. We are allowing service providers with no prior experience in hosting to bid to	Negative- The hosting service element is remaining a requirement, but providers will be allowed additional implementation time in order to recruit and train volunteers who can appropriately support service users, once volunteers are trained this will be mitigate this	Negative- Include requirement within specification under KPI's/ activity reporting to monitor the demographics of families who take up hosting support.

					<p>deliver the service.</p> <p>Positive- We know that this service supports a high proportion of people from different ethnic groups, the current service providers data 2015-2023 shows that 44% of children supported were from a non-White British background.</p>	<p>outcome to become positive</p>	
	<b>Men</b>						
	<b>Women</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<p>“ “Negative as per ethnic groups</p> <p>Positive -</p>	<p>“ “ Negative As per ethnic groups</p>	<p>“ “ Negative as per ethnic groups</p>



					<p>Positive, the providers demographic data has shown that 91% of 'lead family member' supported were women.</p> <p>Therefore this is a service that primarily supports women, given that women are most likely to be the main carer for children.</p>		
	<b>Trans</b>						
	<b>Disabled people/ carers</b>	<b>X</b>			<p>Although the current service does not record specific statistics on disabilities, they have advised that they can</p>		

					confidently say that a large proportion of the families they support have at least one member with suspected traits of ASD or ADHD. The service also receives some referrals from the Whole Life Disability Team. Including a service requirement for staff and volunteers to receive training on ASD and ADHD will promote more appropriate support being provided to individuals with		
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					this traits/ a diagnosis.		
	<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<p>“ “Negative as per ethnic groups</p> <p>Positive – the current service provider has advised that a good proportion of families are referred in because they are pregnant.</p>	“ “Negative as per ethnic groups	“ “Negative As per ethnic groups
	<b>Marriage/Civil Partnership</b>						
	<b>People of different faiths/ beliefs and those with none</b>		<b>X</b>		<p>The existing provider is a faith organisation. It is possible that the new service provider may be a faith organisation. Although this can have many merits (eg access to many willing</p>	<p>The current provider demographic data from 2015-2023 shows that only 10% of families supported were from a Christian background, 30% recorded no religion, 6% other</p>	<p>The provider must ensure that its operational staff and volunteer recruitment policies are inclusive to all faiths and those with no religion. <b>Action – All organisations applying for the tender will have to submit</b></p>

					volunteers), it may also create a barrier to full engagement in the service by those with no faith or different faiths.	religions and 23% multi-religion households. This demonstrates that with the current provider there haven't been barriers for those with a non-Christian or no faith.	<b>recruitment policies, volunteer policies and equalities policies as part of the selection process. Timescale: At application stage and ongoing monitoring.</b> The provider must ensure that staff and volunteers are sensitive and respectful of the views and needs of citizens, religious or otherwise.
	<b>Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual people</b>						
	<b>Older</b>						
	<b>Younger</b>	<b>X</b>			The service supports families with children aged 0-17. The previous service specification stated families		

					would be supported with children aged 0-15 (except in cases where siblings were aged over 15) excluding most adolescent 16- and 17-year olds. This has been extended to 0-17 for all families and therefore has a positive equalities impact for young people.		
	<p><b>Other</b> (e.g. <u>looked after children</u>, cohesion/ good relations, <u>vulnerable children/ adults</u>), <u>socio-economic background</u>.</p> <p><b><i>Please underline the group(s) /issue more adversely affected or which benefits.</i></b></p>	<b>X</b>			The service specifically supports children open to Children's services at the Edge of Care and Early Hep stages who could potentially		

					<p>be on a trajectory to becoming looked after. who may be deemed vulnerable children.</p> <p>The current service provider has advised they do not collect data on income/ socio-economic background, but can confirm that the majority of families they support would be experiencing a level of economic poverty.</p>		
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**1. d. Summary of any other potential impact (including cumulative impact/ human rights implications):**

Re-commissioning the Be-friending and Hosting service should have a positive impact on children and families who are deemed vulnerable by children’s services where ‘problems are emerging’ at Early Help or at the Edge of Care where the immediate or intermediate risk of accommodation into a care placement is likely. This is a non-statutory, preventative service NCC has chosen to commission to support families, it has primarily positive equalities impact for the following equality groups/ individuals: people from different ethnic groups, women, disabled people/ carers, pregnancy and maternity, younger, looked after children, vulnerable children and socio-economic background.

Any risk of negative equalities impacts for women, pregnancy/ maternity and ethnicity in regards to hosting and for people of different faiths/ beliefs and those with none in regards to the current service provider being a Christian faith organisation has been mitigated for.

## Section 2 – Equality outcome

**Please include summary of the actions identified to reduce disproportionate negative impact, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Please pull out all of the mitigations you have identified and summarise them in this action plan**

Equality Outcome	Adjustments to proposal and/or mitigating SMART actions	Lead Officer	Date for Review/ Completion	Update/ complete
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.				

<p>Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who don't</p>	<p><b>Disproportionate negative impact women, pregnancy/ maternity, ethnicity</b>                  The hosting element of the service will remain, in the past year two thirds of service users have protected characteristics of women, pregnancy/ maternity and ethnicity.  <b>Mitigations</b>                  Providers without prior experience delivering hosting / current hosting function will be allowed additional implementation time in order to recruit and train hosting volunteers who can appropriately support service users.</p> <p>Review if provider with hosting experience/ current hosting function has been awarded the contract in May 2023. If provider with no experience/ current hosting function review progress to mobilising hosting service October 2023.</p> <p>This service provides positive equalities impacts for women, pregnancy/ maternity and ethnicity more generally through be-friending as data and anecdotal information from the current service provider has referenced that a large proportion of the families they support have these protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Charlotte Dodds</p>	<p>May 2023                  October 2023</p>	
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<p>Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who don't</p>	<p><b>People of different faiths/ beliefs and those with none</b>                  The existing provider is a faith organisation. It is possible that the new service provider may be a faith organisation. Although this can have many merits (e.g. access to many willing volunteers), it may also create a barrier to full engagement in the service by those with no faith or different faiths.</p> <p><b>Mitigations</b>                  The current provider demographic data from 2015-2023 shows that only 10% of families supported were from a Christian background, 30% recorded no religion, 6% other religions and 23% multi-religion households. This demonstrates that with the current provider there haven't been barriers for those with a non-Christian or no faith.</p> <p>The new service provider must ensure that its operational staff and volunteer recruitment policies are inclusive to all faiths and those with no religion.</p> <p><b>Action – All organisations applying for the tender will have to submit recruitment</b></p>	<p>Charlotte Dodds</p>	<p>March 2023  May 2023</p>	

	<p><b>policies, volunteer policies and equalities policies as part of the selection process.</b>  <b>Timescale: At application stage and ongoing monitoring.</b></p> <p>The provider must ensure that staff and volunteers are sensitive and respectful of the views and needs of citizens, religious or otherwise.</p> <p>Include recruitment policies, volunteer policies and equalities policies as part of tender requirements and selection process March 2023.</p> <p>Review if provider that is a faith led organisation wins the tender in May 2023.</p>			
<p>(Please add other equality outcomes as required – e.g. mitigate adverse impact identified for people with a disability)</p>				

**Please note: All actions will need to be uploaded onto Pentana**

**Section 3 – Approval and publishing**

<b>The assessment must be approved by the manager responsible for the service /proposal.</b> <b>Approving Manager details</b> (name, role, contact details):	<b>Date sent for advice:</b>
<b>Approving Manager Signature:</b>	<b>Date of final approval:</b>

For further information and guidance, please visit the [Equality Impact Assessment Intranet Pages](#)  
Alternatively, you can contact the Equality and Employability Team by telephone on 0115 876 2747

Send document or link for advice and/ or publishing to: [edi@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:edi@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE: FINAL VERSION MUST BE SENT TO EQUALITIES OTHERWISE RECORDS WILL REMAIN INCOMPLETE.**