

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Early Help Contracts for Children, Young People and Families

Reference: EIA000168

Date: 18/01/2024



EIA Form – About your EIA

Reference number	EIA000168
Date Submitted	18/01/2024
Subject of the EIA	Early Help Contracts for Children, Young People and Families
Brief description of the policy, service or function covered by the EIA	<p>Birmingham City Council has commissioned a range of universal, early intervention and prevention services for children and families of which, one of the focus areas was developing a locality-based early help system, based on the 10 locality areas in the city, and endorsing a partnership approach led by a VCS organisation and a team of BCT Early Help workers in each locality. A family can access a range of interventions to support their needs and prevent escalation into more specialist services- programs currently on offer include all sorts of early help services including baby banks, food banks, money advice, energy advice and linking in to available VCS support in the locality of the family's residence. Families sometime need a number of different supports, these could include the Freedom Programme (DA), Parenting Programmes, Triple P, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), Non-Violent Resistant (NVR), Parents and Communities Together (PACT), Healing Together, 1-2-1 practical support in the home, onward sign posting, social prescribing. If necessary, an Early Help Assessment is completed following the submission of a Family Connect Form (FCF) and often a family plan will be developed with the parents and children. The Family Plan is key to linking the family with Voluntary Sector organisations and community organisations including nurseries, schools and Health partners. The Council's financial position has changed significantly since the Early Help programme was rolled out initially, in 2021. These services do not constitute delivery of statutory duties. Ceasing these contracts and associated services will allow Children and Families to make the savings it is required to make. IMPACT: As a result of cessation of the above contracts, these services will no longer be delivered children young people and families in Birmingham.</p>
Equality Assessment is in support of...	["Amended function", "Amended service"]
How frequently will you review impact and mitigation measures identified in this EIA?	Quarterly
Due date of the first review	2024-04-30


Directorate, Division & Service Area


Which directorate(s) are responsible for this EIA?	["Children and Families"]
Division	Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation
Service area	Commissioning
Budget Saving	Yes

Officers

What is the responsible officer's email address?	Debdatta Dobe
What is the accountable officer's email address?	Helen X Price

Data Sources

Data sources	["Birmingham City Observatory data and insight", "Quantitative data (please specify in the box below)", "Relevant reports/strategies"]
Data source details	<p>Census 2021 data</p> <p>School census 2022/3</p> <p>JSNA, 2022</p> <p>Early Help Assessment Data (2021-2023)</p> <p>Improving the way family support services work for minority ethnic families (Early Intervention foundation, 2022)</p> <p>Public health data dashboards</p>

Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic – Age

Does this proposal impact people due to their age as per the Equality Act 2010?	Yes
What age groups are impacted by your proposal?	["10-19 years", "0-9 years", "20-29 years", "30-39 years", "40-49 years", "50-59 years", "60-69 years", "70-79 years", "80-89 years", "90 years or over"]



Please describe the impact to the age characteristic

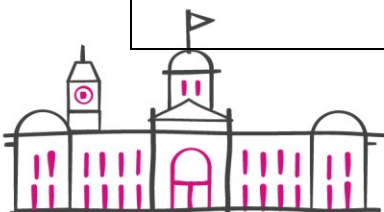
Service users:

While all age groups are impacted by the proposal as Early Help is a preventative service aimed at supporting families and providing the right help at the right time, through a range of universal, universal+ and targeted interventions, the greatest impact is on school aged children ages 6-17 and their family/parental unit, mostly aged 30-47 (including those who may be young parents as well as those who may be young parents with disabilities).

Analysis of Early Help Assessment data (2021-2023) indicates that the highest uptake of Early Help services offered in Birmingham between 2021-2023 was amongst those aged 6-11 (25.1%), followed by those aged 12-17 (23.6%), 0-5 (12.7%) and 36-41 (9.3%). This corresponds to the demographic profile of Birmingham, which is UK's youngest city, with only 13% of the population aged above 65. As Early Help services are oriented to families, young families, children and young people, uptake in those broad age categories are highest.

5% of Birmingham's children aged 0-25 access Early Help. The number of older children and young people are likely to increase over the next 5 to 10 years as the large number of 0-9 year olds grow older and more children fall within the 6-17 year cohort (amongst whom uptake of the service is highest).

There are a large number Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children in Birmingham (1,084 children registered in 2022 school year, with several more presumably out of school). As children from these communities typically leave school earlier, community-based support services are critical to bridge the gaps evidenced in this cohort across their life course (JSNA, 2022).



There are number of children living in absolute low-income families in Birmingham (100549 in 2021/22), Birmingham City Observatory, 2022. The locality-based support model offered by Early Help supports these children, due to multiple barriers in accessing city wide programmes.

Local level data evidencing take up by age is not available. This makes it difficult to prioritise support to those neighbourhoods and localities most adversely impacted on the basis of this protected characteristic. However, across all age groups, access by locality (in descending order) is as follows: (1) Northfield (15.5%); (2) Yardley (13%); (3) Ladywood (11.5%); (4) Hall Green (11.1%); and (5) Hodge Hill (10.6%).

all these affected groups will no longer receive the range of Early Help services outlined above.

External Workforce of contracted providers:

Workforce data for BCT & voluntary sector staff is not currently available.

Impact on workforce is not known at present as a redesigned approach to early help is currently being proposed through the Children's Trust, with a focus on workforce retention.

Workforce data and impact will be considered during the 3 month review when the service redesign is fully known and any impact on staffing is clear.



How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the age characteristic?

It is not possible to mitigate the impact of these savings for all children and families accessing Early Help in Birmingham. Prioritisation for the most vulnerable children and families will enable us to target support to those families most in need. Other options considered include: (a) signposting families to the Family Hubs programme (most of our families accessing Early Help will be eligible for FH services however it is important to note that the two services have different outcomes). In selecting FH locations, officers have taken Early Help data and uptake into consideration; (b) redirecting users to the re-designed early help offer that will be available through the Children’s Trust, once details of this is known, may restore some of the services for children and families in Birmingham; (c) enabling current providers to close down services safely, through a managed transition period made possible through repurposed public health grant funding; (d) joining up the offer with adult social care to manage transition and overlap in service provision and (e) monitoring the long term impact of the proposed saving with the help of our improvement partner.

Birmingham Children’s Trust will work proactively to offer any opportunities to affected Voluntary Sector workforce that may be available within the service redesign once details of this have been finalised.

Protected Characteristic – Disability

Does this proposal impact those people with a disability as per the Equality Act 2010?

Yes



Please describe the impact to the disability characteristic

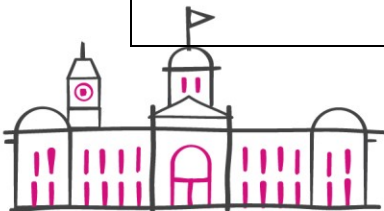
Service Users:

The data collected around disability on the Early Help Assessment across 2021-2023 is limited, with most individual disabilities listed as unknown and only 0.3% identified as yes which is likely to be significantly underreported given the volume of individuals accessing Early Help. Of those known the highest percentage of individuals documented relate to SEND.

Of the 75 cases positively identified as having a disability the highest % is in 6-11 year olds (50.7%). The majority of those identified as having a disability were male (66.7%).

In the absence of robust disability data available through Early Help Assessments, we have considered other data sources available city-wide to consider the impact of the proposal on those with disabilities including Census (2021), City Observatory and School Census data. From these data sources there is a high percentage of children in Birmingham with SEND (37275 children and young people with either an Education, Health and Care plans or receiving SEN support in school). Just over 40% of this cohort are aged 11+, which is also the age group accessing Early Help provision in highest numbers. Overall, according to Census 2021 data, 9.6% of people in Birmingham (including adults) reported living with a disability that severely limits day to day activity, and 10.4% reported living with a disability that partially limits day to day activity.

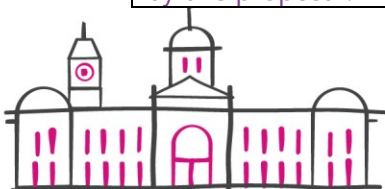
The structuring of early help provision in Birmingham ensured availability of localised, specialist support through a diverse range of voluntary sector providers, some of whom had specialism in disability-focused support, advocacy and advice, through a whole-family lens. The removal of this support will mean this type of support will cease and people with disabilities accessing Early Help services will no longer be able to do so.



	<p>External Workforce of contracted providers:</p> <p>Workforce data for BCT & voluntary sector staff is not currently available.</p> <p>Impact on workforce is not known at present as a redesigned approach to early help is currently being proposed through the Children’s Trust, with a focus on workforce retention.</p> <p>Workforce data and impact will be considered during the 3 month review when the service redesign is fully known and any impact on staffing is clear.</p>
<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the disability characteristic?</p>	<p>It is not possible to fully mitigate the impact of this proposal on children and adults with disabilities, However, there is commitment to maintain a re-designed early help offer through the Children’s Trust, which will focus on prioritising support to those localities and families where vulnerabilities including SEND/disability are most acute. We will also track the long-term impact of the proposal on disabled children and adults through our improvement partner. In addition, as a Council, Birmingham continues to strengthen our SEND service, providing more robust, wrap-around, holistic support to families with SEND children in Birmingham. Some access issues should be mitigated for families through this work.</p>

Protected Characteristic – Sex

<p>Does this proposal impact citizens based on their Sex as per the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>What Sexes will be impacted by this proposal?</p>	<p>["Male", "Female", "Non-binary"]</p>



Please describe the impact to the Sex characteristic

Service users:

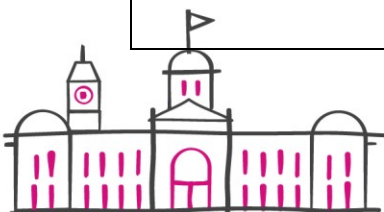
All genders are impacted by the proposal as Early Help is a preventative service aimed at supporting families and providing the right help at the right time, through a range of universal, universal+ and targeted interventions. However, analysis of referral trends, available on the Early Help data system indicates that there is a disproportionately higher number of females likely to be referred or self-referring for support (77.4%). This broadly corresponds to primary care-giving responsibilities in the most part being discharged by women or those AFAB- with the family unit being the focus of Early Help support.

At point of access too, there is a greater proportion of women (57.3%) accessing the service as compared to men (41.2%). 0.5% of those accessing support identified as non-binary, 0.1% identified as transgender and gender identity was unknown in 0.8% of cases. Again this trend is unsurprising given the support offered through early help through pregnancy, perinatal support and parenting programmes, take up of which is likely to be high amongst women.

While Early Help support is not a specialist/targeted service for women and girls, the impact on women and girls will be significant. Cumulatively, there will be less access to support going forward.

Some of the prevention/early intervention support provided by Early Help around domestic abuse (disproportionately impacting women) when withdrawn will put further pressure on crisis intervention services with women presenting with high risk/high need.

As a result of cessation of these services persons of any gender will no longer be able to access these services, with



	<p>greater impact being experienced by women.</p> <p>External Workforce of contracted providers:</p> <p>Workforce data for BCT & voluntary sector staff is not currently available however, voluntary sector workforce is overrepresented by women (67% according to NCVO data). High level workforce data accessed from the voluntary sector indicate that the majority of people overall impacted by these changes are female (57.3%), however in the case of those 23 years old and under the percentage of male and female is evenly split.</p> <p>Full impact on workforce is not known at present as a redesigned approach to early help is currently being proposed through the Children’s Trust, with a focus on workforce retention.</p>
<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the Sex characteristic?</p>	<p>It is not possible to mitigate this impact- some safeguards that can be built include: (a) strengthening other existing universal pathways to support including HAF, Family Hubs, Neighbourhood Network Navigators (among others); (b) embedding a prevention/early intervention focus in other thematic programmes/workstreams such as Domestic Abuse, Substance Misuse etc; (c) training BCC staff in gender mainstreaming and reviewing existing/continuing programmes through a gendered lens to improve access to support.</p>

Protected Characteristic - Gender Reassignment

<p>Does this proposal impact people who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process to reassign one’s sex as per the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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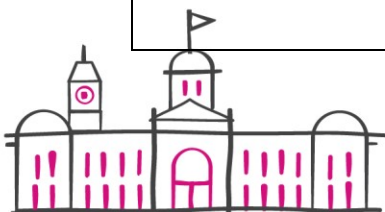
<p>Please describe the impact to the gender reassignment characteristic</p>	<p>As there was no option to select impact not known/neutral we have selected yes and provided further context below:</p> <p>Service users:</p> <p>Information about this protected Characteristic is not available for young people using the impacted services. There is no data on how many are considering undergoing reassignment or have already undergone reassignment – the age for undergoing assignment is at least 18, so this would exclude some of the younger demographic. There is no Birmingham specific demographic information to inform this analysis any further.</p> <p>External workforce of contracted providers:</p> <p>Information about this protected Characteristic is not available for staff of the impacted service providers.</p>
<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the gender reassignment characteristic?</p>	<p>Services will be encouraged to design intake forms/questionnaires that highlight confidentiality and encourage disclosure/reporting of this protected characteristic. Similar processes will be followed for workforce, following all relevant HR processes and regulations.</p>

Protected Characteristic - Marriage and Civil Partnership

<p>Does this proposal impact people who are married or in a civil partnership as per the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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<p>What legal marital or registered civil partnership status will be impacted by this proposal?</p>	<p>["Single","Never married and never registered a civil partnership","Married: Same sex","Married: Opposite sex","In a registered civil partnership: Opposite sex","In a registered civil partnership: Same sex","Separated, but still married","Separated, but still in a registered civil partnership","Divorced","Formerly in a civil partnership now legally dissolved","Widowed","Surviving partner from civil partnership"]</p>
<p>Please describe the impact to the marriage and civil partnership characteristic</p>	<p>Service users</p> <p>34% of households in the city are households with dependent children (144,362). Of these, the highest category of households with dependent children are those living in a married or civil partnership household (80,851), Census 2021. While Early Help data does not specifically capture details of access broken down by this protected characteristic, the service is oriented towards providing family/household-based support. Given the high proportion of households with dependent children who are living in married or civil partnership, the proposal is likely to impact this cohort, at least those of legal marriage age.</p> <p>A large proportion of those accessing Early Help service (0-17 years) will not be of legal age of marriage and therefore unimpacted.</p> <p>As a result of cessation of these services persons who share this protected characteristic will no longer be able to access these services, with greater impact being experienced by those married/civil partnership.</p> <p>External Workforce of contracted providers:</p> <p>This information is not available for staff of the impacted service providers- impact is therefore not known.</p>



<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the marriage and civil partnership characteristic?</p>	<p>While this impact is unlikely to be significant, it is not possible to mitigate fully- we will strengthen other family-based support, where possible, to minimise impact by association/consequence on those who are married/in civil partnership. The Children’s Trust will retain their work in promoting the Supporting Families outcomes.</p> <p>There is no known impact on staff of impacted service providers.</p>
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Protected Characteristic - Pregnancy and Maternity

<p>Does this proposal impact people covered by the Equality Act 2010 under the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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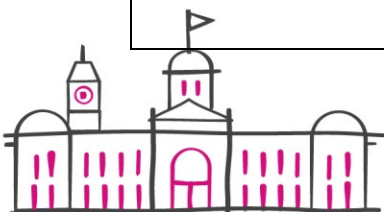


Please describe the impact to the pregnancy and maternity characteristic

General fertility rate, live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years (5 years pooled) for Birmingham, at 63.5 is above the England average of 59.2. Delivers of births to teenage mothers (5 year pooled) for Birmingham at 0.8 is above the England average of 0.7. (Public Health Fingertips). If we look at a single years' data, in 2021, 41 young women under 16 became pregnant in Birmingham. This equates to 1.7 conceptions per 1000 women age 13-15 and is in line with the national average for that year. Reducing unplanned pregnancies is a key theme in Birmingham and Solihull reproductive health strategy. (JSNA, 2022) It is important for services to be available in the community that supports young women who are pregnant as these pregnancies are likely to be unplanned- they reflect how well as a city we are supporting young people to have healthy relationships and exercise reproductive choices, including access to contraception. Conceptions under the age of 18 can negatively impact the life chances of both mother and child. Teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education, are more likely to bring up their child alone, live in poverty and have poorer mental health when compared to older mothers. Babies born to teenage mothers have 60% higher mortality rates (JSNA, 2022).

When analysing Early Help data, where child ages are known, 0.1% of those accessing the service have children noted as unborn- this is not a very significant percentage, however, the focus of Early Help is very much oriented towards providing appropriate perinatal care, early years support, parenting programmes and advise and making other forms of targeted support available to families at the cusp of secondary/tertiary intervention. Withdrawal of these services will have a negative impact on maternal and baby health outcomes.

As a result of cessation of these services persons who share this protected characteristic will no longer be able to access these services- they will no longer be available to them.



	<p>External Workforce of contracted providers:</p> <p>This information is not available for staff of impacted service providers</p>
<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the pregnancy and maternity characteristic?</p>	<p>The revised approach towards delivering Early Help, currently in consideration by the Children’s Trust will need to target and prioritise those who are pregnant, prioritise preventing teenage pregnancy and supporting the needs young parents, to the extent available resources allow. Targeting interventions for young women living in high risk or deprived areas will be important. Joining up resources with health care partners to continue providing critical community-based health programmes that are easy to access will also be critical. Continuity of public health led school based healthy relationship programmes will also be critical to ensure a level of support and awareness raising is sustained.</p>

Protected Characteristic - Ethnicity and Race

<p>Does this proposal impact people due to their race as per the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>What ethnic groups would be impacted by this proposal?</p>	<p>["White British", "Other White", "Bangladeshi", "Chinese", "Indian", "Pakistani", "Other Asian", "African", "Caribbean", "Black British", "Other Black", "Arab", "Latin American", "Irish", "Gypsy or Irish Traveller", "Roma", "Central and Eastern Europe", "Western and Southern Europe"]</p>



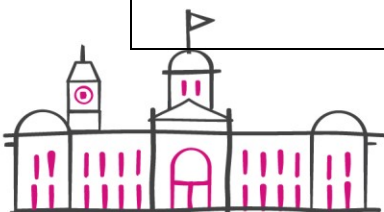
Please describe the impact to the ethnicity and race characteristic

All ethnic groups would be impacted due to the diversity of those accessing the service. Early Help access data broken down by ethnicity evidence highest uptake amongst (a) White British (30.7%); (b) Asian/Asian British- Pakistani (15.8%); (c) Black/Black British-African (6.6%). A high percentage of ethnicity data was not declared or not known.

While uptake by ethnicity fluctuates month to month, the highest uptake remains consistent amongst White British, Asian/Asian British and Black/Black British ethnic identities. Locality level data on ethnicity is available through data dashboards generated via the Family connect form. Sampling of this data indicate high proportion of white ethnicity reported in Erdington, Hodge Hill, Yardley, Edgbaston, Selly Oak and Northfield. Uptake amongst Asian/Asian British ethnicity was highest in Ladywood, Hodge Hill, Yardley and Hall Green. Uptake amongst Black British ethnicity was highest noted in Perry Barr, Ladywood and Edgbaston (March 2023).

There are a large number Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children in Birmingham (1,084 children registered in 2022 school year, with several more presumably out of school). As children from these communities typically leave school earlier, community-based support services are critical to bridge the gaps evidenced in this cohort across their life course (JSNA, 2022).

Research by the Early Intervention Foundation highlights what is already well-established knowledge of systemic and other barriers experienced by minoritised communities. They often report receiving a lower standard of service. While minoritised families are more likely to need support due to multiple, intersecting needs, they are more likely to encounter multiple barriers, get signposted to multiple services before being taken on, experience culturally insensitive support due to lack of specialist knowledge. Parents from racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to report feeling invalidated, unsupported by their support worker. This has exacerbated post Covid-19 as pressures on



public services continue to escalate, according to research undertaken by Ubele.

PHE review on the Impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities, research by King's Fund, the Institute of Race Relations, the Health Foundation and plethora of other credible sources, highlight the disparate health and social care outcomes attained by black and minoritised communities- they are most likely to live in the 10% most deprived areas in England, exacerbating their poorer health outcomes. The update to the Marmot review published in 2020 further underlined how poorer health outcomes are more pronounced for BME populations.

The impact of this proposal on minoritised and racialised groups will be disproportionately high, especially considering the 'super-diversity' of Birmingham's young population and the diversity data obtained through Early Help data dashboards- our voluntary sector providers had the cultural competence and awareness that will be hard to replace. Many staff had lived experience of the issues families presented with and were from the local area, having knowledge of local contexts and issues. The cessation of these services will mean that service users of all ethnicities will no longer be able to access these services with biggest impact experienced by those ethnicities amongst whom uptake was highest (See above).

External Workforce of contracted providers:

Staff data for this protected characteristic is currently not available for staff of the impacted service providers.



<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the ethnicity and race characteristic?</p>	<p>While Early Help is a non-statutory provision, in considering the Council's PSED, equity of access to support and equality of opportunity for minoritised communities within the context of a redesigned early help offer available through the Children's Trust will need to be fully considered. Retention of staff with lived experience and cultural competence where possible will need to be prioritised.</p> <p>This element of the EIA will be revisited and revised when the redesign is completed.</p>
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Protected Characteristic - Religion or Beliefs

<p>Does this proposal impact people's religion or beliefs as per the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>What religions could be impacted by this proposal?</p>	<p>["No religion", "Christian", "Buddhist", "Hindu", "Jewish", "Muslim", "Sikh"]</p>



<p>Please describe the impact to the religion or beliefs characteristic</p>	<p>As there was no option to select impact not known/neutral we have selected yes and provided further context below:</p> <p>Religion is not a data set collected within the Early Help data, however this protected characteristic is not likely to be impacted/impact is likely to be neutral on account of the proposal.</p> <p>According to census data 2021 43% of young people report their religion as Muslim in Birmingham, 23% as Christian and 27% as having no religion. There is very little information locally or nationally about whether identifying with a particular religion increases vulnerability or barrier to accessing support.</p> <p>External Workforce of contracted providers:</p> <p>Staff data for this protected characteristic is currently not available for staff of the impacted service providers.</p>
<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the religion or beliefs characteristic?</p>	<p>There is no impact identified on people of particular religious groups or beliefs- however the redesigning of the early help offer through the Children’s Trust could provide positive opportunities for community consultation and ensure the new refocused service reflects the voice of the communities it serves. Should this consultation make available any additional insight, it shall be fully considered.</p>

Protected Characteristic - Sexual Orientation

<p>Does this proposal impact people’s sexual orientation as per the Equality Act 2010?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>What sexual orientations may be impacted by this proposal?</p>	<p>["Straight or heterosexual", "Gay or lesbian", "Bisexual", "Pansexual", "Asexual", "Queer", "All other sexual orientations"]</p>



<p>Please describe the impact to the sexual orientation characteristic</p>	<p>As there was no option to select no known impact/neutral, we have selected yes and provided further context below:</p> <p>There is no available Early Help data on sexual orientation. According to census 2021 data, 87.57% of people aged 16 and over identified as heterosexual in Birmingham. 1.35% identified as gay or lesbian; 1.27% identified as bisexual, 0.04% identified as queer and 9.42% did not answer. While sexual orientation can exacerbate vulnerabilities, in the context of the proposal and the service impacted, there is no known impact on this protected characteristic as the service currently does not offer targeted support based on sexual orientation. If further research into the points at which vulnerabilities arise for persons on basis of sexual orientation identifies need for targeted support through early help provision, this can be revisited through service redesign.</p> <p>There is no specific known impact on this protected characteristic on account of this proposal on either service users or staff of impacted services (external workforce of contracted providers).</p>
<p>How will you mitigate against any negative impact to the sexual orientation characteristic?</p>	<p>Currently there is no known impact on this protected characteristic. However, this element of the EIA will be revisited and revised when the redesign is completed.</p>

Monitoring

<p>How will you ensure any adverse impact and mitigation measures are monitored?</p>	<p>A review and refresh of this EIA and the identified impact and mitigation measures will be carried out in 3 months' time when the full nature of the redesigned early help service is known and fuller discussions with communities and current providers have been conducted. At that point, gaps in existing data will also be addressed. Of particular interest is locality level data breakdown- we will attempt to obtain data at locality/ward level to further inform the process of refocusing and targeting support and resources available to areas and communities most in need.</p>
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Please enter the email address for the officer responsible for monitoring impact and mitigation

debdatta.dobe@birmingham.gov.uk

