

City of York Council
Equalities Impact Assessment

Who is submitting the proposal?

Directorate:	Children's and Public Health		
Service Area:	All		
Name of the proposal:	Best Start in Life Local Plan		
Lead officer:	Rob Newton		
Date assessment completed:	February 2026		
Names of those who contributed to the assessment:			
Name	Job title	Organisation	Area of expertise
Rob Newton	Local Evidence Lead	City of York Council	Best Start in Life and evidence use
Kate Horne	Public Health Principal	City of York Council	Public Health
Maxine Squire	Assistant Director	City of York Council	Education, Skills and SEND

Step 1 – Aims and intended outcomes

1.1	What is the purpose of the proposal? Please explain your proposal in Plain English avoiding acronyms and jargon.
	<p>The proposal seeks approval for York’s local Best Start in Life (BSiL) plan, which sets out a coordinated, multi-agency approach to improving early childhood development from conception to age five. The plan aims to reduce the significant inequalities in child development that are evident by age two and widen by school entry. It brings together health, early education, children’s services, and the voluntary and community sector to create a more coherent and accessible system of support for families.</p> <p>The proposal also seeks delegated authority for final sign-off of the plan and outlines an enhanced ambition to position York as a Centre of Excellence for early childhood development. This would strengthen York’s capacity to innovate, attract investment, and deliver high-quality, evidence-based early years support.</p>

1.2	Are there any external considerations? (Legislation/government directive/codes of practice etc.)
	<p>The proposal is shaped by several statutory and national requirements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Childcare Act 2006, which places duties on local authorities to improve early years outcomes, ensure sufficient childcare, and provide information to families.• The Government’s Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life strategy, which requires each local area to publish a BSiL plan and meet statutory targets for Good Level of Development (GLD) by 2028.• Statutory public health duties under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, including delivery of the Healthy Child Service.• National expectations around Family Hubs, parenting support, and the Home Learning Environment. <p>These duties have been subject to legal challenge nationally, making compliance essential.</p>

1.3	Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?
	<p>Stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children aged 0–5 and their families, particularly those experiencing disadvantage, who stand to benefit from improved access to support, early intervention, and reduced inequalities. • Early years providers, schools and academies, who have a direct role in supporting child development and school readiness. • Health partners, including midwifery, health visiting, and primary care, who deliver universal and targeted early years services. • Voluntary and community sector organisations, who provide family support, outreach, and community based provision.-based provision. • Universities and research partners, who contribute to evidence generation, evaluation and workforce development. • Council services, including children’s services, public health, SEND, and education, who are responsible for statutory delivery and system leadership. • All stakeholders share an interest in improving outcomes for young children, reducing inequalities, and ensuring services are accessible, coordinated and effective.

<p>What results/outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom? This section should explain what outcomes you want to achieve for service users, staff and/or the wider community. Demonstrate how the proposal links to the Council Plan (2019- 2023) and other corporate strategies and plans.</p>
<p>The proposal aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased proportion of children achieving a GLD (to 79% by 2027/28 and beyond to meet our local ambition) • Increased GLD for children eligible for FSM (to 58.1%) • Improve and Reduce inequalities in early childhood and maternity outcomes

- A sustainable, integrated early years system closer to home that delivers better outcomes for all children
- Learning from evidence based approaches and lived experience.
- Families have clarity of and understand typical development at each stage.
- Families make more informed decisions on how to support their children to achieved GLD.
- Clear progress reporting, so we know if we are making a difference.
- Early identification of those children not on track to achieve GLD/ or with additional needs
- Families feel more supported, which includes the fundamental building blocks.
- Increased parental confidence to support their child/ren to achieve GLD and reduced isolation.
- Strengthened community capacity and provision in the EY.
- There are better home learning environments
- More consistent developmental assessment and support from professionals and families.
- Families have a better experience across the EY integrated pathway.
- Increased engagement from families with the potential to benefit the most
- Stronger sense of belonging and trust in local services
- Children and families feel safer
- More confident, skilled leaders across ECEC settings.

Step 2 – Gathering the information and feedback

2.1	What sources of data, evidence and consultation feedback do we have to help us understand the impact of the proposal on equality rights and human rights? Please consider a range of sources, including: consultation exercises, surveys, feedback from staff, stakeholders, participants, research reports, the views of equality groups, as well your own experience of working in this area etc.	
Source of data/supporting evidence	Reason for using	
Local analysis of 12,000 children’s development over seven years	Demonstrates early emergence of inequalities and informs targeting	

Early Talk for York evaluation	Provides evidence of effective early years interventions locally
Healthy Child Service data	Identifies health inequalities and developmental trends
School readiness and GLD data	Shows persistent gaps between disadvantaged and non disadvantaged children-disadvantaged children
Raise York Family Hubs coproduction	Provides direct insight into family experiences, barriers and priorities
Consultation with early years providers, health partners and VCS organisations	Ensures system-wide understanding of needs, strengths, gaps, fragmentation and opportunities, as well as agreed prioritisation.
National research (Marmot, Centre for Young Lives, IPPR, 1001 Days Movement, EIF)	Provides robust evidence on early childhood development and the impact of early intervention, as well the importance of integration at the community level centred around families, rooted in where they spend their everyday lives. Evidence suggests this trusted approach will help to reach families that need this the most (tackling inequalities).
Feedback from SEND Central and other coproduction forums	Highlights the importance of accessible, inclusive design and early identification
SEND parent carer survey	Highlights improving the early years offer for this cohort is a priority.

Step 3 – Gaps in data and knowledge

3.1	What are the main gaps in information and understanding of the impact of your proposal? Please indicate how any gaps will be dealt with.		
Gaps in data or knowledge		Action to deal with this	
Limited local data on experiences of: - - minority ethnic families in early years services -Dad's -Gypsy travellers		Strengthen engagement with community groups starting with inclusive community research; improve analysis of ethnicity data across services	
Limited insight into barriers faced by LGBTQ+ parents		Work with local networks and Family Hubs to gather targeted feedback	
Incomplete understanding of the needs of families with no recourse to public funds		Collaborate with advice services and community organisations to gather evidence	
Limited data on experiences of families in more rural areas		Use Family Hub outreach and health visiting data to identify access barriers	
Need for more granular data on children with emerging developmental needs		Strengthen early identification pathways and data sharing across health and education	

Step 4 – Analysing the impacts or effects.

4.1	Please consider what the evidence tells you about the likely impact (positive or negative) on people sharing a protected characteristic, i.e. how significant could the impacts be if we did not make any adjustments? Remember the duty is also positive – so please identify where the proposal offers opportunities to promote equality and/or foster good relations.		
Equality Groups and Human Rights.	Key Findings/Impacts	Positive (+) Negative (-) Neutral (0)	High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)

Age	The proposal is wholly focused on improving outcomes for children aged 0–5 and their families. It is expected to have a strong positive impact, particularly for younger children (conception to age two) where inequalities emerge earliest.	Positive	High
Disability	Children with SEND and developmental delays are likely to benefit from earlier identification, targeted interventions, and improved coordination across services. Families of disabled children may also experience improved access to support. Family Hub provision will be reviewed for accessibility.	Positive	High
Gender	Possible differential impact is anticipated for children. (Females currently achieve more highly than males) Currently female parents/carers are more likely to feel included and access support available. The proposal should seek to develop more male inclusive approaches by working with them through co production processes and engaging with national representative organisations.	Positive	Medium
Gender Reassignment	No direct impacts identified. Inclusive practice and accessible services will ensure trans parents and carers are supported.	Neutral	Low
Marriage and civil partnership	No differential impact identified.	Neutral	Low
Pregnancy and maternity	Significant positive impact expected through strengthened support in pregnancy, the first 1001 days, and early parenthood.	Positive	High
Race	Families from minority ethnic backgrounds may face additional barriers to accessing services. The proposal's focus on proportionate universalism and targeted outreach is likely to improve access and reduce inequalities.	Positive	Medium/High

Religion and belief	No direct impacts identified. Services will be delivered in a culturally sensitive and inclusive manner.	Neutral	Low
Sexual orientation	No direct impacts identified. Inclusive family support will ensure LGBTQ+ parents and carers can access services without discrimination	Neutral	Low
Other Socio-economic groups including :	Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?		
Carer	Parents and carers of young children, including those caring for disabled children, will benefit from improved support, information and early intervention	Positive	Medium/High
Low income groups	The proposal is expected to have a significant positive impact by improving access to early years support, reducing isolation, and addressing inequalities that disproportionately affect families experiencing poverty.	Positive	High
Veterans, Armed Forces Community	No specific impacts identified, though improved access to universal services may benefit families.	Neutral	Low
Other	Families experiencing social isolation, insecure housing, or limited access to transport may benefit from improved outreach and place-based delivery.	Positive	Medium
Impact on human rights:			
List any human rights impacted.	<p>The proposal supports the rights to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (improving early learning and school readiness) • Health and social care (strengthening prevention and early intervention) • A decent standard of living (reducing inequalities and supporting families facing hardship) 	Positive	High

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and non-discrimination (targeting support where inequalities are greatest) <p>Overall, the proposal enhances human rights and does not restrict any rights.</p>		
--	--	--	--

Use the following guidance to inform your responses:

Indicate:

- Where you think that the proposal could have a POSITIVE impact on any of the equality groups like promoting equality and equal opportunities or improving relations within equality groups
- Where you think that the proposal could have a NEGATIVE impact on any of the equality groups, i.e. it could disadvantage them
- Where you think that this proposal has a NEUTRAL effect on any of the equality groups listed below i.e. it has no effect currently on equality groups.

It is important to remember that a proposal may be highly relevant to one aspect of equality and not relevant to another.

<p>High impact (The proposal or process is very equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is significant potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or public facing The proposal has consequences for or affects significant numbers of people The proposal has the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights.</p>
<p>Medium impact (The proposal or process is somewhat equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is some evidence to suggest potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or across services, but mainly internal The proposal has consequences for or affects some people The proposal has the potential to make a contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>
<p>Low impact (The proposal or process might be equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is little evidence to suggest that the proposal could result in adverse impact The proposal operates in a limited way The proposal has consequences for or affects few people The proposal may have the potential to contribute to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>

Step 5 - Mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts

5.1	<p>Based on your findings, explain ways you plan to mitigate any unlawful prohibited conduct or unwanted adverse impact. Where positive impacts have been identified, what is been done to optimise opportunities to advance equality or foster good relations?</p>
<p>The assessment identifies no unlawful or unmitigable negative impacts. However, to maximise positive impacts and ensure equitable access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen targeted outreach to families experiencing disadvantage, minority ethnic communities, and those with limited access to transport. • Ensure all services are inclusive of LGBTQ+ parents, single parents, kinship carers and families with complex needs. • Embed coproduction with families, including those who are seldom heard, throughout the development and delivery of the plan, using inclusive approaches. • Improve data collection on protected characteristics to monitor access and outcomes. • Ensure the Centre of Excellence model includes inclusive design principles and avoids creating barriers for families who cannot travel easily. • Target and employ workforce to reflect the make-up of communities. • Target and recruit peers and volunteers reflective of the communities we serve. Seek to capacity build and shift power to communities through coproduction approaches and involving them in the delivery of the plan, rather than “doing to.” 	

Step 6 – Recommendations and conclusions of the assessment

6.1	<p>Having considered the potential or actual impacts you should be in a position to make an informed judgement on what should be done. In all cases, document your reasoning that justifies your decision. There are four main options you can take:</p>	
<p>- No major change to the proposal – the EIA demonstrates the proposal is robust. There is no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact and you have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitor and review.</p>		
<p>- Adjust the proposal – the EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality or to foster good relations.</p> <p>- Continue with the proposal (despite the potential for adverse impact) – you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and how you believe the decision is compatible with our obligations under the duty</p> <p>- Stop and remove the proposal – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should consider stopping the proposal altogether. If a proposal leads to unlawful discrimination it should be removed or changed.</p>		
<p>Important: If there are any adverse impacts you cannot mitigate, please provide a compelling reason in the justification column.</p>		
Option selected	Conclusions/justification	
No major change to the proposal	The EIA demonstrates that the proposal is robust, strongly aligned with equalities and human rights duties, and likely to have significant positive impacts for children and families across York. The proposal directly addresses inequalities and advances equality of opportunity. No adverse impacts have been identified that require changes to the proposal.	

--	--

Step 7 – Summary of agreed actions resulting from the assessment

7.1	What action, by whom, will be undertaken as a result of the impact assessment.		
Impact/issue	Action to be taken	Person responsible	Timescale
Barriers for minority ethnic families and low income groups	Targeted engagement and outreach through Family Hubs and VCS partners	Family Hubs Lead	Ongoing
Limited insight into dads and LGBTQ+ parents' experiences	Work with local networks and nationally representative organisations to gather feedback and improve inclusivity	Public Health & Family Hubs	Year 1–2
Access barriers for families in more rural areas	Strengthen place-based delivery and outreach	BSiL Programme team	Ongoing
Need for inclusive coproduction and shifting of power, where communities are involved in decisions and delivery.	Embed coproduction with diverse families in all workstreams	BSiL Programme Team	Immediate and ongoing

A workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve.	Target and recruit a workforce, peers and volunteers that is reflective of the communities the plan will serve.	BSiL Programme team	Immediate and ongoing.
---	---	---------------------	------------------------

Step 8 - Monitor, review and improve

8. 1	<p>How will the impact of your proposal be monitored and improved upon going forward?</p> <p>Consider how will you identify the impact of activities on protected characteristics and other marginalised groups going forward? How will any learning and enhancements be capitalised on and embedded?</p>
	<p>The impact of the proposal will be monitored through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive outcomes framework aligned with GLD, health indicators and early identification measures. • Regular reporting to the Raise York Board and Executive Member. • Ongoing coproduction with families to identify barriers, test new approaches and refine delivery. • Improved data collection on protected characteristics to assess whether services are reaching those most affected by inequalities.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual review of the EIA to ensure learning is embedded and emerging issues are addressed. |
|--|--|

The approach will support continuous improvement, ensuring that York's early years system becomes increasingly inclusive, equitable and effective.