

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title

Title: South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency

Directorate: CYPS

Service area: Looked After Children

Lead person: Ian Walker, Head of Service

Contact number: 07554436548

Is this a:

☐

Strategy / Policy

☒

Service / Function

☐

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

In June 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) reported that local authorities should be working towards Regional Adoption Agency model by 2020. There was an expectation that local authorities would begin planning, developing and working with partners to shape their RAA. The DfE's commitment to this approach was such that the Education and Adoption Act 2016 gave power to the government to direct a local authority to enter into a RAA (or a partnership with a VAA) if they deemed that there was insufficient evidence of engagement in the process. After a lengthy

process the four South Yorkshire Authorities are now in a position to present the proposed model to their respective Cabinets for consideration. This Screening Tool will consider the potential impact of this change in service delivery on the various aspects of the community within RMBC.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		X
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

Existing adoptive parents have been fully consulted as part of the development of this model of the RAA and have been part of the ongoing project development group and they are satisfied that this model will best meet their needs. Senior Officers have been instrumental in the development of this model to ensure it best meets the needs of children and families in Rotherham and this development has included a careful consideration of equality and diversity needs.

Given that this model is believed to be the lightest touch possible that is likely to be endorsed by the DfE the impact on the community is likely to be minimal. There is no proposal to move the existing Adoption Service from Riverside House and so there should be no impact on accessibility of the service for residents in Rotherham.

Service users may be impacted but the intention of the proposal is only to do so in a positive way. By pooling resources both children and parents should have their needs for a permanent family met in a more timely way. In addition, post adoption support resources will be more readily available and following best practice exemplars. As a result the SYRAA is designed to ensure as far as possible that the impact on the community will be a positive one.

- **Key findings**

By pooling resources in respect of adoptive parents across the four authorities it is reasonable to assume that children who are in the 'hard to place' categories, which includes children from a BME background and children with a disability, should be matched with an adoptive family in a far shorter timescale.

- **Actions**

The continued involvement of senior officers in the SYRAA Partnership Board will ensure that the adoptive parents and looked after children with any protective characteristic will continue to have their needs for a permanent family best met.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	2 nd December 2019
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	9 th December 2019
Lead person for your Equality Analysis	Ian Walker, Head of Service.

(Include name and job title):	
-------------------------------	--

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	22 nd November 2019
Report title and date	South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency – November 2019
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	t.b.c.
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	