

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: Family Hubs progress update and extension

Directorate: Children and Young People's Services

Service area: Family Help

Lead person:
Kirsty Woodhead

Contact number:
01709 822531

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

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

The Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme aims to provide families with the integrated support they need to care for their children from conception, throughout the early years, and into the start of adulthood. All families need support at times and our ambition is for every family to receive the right support, at the right time, in an easy way.

The cabinet report recommends that Cabinet notes the update and progress made in the delivery of the Family Hubs programme over the last year; approves a consultation on proposals to deregister the existing Children's Centres to enable the Council to move forward with the Family Hubs programme and for the decision, based on the consultation, to be delegated to the Executive Director for Children and Young People's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People; approves, in line with government requirements and ensuring consistency for families, that the current Family Hubs

buildings including Children’s Centres be renamed Best Start Family Hubs; and notes the future of the programme with additional grant funding to embed the model and agrees that the decision to accept and allocate this funding be delegated to the Executive Director for Children and Young People’s Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

The Family Hubs Programme is highly relevant to equality and diversity and is expected to have significant positive impacts, especially for families experiencing disadvantage or barriers to accessing support. Implementation must remain attentive to accessibility, representation, and cultural competence to ensure equitable outcomes for all communities.

Considering equality and diversity, the programme is particularly relevant to supporting certain protected characteristics groups:

Age: Family Hubs directly benefit children, young people, parents, and carers. Services are designed to support early childhood development and improve outcomes for teenagers and young adults.

Disability: Family Hubs will offer accessible environments, including physical accessibility, communication support, and neurodiversity-aware practices. Digital access routes will incorporate accessibility features.

Gender / Sex: Female carers, who statistically shoulder most primary caregiving responsibilities, may benefit from improved support pathways. Services for fathers and male carers will be intentionally promoted to avoid exclusion.

Pregnancy and Maternity: Maternity and perinatal support pathways within the programme are a core feature of delivery.

Race / Ethnicity: The programme seeks to address racial disparities in early childhood outcomes. Engagement approaches will include culturally responsive practice, interpretation support, and tailored outreach.

Religion or Belief: Services will respect and accommodate faith-based needs, including dietary, cultural, and scheduling considerations.

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity: Support services will be inclusive of LGBTQ+ families and young people. Staff will be trained to provide non-judgemental, identity-affirming support.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?	x	
Could the proposal affect service users?	x	

Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	x	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	x	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?	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?

Equality and diversity have been central to the development and delivery of the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, which is in its fourth delivery year. The programme is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all families, with particular attention given to those who may face barriers to engagement, such as families from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

Through parental engagement opportunities and forums, services are co-produced with parents and carers to ensure they reflect the diverse needs of the community, and staff are trained in cultural competence and inclusive practice. Targeted outreach, translation services, and flexible delivery models help ensure that no family is left behind, and ongoing monitoring ensures that the programme continues to promote equity in outcomes for children and families.

The following considerations will be made when planning the recommended consultation:

- Representation and inclusive engagement to ensure we reach parents and carers from a range of backgrounds and with protected characteristics.
- Accessibility.
- Cultural competence and sensitivity.
- Understanding and addressing barriers to participation.
- Confidentiality, safety, and trauma-informed practice.
- Flexible consultation methods to support engagement.

Key findings

Rotherham’s Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme provides support to children and families across Rotherham, including some of the most vulnerable children and families.

Key findings from the assessment indicate that the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme is well-positioned to promote equity and inclusion across a diverse range of families. The programme has identified specific groups—such as families from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage—as potentially facing barriers to accessing services.

Targeted strategies, including culturally competent service delivery, accessible communication formats, and co-production with parents and carers, have been embedded to address these challenges. The assessment also highlighted the importance of engaging fathers and non-birthing partners, ensuring services are inclusive of all family structures.

Ongoing monitoring and feedback mechanisms are in place to evaluate the programme’s impact and ensure continuous improvement in reaching and supporting all communities equitably.

Actions

Further Equality Impact Analysis will be completed as required as part of the delivery of the programme.

Continued work will take place across the Family Hubs Partnership to ensure that services delivered to children and families are inclusive and meet their individual needs.

Service design and delivery will be informed by robust data and engagement with children, young people, parents, carers and families.

VCS organisations will continue to play a vital part of the Family Hubs network, ensuring children and families receive community based services in places, and by people with whom they have trusted relationships.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	19 th January 2026
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	19 th January 2026
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Kirsty Woodhead, Head of Service Family Help

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Nicola Curley	Director of Children's Services	19 th January 2026

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	19 th January 2026
Report title and date	Family Hubs progress update and extension
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	16/03/2026
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	16/01/2026