





Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

MTP Ref:	CS18BS03	Line title and description of change:	Change For Children Programme - Early Help Review Development of a new model for Early Help, supporting a reduction in demand for children’s social care services and the delivery of associated savings.
Officer contact name and telephone number for further information:	Joy Shakespeare 01296 387762		
Date assessment completed:	3/4/17 first assessment 30/10/17 updated to take account of consultation responses 15/11/17 transferred to MTP EIA & VCS format 8/12/17 further update		
Who else involved in the assessment:	Julie Tisbury, Philip Dart		
Signature and name of Cabinet Member signing off this impact assessment and any resulting actions.	Name: Warren Whyte and Mike Appleyard		
	Signature:		
	Portfolio: Cabinet members for Children’s Services and Education and Skills		

Section A: Our residents and service users (relates to screening questions 1 and 2)

You have identified that the proposal will or may have an impact on the public or services directly and/or that groups of people will or may be affected differently by the proposal, therefore, you should address the questions below insofar as they are appropriate and relevant to the proposal.

Questions to consider/prompt your thinking	The Findings and your evidence base for these
<p>What do you know about the proposal will impact on different groups of people in Buckinghamshire, particularly, those with protected characteristics? How do you know this? For example, disaggregated data from any relevant consultations/focus groups, national or local published research reports, satisfaction surveys, service monitoring data, benchmarking with other providers, demographic data or other information. Please refer to the county council’s “Research” information on the website and the information provided by partners on the BSP website.</p>	<p>Rationale for the new service</p> <p>Demand for statutory services in Buckinghamshire has increased substantially in the last 5 years, above increases in population growth (CYP population  7%):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with an SEND Statement  11% • Number of children in our care  12% • Number of children in need  12.6%

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

<p>What new research might you need to undertake to understand the impact of implementing this proposal on different groups of people (in particular those with protected characteristics)?</p>	<p>Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) cannot sustain the financial and practical implications of this increase in demand; however alternatives could directly impact negatively on service users and the staff that provide these services.</p> <p>We therefore need to target resources more effectively, increasing the number of families we support at an earlier stage to prevent them entering into high cost statutory services. To do this, we need to think differently, embrace new ways of working and reconfigure services.</p> <p>We need to move towards a single service approach, based on the evidence provided, ensuring that the needs of children, young people and their families are still met and a reduction on the demand for statutory services is achieved.</p> <p>The Change for Children Transformation Programme recognises that to improve outcomes for children and young people, we need to ensure they get the right service, at the right time, from the right place. Resilience and capacity needs to be built within communities and service users need help at a preventative level giving professionals the greatest opportunity to support them in effecting change and therefore preventing the need for high level, high cost intervention services. The Early Help Review (EHR) is one of the four priorities of the Change for Children Transformation Programme and its aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve outcomes for children and families by transforming the way in which services are delivered • To reduce demand on statutory services by providing support when problems appear • To deliver significant budget savings
<p>If your findings indicate actual or potential indirect discrimination¹ you must demonstrate how the proposal is the least discriminatory way of achieving a stated legitimate business aim.</p>	
<p>How will implementing the proposal impact on future service users? For example, what does data tell you about who is and who should be benefitting from the existing service? What do you know about the needs and barriers of people who should be accessing the service but aren't? What action, if any, should you take to address these issues? Will implementing the proposal prevent these issues from being addressed?</p>	
<p>Where the proposal is about removing/reducing a service, changing delivery methods or increasing charges, what are the implications for people with protected characteristics, our priority groups in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, geographical communities and different socio economic groups? Consider also any implications for people in terms of how this may change their mode of travel/travel time, as well as any other increases in time spent accessing the service, increased inconvenience and personal cost. How likely is increased dissatisfaction with the service or the county council? Could implementation of the proposal lead to groups of people perceiving preferential treatment of another group, or that the needs of their own group have been ignored in favour of another group? If yes, how will you address these fears/concerns? Consider the role, or potential role, of the media, advocacy groups and extremist groups to misrepresent the county council's actions or intent.</p>	

¹ Indirect discrimination can occur when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone **and** as a result, people who share the service user's protected characteristic are put, or would be put, at a particular disadvantage when compared with people who don't share that protected characteristic **and** the service user is put, or would be put at that disadvantage **and** the service provider cannot justify this as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate business aim

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

	<p>The project has 2 parts, which are interlinked and not necessarily consecutive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: The redesign of Early Help services which are delivered by or commissioned by BCC Children’s Services. • Part 2: To work with partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors to deliver multi-agency transformational approaches to Early Help. <p>(This Equality Impact Assessment focuses in Part 1 of the project)</p> <p>The main objectives of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make services financially sustainable • To eliminate piecemeal reduction in services which put further pressure on statutory services • To ensure contacts, repeat contacts and referrals to social care reduce, and, children and their families receive the right support at the right time, early enough. • To ensure Early Help is sufficiently co-ordinated • To enable the tracking of outcomes across all Early Help services to provide evidence of sustainability <p>Access to the new service will be by direct self-referral by phone, referral form or through a professional referral from someone that the family or service user already trusts. This referral system builds on what has already been provided and has proved effective. There will be a significant outreach communications plan to ensure that all groups, especially those who are targeted and those with protected characteristics, are aware of the service.</p> <p>The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board’s Threshold Document will be used to judge eligibility for services, which will be targeted at those groups of children and families who need support the most.</p>
--	---

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

	<p>The new model seeks to target services rather than provide universal services, based on needs analysis. Any targeting will consider the 9 protected characteristics.</p> <p>The current services disproportionately benefit, by design, children and their families. The intention of the new service is to further disproportionately benefit the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 0 – 18 • Families where either a child or an adult has a disability or mental health needs • Young people up to 25 where special needs are identified • People who are pregnant or parents, especially those who are disadvantaged in other ways (eg single parent, in receipt of work related benefits) • Women (as research indicates that the majority of parents with caring responsibilities are female) • Families who are in poverty or struggling, or who are otherwise disadvantaged <p>Some ethnic groups are also more likely to be in the above categories of disadvantage based on local and national data on children affected by poverty, children’s achievement in school and children coming into the care system. These ethnic groups include Black African, Black British, mixed heritage and some specific Asian backgrounds. Because of the improvement in targeting services, these groups are therefore more likely to disproportionately benefit from the proposal.</p> <p>However, under the proposal, some groups will have services reduced or withdrawn, and these would include some people who are in the following groups but who are not otherwise disadvantaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 0-18 • People who are pregnant or parents
--	---

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

In order to mitigate the impact on these groups we intend to improve our communication pathways (via internet websites and work with key partners in education and health services). Our aim is that these groups will be supported to engage with the wide variety of provision already available from partner agencies across Buckinghamshire.

We have undertaken a needs assessment in order to understand the needs of the local community and the groups within it. This assessment looks at the following as proxy measures; Population Growth, Deprivation, Worklessness, Trilogy of risk (joint impact of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health), Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, Education needs, Health and Other (including lone parent households, households where not all people have English as a main/preferred language).

- **Population Growth** - The population of 0-19 year olds in Buckinghamshire is increasing, with a projected increase of 15% between 2011 and 2031. During the same time period, the projected increase in the population of 0-4 year olds is 6.5%.
- **Deprivation** - Buckinghamshire is the second least deprived County Council in England according to the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), however, 21% of the County's population live in areas categorised as 'Financially Stretched' or as 'Urban Adversity'.
- **Worklessness** - The number of people in Buckinghamshire claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) has been falling since 2011; however there are still over 2,000 unemployed people in Buckinghamshire with clear hotspots in Aylesbury Town Centre, Buckingham, High Wycombe, Chesham and South Bucks.
- **Crime** - In 2016, there were 29,526 criminal offences recorded in Buckinghamshire and over two thirds of these were in Aylesbury and High Wycombe towns. The most common criminal offences recorded were violence and sexual offences and anti-social behaviour.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

85 children aged between 10-14 years committed a criminal offence in 2016 and they account for just over one fifth of all offences committed by young people. Over one third of offences are committed by 16 year olds accounting for the greatest number of offences (149). The proportion of young offenders aged 16 in Bucks is at least 10% higher than the proportion for the SE. 91% of crimes are committed by males. 65% of crimes are committed by White young offenders and 32% crimes are committed by young offenders from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and half of those crimes are committed by young people of mixed ethnic group.

- **Trilogy of risk** - 164 young people (0-24) used specialist treatment services in 2014/15, with 92% of service users using cannabis and 66% consuming alcohol. 23% of people aged 16+ are estimated as 'increasing risk' or 'high risk' drinkers. Between 24th June 2015 and 29th June 2016, 476 families were referred to the Early Help panel, of these 476, 70 (14.71%) were referred for mental health reasons, 32 (6.72%) for domestic abuse and 14 (2.94%) for substance misuse. These 3 reasons form part of the 7 most common reasons for referral to the Early Help. As a number of services that currently form part of Early Help will be integrated into one service to provide whole family support, this positive impact will continue.
 - According to ONS Public Health Birthfiles in 2014, there were 5,812 births in Buckinghamshire and of these women between 1,825 and 2,988 had various mental health concerns.
 - In 2015-16, there were 7,908 domestic incidents, 2,444 of which were recorded crimes and the majority of these were in the Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe districts.
- **Education needs** - Between January and August 2015, 57 pupils were permanently excluded from school. This figure increased to 115 in the same time period the following year.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

- **Health** - 2014 data suggests that girls aged 15 – 17 years have a pregnancy rate of 12.8 per 1,000. Data published in Nov 2015 by ONS Annual District Birth and Death Extracts, the Public Health Outcomes Framework states that 7.3% of premature births were babies with low birth weights. The majority of low birth weight children are seen to occur with mothers under 20 years old. It is estimated in Buckinghamshire that 9.8% of children aged 5-19 years have asthma, 0.3% have epilepsy, 0.2% have diabetes, 9.9% have eczema and 11.7% have allergies.

An additional piece of research was also carried out into the ethnicity of children and families accessing services at present, and this confirmed that, while the groups accessing services are broadly in line with the Buckinghamshire picture, there is a disproportionate use of services by most groups other than white British. This is particularly noticeable in the mixed groups.

Details are contained in the table provided below. The figures for service users are based on the years 2015-17 and for Buckinghamshire as a whole on the 2011 census. There is therefore a caveat around the figures as we are not directly comparing like with like.

Ethnicity	Current users %	Buckinghamshire %
White British	71.9	81.1
White other	5.1	5.2
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	5.6	0.9
Asian/Asian British	9.8	8.1
Mixed White/Asian	2.8	0.8
Mixed White/Black African	1.1	0.2
Black British	2.6	2.1
Other	1.1	1.6

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

A number of focus groups with children and families have been held as part of developing the proposal outlined above. These focus groups were drawn from current client groups of the affected services, and the responses received were matched against the following summary of local and national research key messages from children and families:

Respondents expressed what they felt currently doesn't work:

- Having to deal with a range of disconnected services
- Being given the wrong information
- Not knowing where to go for help
- Lack of accountability i.e. services not following up on a complaint
- Feeling misunderstood or judged

Respondents expressed what they prefer:

- Feeling listened to and understood
- Not feeling judged
- Being treated with respect
- One consistent key worker
- Being able to get support/information for more than one thing
- Being able to get support for more than one member of the family and having the whole family's needs considered
- Being able to access information, advice and support through a number of different methods of access (web, leaflets, 1 to 1, etc.)
- Workers being easily accessible both in terms of venue (home or local community) and by being available on the phone
- Being flexible in approach, taking into account individual circumstances and giving practical tailored advice and support
- Keeping the service user informed every step of the way.

Respondents identified areas for improvement:

- Increased awareness of services
- Clarity about what can be offered
- Consistent advice.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

Local and National research has also been considered, including:

- DfE Review of Children’s Centres July 2016:
Proving their value and effectiveness is challenging
Parent support and specialist family/parent support services offer better value for money than the more child-based services
- All Party Parliamentary Group report, July 2016 recommended the development of Family Hubs, ‘As part of its work on the Life Chances Strategy, the Government should give full consideration to augmenting Children’s Centres into Family Hubs – a “nerve centre” for all types of family support, with a mixture of statutory, voluntary and specialist help both on-site and signposted.’
- Children’s Commissioner Oct 16 recommended ‘hubs to coordinate support for parents, children and families, including Early Help’
- National research into what works:
 - Early Intervention Foundation
 - Lessons learned from Troubled Families programme
 - Other local authorities – lessons learned from their journey

Extensive research into what other local authorities have done to deliver their Early Help services has also been completed. More than 20 other local authorities were contacted, and individual discussions held. Lessons learned have included:

- The importance of using the Troubled Families criteria to demonstrate progress
- How to integrate services most effectively
- How to implement co-location and the advantages and disadvantages of this approach
- Simpler referral pathways - no wrong door recommended
- Targeting services to families through outreach recommended

In addition to this, co-design workshops with frontline staff and Managers were held (Nov – Dec 2016) in order to develop the proposal to take out to full public consultation.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

As a result of all the feedback and research, overall key principles behind the service were identified as:

- One Early Help service uniting professionals with varied backgrounds
- Whole family, all of their problems, with consent
- Single assessment, single plan
- Lead family worker
- An assertive, challenging, persistent approach
- Locally based teams
- Phased approach, working collaboratively with partners.
- Outcomes focussed, clear measurable targets
- Longer term reduction in demand on statutory services

These key principles underpin the ideas and considerations for the future of Early Help in Buckinghamshire and were the foundations of the model that then went out to public consultation.

Before proceeding to public consultation, there was also consideration given to other possible ways forward. These were:

1. Continue with same range of internally delivered and commissioned services
2. Maintain some services based on clear criteria of effectiveness, and cease others where evidence is less clear
3. One Early Help service bringing together variety of staff skills and experience, based on key principles. Whole family key worker approach, working with families at level 3 on the Thresholds document and some prioritised groups at level 2.
4. One Early Help service, where staff retain own specialisms and do not work in a whole family, all the problems approach.

After considering the options, Cabinet agreed the public consultation on the broad principles of option 3, as the one which is most likely to meet the objectives of this project as outlined in question 1.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

The location of the team bases or 'hubs' has been carefully considered, based on need as well as ease of access in terms of bus routes/transport links. A detailed analysis of current service users has been carried out to judge how far people would need to travel to new locations. Building locations are being chosen where 80% of current users are within 4 miles of new locations, which is judged reasonable so long as there are reliable public transport links. Additionally, most of the interventions in the new service will be delivered in the family home rather than in a central location, which will in itself disproportionately benefit those with disabilities, or parents of young children or those who otherwise find it difficult to travel through poverty or through living in rural locations without good transport links.

Research is being done to understand what community services are already established to fill any potential gaps, and provide continued support to communities. BCC already have a website (Buckinghamshire Family Information Service, BFIS) detailing information around support services on a local level, and in order to support this review, BFIS will be upgraded and further developed.

A full public consultation commenced on 14 July 2017 and ran until 16 October 2017. The main survey was online, and was accompanied by significant publicity locally, targeted social media advertising and partner engagement to promote the consultation to their contacts and clients. Paper copies of the consultation were available at libraries and in youth centres. This was reinforced by focus groups made up of those groups who are less likely to respond to an on line survey, and who were representative of the proposed client group of those families who need support the most. These also included people with protected characteristics.

A full report of the public consultation is available as an appendix to the Cabinet paper, to which this Equalities Impact Assessment is also appended.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

However, a brief summary of that consultation is provided below. The survey was completed by 1,991 residents, 365 organisations and 79 young people using Youth Services.

Residents

Most respondents were families with children (85%), who are the main target group for these services. Over half of this group had children under 5, (which is twice the Buckinghamshire profile for households with children) and respondents where their children had disabilities made up 22% of all respondents with children (which is seven times higher than the Buckinghamshire profile of children with disabilities). The profile of adult respondents was similar to the Buckinghamshire profile across a range of other demographic characteristics.

Of the 1,991 residents who responded to the survey. 89% of respondents were female, compared with 51% of the Bucks population. The 25-34 and 35-44 age groups (together 70% of respondents) over-indexed against the Bucks population in these two age bands (31%). Adults aged 35-44 formed the largest cohort overall (42% of respondents). In terms of ethnicity, disability and employment status, the respondent profile was very similar to the county profile, with the majority being white, not disabled and in employment. The Acorn profile of respondents was representative of the Bucks population, particularly for the less affluent groups most in need and more likely to access services.

Taking into account the proportion of people who agreed, as well as those who disagreed with the proposal, there was net positive agreement with the proposal of 18% of residents. Although there was 'net' agreement with the proposal overall, there were relatively high levels of both agreement and disagreement with the proposal. Where half of residents (50%) agreed with the proposal and three in ten (32%) disagreed. Approx. two in ten residents (18%) either didn't have a strong opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed) or didn't know.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

	<p>The proportion of people agreeing or disagreeing with the proposals was different for specific groups of people. For example, respondents whose children had disabilities or children aged 10-14 were more likely to agree with the proposals, and respondents whose children were aged under 5 or those providing further comments were more likely to disagree with the proposals.</p> <p>Half of respondents provided further considerations or made further comments regarding the proposals, which were categorised into topics. The main topics raised were regarding ‘Early Help’ services (for example providing services that are open to all to use, wanting immediate help when needed though non-targeted services), ‘Access’ (for example providing local easy to access services), considerations regarding their understanding of the proposals (‘clarity’) and concerns regarding service closures.</p> <p>Organisations Respondents could also complete the survey on behalf of an organisation, where the majority of the 365 respondents were from public sector organisations (54%). A number of respondents were from the same organisation.</p> <p>Taking into account the proportion of respondents who agreed, as well as those who disagreed with the proposal, there was net positive agreement of 25%. As with residents, there were relatively high levels of both agreement and disagreement. Where approx. six in ten of respondents from organisations (56%) agreed with the proposal and three in ten (31%) disagreed. Approx. one in ten respondents (13%) either didn’t have a strong opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed) or didn’t know.</p> <p>Organisations’ main comments fell into similar categories as those expressed by residents, including concerns regarding service closures, accessibility, their understanding of the proposal and its ‘clarity’.</p>
--	--

*Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment***Youth Service Users**

The consultation was also open to children and young people who are users of the councils Youth Service to complete. A total of 79 young people aged between 14 and 24 completed the survey at these centres, where disagreement with the proposals was higher (at 52%) than residents or organisations and levels of agreement were also lower (at 11%).

Focus Groups

Three Focus Groups took place with 16 people that were invited from a range of the current services provided to children, young people and families. Topics covered included 'Assessing Services', 'One Family Worker' and understanding what 'Early Help' means to the group.

Petitions

While not part of the council's consultation the council notes two petitions relating to the proposals. The 38 Degrees petition with 2,222 signatures as at 16 October 2017 (regarding saving Children's Centres), and a Labour Party petition (also against Children Centre Closures), with 179 signatures as at 16 October 2017.

In summary – protected characteristicsAge

Research is clear that family intervention has a positive impact on children, young people and parents. For example, Children's Centres only provide support for families where children are under 5 so the proposed changes to reconfigure the use of Children's Centres positively impacts on families with children over the age of 5. There is a range of universal support services operating in Buckinghamshire, some of which are already advertised on the BFIS website however work is being done to develop this directory to include a fuller list of available services provided in the community. It will not be possible to compile a complete list as many facilities and services are available

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

very locally and are only advertised in that area – examples include faith based provision of mother and toddler groups.

Disability

It is anticipated that children and parents with a disability will disproportionately benefit from the new service as they will be a targeted group. Currently 69% of service users of the Family Resilience Service have a disability, either physical or mental, or have a learning difficulty of disability which demonstrates that this group is already disproportionately benefit, and this will not change. The new service will be closely aligned with education providers and special educational needs to ensure early identification of problems.

Pregnancy & maternity status

Pregnancy and maternity status will be positively impacted by the provision of this new service as these service users are already more likely than others to access the service. The provision of parenting groups will increase, and the delivery of service via outreach into homes or local community locations will extend the provision available to those who struggle to access current services because of poor transport links, poverty or simply through having a number of young children.

Race

It is anticipated that there will be a positive impact on some ethnic groups who are more disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment or poverty. The Government’s recent race disparity audit bears this out:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-disparity-audit>

Current users of the services have been analysed by ethnicity and this shows that groups other than white British are more likely to be benefitting disproportionately at present. As the new model intends to further target need, this is likely to increase this positive benefit for people who are from minority groups.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

Religion or belief
No impact is anticipated

Gender Reassignment
No impact is anticipated

Sex
The new service will provide support specific to the needs of vulnerable families. It will be open and inclusive focussing on the family's needs and would not discriminate based on sex. It is more likely to benefit women who are more likely to have caring responsibilities. However, in order not to discriminate against men as fathers, there will be ongoing monitoring of the support provided to them and their take up of service, and this will be kept under review.

Sexual orientation
No impact is anticipated

Married or civil partnership status
No impact is anticipated

Other impact
It has already been noted above that there have been some groups, particularly mothers of young children who currently access services provided by Children's Centres, who are unhappy with the proposed changes. This is generally because of the drop in and social support that Children's Centres currently offer, and which will cease. This means that for those people who do not have any additional support needs identified, and who are not in the target group, there will therefore be a reduction in service. Because this group is mainly comprised of mothers of children under five, there could be a disproportionate impact perceived.

Mitigation plans are outlined above.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

Section B: Our internal and external partners (relates to screening question 3)

You have identified that the proposal will or may have an impact on how other services are delivered by the county council, external suppliers or other statutory agencies, you should answer the questions below insofar as they are appropriate and relevant to the proposal. (Please note that VCS organisations are dealt with separately in Section D.)

Questions to consider/prompt your thinking	The Findings
<p>Could implementation of the proposal lead to increased service demands or costs for other county council services, external providers or statutory agencies? If yes, what is being done mitigate the impact or prepare those services/organisations for the increased demand/costs?</p> <p>Where the proposal relates to an external contractor, what is the impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The contractor e.g. staffing, capacity, business continuity management capability? – the future of the service (especially if several other authorities are also contracting services from this provider i.e. domino effect) – Beneficiaries, service users and carers (if not answered in Section A above)? – The wider local community? – Further down the supply chain, especially where locally sourced? <p>What steps have you taken to reduce the council’s potential liability for breaches under the Equality Act where services are being delivered on our behalf? How will compliance monitored?</p>	<p>Partners and stakeholders have been an ongoing part of the Early Help Review with feedback and thoughts sought as part of the process. Partners and stakeholders were part of the co-design model workshops where hypotheses derived from the data analysis mentioned above were tested. Interviews have been held with a range of stakeholders to get their views on how support for children, young people and their families could be improved and to ensure relationships are built with key people to ensure final recommendations put forward are a result of collaboration between all those involved. It has and continues to be important that rationale for change is communicated effectively to ensure a smooth transition is achieved.</p> <p>Services currently available in Children’s Centres provided by other agencies (such as antenatal classes, mother and toddler sessions or music sessions) will either be relocated to other partner buildings (eg health centres, faith group buildings or libraries), or provided in other community locations. It is possible that some of these sessions may be delivered from the new team bases, though this would not be the primary function of the bases. This has been discussed with some partners (including Health providers) and plans are being drawn up to mitigate any loss of services.</p> <p>Dependent on the facilities at each individual base, our intention is that some group or specialist sessions would be delivered there, targeting local need or specific groups. Some of these will include sessions run by partner agencies. For example, parenting groups for</p>

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

the parents of children with a disability, groups for women who have suffered domestic abuse, or workshops on employment for people who have limited education. It is likely that other group sessions will be available in other community locations as well, in the same way as already happens with parenting groups across the county.

Some Children’s Centres will be repurposed appropriate to the local need, for example as nurseries or additional school facilities. It is possible that some may be taken over by local voluntary or community groups, or by other partners such as health providers.

Youth centres run by the council are also affected. Other youth centres previously run by the council were handed over to local community youth groups, as part of an earlier process and this has worked well. The plan now is to either repurpose the buildings or to hand them over to other community or partner providers. Details are being worked up to ensure that any loss of service is mitigated.

Building locations are being chosen where 80% of current users are within 0-4 miles of new locations, which is judged reasonable so long as there are reliable public transport links.

Existing contracts will continue to be monitored under existing management arrangements, until such time as the service goes live. The proposal currently sees 100% of the new Early Help Service in-house, therefore, monitoring compliance with the Equality Act will be carried out as part of normal service planning and performance management.

Legal advice is being sought on whether TUPE arrangements apply to staff who currently work for external providers. Discussions with providers have been ongoing through the review period so that they have been kept informed and their views sought.

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

	<p>In order to publicise the new service when it is launched, a communications plan has been prepared. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct communication with previous service users via email, phone, letter or face to face • Publicity via press statements with offers of interviews with elected members or senior officers • Social media campaigns targeted at specific groups who are most vulnerable for reasons of their protected characteristics • Partner engagement with schools, nurseries, health services and the voluntary and community sector, so that they can reach out to those who use their services • A re-launched website
--	---

Section C: Our employees (relates to screening question 4)

You have identified that the proposal will or may have an impact on our employees, therefore, you should address the questions below insofar as they are appropriate and relevant to the proposal.

Questions to consider/prompt your thinking	The Findings
<p>How have you ensured that employees affected by the proposal but who are absent because of long term sickness, being on secondment or a career break, being on maternity/paternity, adoption or carer’s leave are not disadvantaged by their absence?</p> <p>How have you ensured that any employee selection processes do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees because of a protected characteristic? Have you ensured that, where relevant, reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure that a person who is disabled is able to fully participate in the process?</p> <p>If the proposal is about delivering a service differently, how have you ensured that employees are properly equipped with the relevant tools, skills and knowledge to do so?</p>	<p>With Option 3, the recommended option, all staff within the ‘in scope’ services are likely to be affected and this will include some staff who are employed by contracted partner agencies.</p> <p>The impact on front line staff and managers will include potential changes to their work bases. This may have a disproportionate impact on those employees who have caring responsibilities such as parents. This is more likely as the large majority of affected staff are female, and this group is more likely to have those caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Age ranges are varied across the in scope services and recruitment will be in line with the Council’s Equality and Diversity policy. An option to reduce the impact on staff would be to offer voluntary redundancy (VR) and redeployment which would be open to all eligible staff in scope of the review.</p>

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

<p>How will you be able to demonstrate that you have implemented the council’s policies and procedures fairly? For example, what employee monitoring data do you need to gather, analyse and compare pre and post implementation of the proposal?</p>	<p>Employees may also be affected by changes to working practices, so that those who are currently based in a specific location will be asked to go out into the community instead to do their work. This impact is again more likely to affect female employees than male, as the large majority of those affected are female. This will be mitigated by full training and support and the offer of voluntary redundancy and redeployment within the local authority for those employees who feel that this new type of work is not for them.</p> <p>A full staff consultation will be carried out in line with council policies and procedures once the model has been formally agreed. This will take place over a 45 day period. Those staff who are who are absent because of long term sickness, being on secondment or a career break, being on maternity/paternity, adoption or carer’s leave will have their statutory rights protected. As far as is possible, all staff will be given choices as to where they will be based.</p> <p>As part of the consultation, employee monitoring data will be collected around recruitment, redeployment and redundancy in line with the council’s policies and procedures. An HR officer has been assigned to oversee the consultation and ensure equity and transparency as well as adherence to policies.</p> <p>The Communications Team has used various methods to ensure all staff receive the same information at the same time. A dedicated email box was set up in November 2017 and there have been additional communications via meetings and newsletters to ensure maximum coverage.</p> <p>We recognise that this is a large scale change for employees and we are taking ongoing advice from HR, ensuring fairness generally and due consideration of equalities issues in our workforce as we transition from existing services to the new model.</p>
---	--

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

Section D: The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) (relates to screening question 5)

You have identified that the proposal has a direct impact on voluntary and community sector organisations either as a result of a reduction in, or cessation of, grant funding, or where contracts are coming to an end and will not be renewed, or where new contracts are at a reduced level of funding than was previously the case. Therefore, you should address the questions below insofar as they are appropriate and relevant to the proposal.

Questions to consider	The Findings
Which VCS organisation(s) is / are involved?	<p>The impact on the voluntary and community sector is being fully considered in the main report that proposes a move to the new model of Early Help. We have specially considered the impact on all VCS organisations with whom we contract and who are directly affected by the proposal. In addition, we have carried out an audit of all VCS organisations whether commissioned or otherwise, that support Early Help. This will be kept under constant review and will form part of the conversations beginning with the sector and the new style of relationship between the public and VCS.</p> <p>The affected contracted providers include some organisations that are from the voluntary and community sector. In order to ensure that all necessary policies and procedures are adhered to, legal advice has been sought. At this stage it is not appropriate for contractual reasons to provide a detailed financial breakdown but an impact assessment will form part of the decision making process.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be a positive impact on community cohesion for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and locality groups (special interest, faith based for example) will be able to use the new website to publicise their offer more widely.
What is the source of the current funding (i.e. BCC budget, national funding stream)?	
<p>What will the financial impact of the proposal be on the organisation(s) involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % reduction in BCC contribution • % reduction in the organisation’s total income (based on current year income) 	
What funding does the organisation receive from other Buckinghamshire bodies or organisations (e.g. District Councils, Bucks Community Foundation)? Please provide a breakdown.	
What are the reasons for reducing or ending the funding?	
<p>How will the proposal impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the organisation(s) e.g. staffing, capacity)? • the future of the service* • beneficiaries, service users and carers (if not answered in Section A above)? • volunteers currently providing the service? • any assets used to provide the service*? • the wider local community*? • the supply chain, especially where locally sourced? 	

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

<p>Is alternative provision of the services available to existing clients? If yes, from which organisations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of volunteering is being developed to provide new opportunities for service users to move forward into employment and other opportunities in the community • New groups/services will be set up to address specific issues as they are identified proactively through data collected <p>The whole intention of the review into Early Help is to build the resilience of children, families and communities so that they are far less reliant on statutory services which can be intrusive. This ambition is clearly outlined in the Early Help Strategy which will form part of the final proposal.</p>
<p>Could implementation of the proposal lead to increase demand on other voluntary sector organisations? If yes, what is being done to prepare for this increased demand?</p>	
<p>Is there a particular geographical impact?</p>	
<p>Will this reduction have a positive, negative or neutral impact on our efforts to encourage people and communities to become more self-reliant?</p>	

Section E: Consultation and Engagement (relates to any screening question where the answer was “yes” or “maybe”)

Please answer the questions insofar as they are relevant to the proposal. If they are not relevant, please indicate this in “The Findings” box below.

<p>Questions to consider/prompt your thinking</p>	<p>The Findings</p>
<p>Equalities Perspective:</p> <p>Does the proposal require targeted engagement to ensure that people directly affected are aware of the proposal and/or consulted with about how to mitigate an adverse impact or to eliminate any identified discrimination? If yes, how will this be achieved? How will you ensure that communication is appropriate to meet the different communication needs of different groups of people? For which groups will face to face communication be preferable/the most effective method?</p>	<p>A public consultation commenced on 14 July 2017 and ran until 16 October 2017. The main survey was on line, and was accompanied by significant publicity locally, targeted social media advertising and partner engagement to promote the consultation to their contacts and clients. This was reinforced by focus groups made up of those groups who are less likely to respond to an on line survey, and who were representative of the proposed client group of those families who need support the most. These also included people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>A full staff consultation will also be required, once the model has been formally agreed. This will take place over a 45 day period.</p>

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

	<p>Partners, stakeholders and service users have been an ongoing part of the Early Help Review with feedback and thoughts sought as part of the process. Partners and stakeholders were part of the co-design model workshops where hypotheses derived from the data analysis mentioned above were tested. Interviews have been held with a range of stakeholders to get their views on how support for children, young people and their families could be improved and to ensure relationships are built with key people to ensure final recommendations put forward are a result of collaboration between all those involved. It has and continues to be important that rationale for change is communicated effectively to ensure a smooth transition is achieved.</p> <p>The Communications Team used various methods throughout to communicate the outcomes of the review including internal, external and partner mediums, to ensure all staff receive the same information as the same time. A dedicated email box was set up in November 2017 and there have been meetings and newsletters to ensure maximum coverage.</p> <p>In order to publicise the new service when it is launched, a communications plan has been drafted. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct communication with previous service users via email, phone, letter or face to face ▪ Publicity via press statements with offers of interviews with elected members or senior officers ▪ Social media campaigns targeted at specific groups who are most vulnerable for reasons of their protected characteristics ▪ Partner engagement with schools, nurseries, health services and the voluntary and community sector, so that they can reach out to those who use their services ▪ A re-launched website
--	---

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

<p>VCS Perspective: How will you discuss the potential implications of your proposal with the VCS organisation(s) involved? <i>*The Bucks Compact states “Where there are restrictions or changes to future resources, discuss with VCOs the potential implications as early as possible, give organisations the opportunity to respond, and consider the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision.”</i></p>	<p>We will talk to individual groups affected plus the infrastructure organisations e.g. Heart of Bucks, Action for Youth, Community Impact Bucks, Citizens Advice, LEAP – the County Sports Partnership, Bucks Business First.</p>
<p>Section F: Monitoring implementation and impact (relates to any screening question where the answer was “yes” or “maybe”)</p> <p>Please answer the questions below insofar as they are relevant. If they are not relevant, please indicate this in “The Findings” box below.</p>	
<p>Questions to consider/prompt your thinking</p>	<p>The Findings</p>
<p>How will you monitor the implementation of the proposal to assess its impact on the county council’s Equality Duty and its commitment to a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector?</p> <p>You will need to consider what information you already have that will enable you to analyse and interpret information in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the numbers of particular groups using the services and what outcomes they experience • Show under-use of a service by an equalities group • Show over-use by an equalities group • Reveal discrimination • Demonstrate that services are not discriminatory • Measure the effectiveness of service changes • Identify the need for new or changed services 	<p>A performance framework is being developed to build on what is already being reported. This will be a flexible and ongoing process which we will review and constantly engage with partners on to ensure that appropriate performance monitoring is in place and any impact, negative or otherwise will be mitigated.</p> <p>The proposed new model has been introduced in a wide range of local authority areas across England over the last 3 years. Early indications are very positive, with local authorities citing positive impact on children and families. A new report is expected imminently from the Early Intervention Foundation, which aims to evaluate the relative success of this way of working and provide guidance on the best way to evaluate it.</p> <p>Whilst there has been no formal benchmarking of success measures to date, there is an increasing consensus that the Troubled Families measures are a valid and evidence based approach, as they address the following key areas of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attendance rate including exclusions • Crime and antisocial behaviour

Equalities and VCS Impact Assessment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worklessness in adults and young people • Children in need – reducing demand for statutory services • Domestic abuse incidence • Health and wellbeing of children and parents <p>All data will be broken down by age, gender, ethnicity and other factors, and these will be clearly identified in monthly reports and annual evaluation reports. As at present, these figures are checked against the demographics of the county to ensure that there no group is disadvantaged. Additionally, service user feedback is already gathered routinely and this will continue.</p>
--	--

Assessment - Actions Arising

Action	Officer responsible	By when
A full staff consultation will be carried out in line with Council policies and procedures once the model has been formally agreed. This will take place over a 45 day period.	Carol Douch	To commence Jan/Feb 2018 – dependent on political decisions
A Communications Plan has been prepared in order to ensure communications are circulated on developments with the Early Help Review and publicise the new service when it is launched.	Carol Douch	Ongoing – new service due to launch June 2018
Ongoing monitoring and review during service implementation into business as usual, to inform and ensure service meets identified needs and protected characteristics.	Carol Douch	Ongoing
Discussions to continue on how to repurpose buildings and relocated ongoing services	Carol Douch	Ongoing
VCS impact will be kept under constant review	Carol Douch	Ongoing
Discuss with VCS infrastructure organisations, early intervention approach and VCS involvement	Carol Douch	Ongoing