

## Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)



Name of proposal	Enhanced Childminding Provision - Approved Provider List
Directorate and Service Area	People; Early Years & Childcare
Name of Lead Officer	Bridget Atkins

### Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

#### 1.1 What is the proposal?

This proposal is to set up an approved provider list for Bristol City Council's enhanced childminding provision service. The service offers a package of support to vulnerable children mostly under 2 and their parents, including childcare with an experienced childminder.

The approved provider list sets out criteria to provide enhanced childminding which childminders have to meet in order to have a child placed with them by Bristol City Council. The criteria will be the same that childminders currently have to meet - such as an Ofsted rating of good or outstanding, at least two years' experience – however the approved provider list will be a more open and transparent system, that aims to attract new providers as well as offering clarity for existing providers.

### Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

#### 2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

Of the providers used in 2019/20 for the service, 80% traded under their own name rather than a company name. In terms of the wider childminding

workforce, and attracting new providers to the service, 12% of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) respondents in the Bristol Quality of Life survey 2019-20 said they were self-employed, compared to 9% Bristol average. Therefore attempts to bring in new childminders will need to be accessible to BAME sole traders in order to access and better represent the self-employed workforce.

The 2019 Education Policy Institute (EPI) report, 'The early years workforce in England', found that in 2018 88.8% of the workforce was of White ethnic background, compared to 85.4% of the population (2011 census). This may have implications for addressing diversity gaps amongst enhanced childminding providers, as any new providers would be drawn from this workforce as they require at least 2 years' experience.

## 2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

The current application form collects information on gender, age, religion, ethnicity, first language and disability. These are included on the main form due to relevance to placing with a child, to ensure they are best able to meet their needs. However this information has to date not been collated in a manner allowing for analysis of the provider workforce. Efforts to undertake analysis have been made more difficult as a number of the forms are held in hard copy, and are not easily accessible due to current working from home requirements.

Data on gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and sexual orientation is not currently collected. The EPI report does not have workforce information on other protected characteristics, nor do Government statistical publications on this topic.

## 2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

In order to promote and communicate the new approved provider list, work will be done to identify relevant community groups to help do so, and messaging produced in an accessible way to attract as wide a range of qualified applicants as possible.

The existing specifications, on which the approved provider list will be based, have been designed to be as accessible as possible to small providers and sole traders, and the enhanced provision team offer support to for potential providers making an application. This will continue with the new approved provider list.

### Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

As the service itself will be delivered to the same specifications, with the same criteria to access services, there is not an anticipated direct equalities impact on service users. This is a targeted service, and will continue to work with children and families with a range of needs including disabled parents, and asylum seeking, refugee, and traveller families.

Where the proposal may have an impact is on the childminders who are providing the service, as they will have to apply to join the approved provider list. The specifications are as similar as possible as current specifications for the service, and the process is being made as simple as possible, so as not to be made to arduous a process for childminders, many of whom are sole traders with little experience of applying to local government contracts.

Although use of ProContract online procurement portal can be difficult for smaller providers to effectively utilise, the tender requirements have been designed so that existing provider should be able to continue to do so, with similar requirements in terms of experience, qualifications and policies in place.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

In response to the prevalence of sole traders in the workforce, the Early Years & Childcare team have produced a number of resources to support childminders to provide an inclusive service, including a draft equalities policy covering promoting inclusion, promoting diversity, challenging prejudice and support for children with disabilities (as well as training on this issue), which can be found here -

<https://www.bristolearlyyears.org.uk/childminders/childminding-policies/>

Applicants will need to demonstrate understanding of equalities requirements set out in the service specifications in order to get onto the approved provider list, to ensure providers understand the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and are committed to promoting equality and inclusion. Whilst sole traders may not have their own equality policy they will be required to demonstrate

that they will adhere to the equality policy of an appropriate professional body. Commitment to equality and inclusion will also be monitored as part of ongoing reviews of enhanced childminding placements.

If there are any unforeseen challenges in applying to join the approved provider list, compared to the previous application process, additional support can be provided. Ongoing monitoring of applications compared to current childminding providers will take place to see if providers as a whole, or any particular groups within it, are struggling to meet the requirements of joining the approved provider list.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

In developing a more open and transparent application process, there is potential to advertise the service more widely to childminders, and draw in a workforce more representative of the wider Bristol population.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

Promotion and communication of the approved provider list can be developed in an accessible manner, conscious of any diversity gaps in the current provider workforce, and engagement can be done with relevant community organisations to try and address these gaps. To identify the relevant community groups, an audit of current application forms will be carried out.

#### **Step 4: So what?**

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

The equality impact assessment has highlighted the lack of existing equalities monitoring data for all protected characteristics, when looking at the childminders that provide the enhanced childminding service. It has also highlighted the need for promotion and communication of the new approved provider list to address diversity gaps in the provider workforce.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

In response to the equalities impact assessment, equalities data on providers will be collected as standard at the point of application, which will be used to

identify any ongoing diversity gaps in the workforce. In addition, further analysis of individual application forms will be carried out to establish a better informed picture of the current workforce. Work will be done to identify relevant community organisations, through whom the approved provider list can be promoted to help reduce these gaps.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?

Annual reports will be produced from the new data collected. These can identify where attempts to address diversity gaps in the enhanced childminding providers have been successful, and where engagement with particular groups has not made an impact, meaning communication and promotion approaches can be reviewed.

Service Director Sign-Off: A Hurley	Equalities Officer Sign Off: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>
Date: 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Date: 24/9/2020