

London Borough of Hackney Equality Impact Assessment Form

The Equality Impact Assessment Form is a public document which the Council uses to demonstrate that it has complied with Equality Duty when making and implementing decisions which affect the way the Council works.

The form collates and summarises information which has been used to inform the planning and decision making process.

All the information needed in this form should have already been considered and should be included in the documentation supporting the decision or initiative, e.g. the delegate powers report, saving template, business case etc.

Equality Impact Assessments are public documents: remember to use at least 12 point Arial font and plain English.

The form must be reviewed and agreed by the relevant Assistant Director, who is responsible for ensuring it is made publicly available and is in line with guidance. Guidance on completing this form is available on the intranet.

Title of this Equality Impact Assessment:

Outcomes of the Early Help Review

Purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment:

To assess the impact of service changes associated with the outcomes of the LBH Early Help Review.

Officer Responsible: *(to be completed by the report author)*

Name: Joshua Naisbitt	Ext: 8146
Directorate: Children & Education	Department/Division: Education Operations

Group Director: Jacquie Burke

Date: 08.12.2021

Comment : N/A

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

In completing this impact assessment, you should where possible, refer to the main documentation related to this decision rather than trying to draft this assessment in isolation. Please also refer to the attached guidance.

STEP 1: DEFINING THE ISSUE

1. Summarise why you are having to make a new decision

The Early Help Review has constituted an internal review of Hackney Council Early Help services, to ensure that these services are delivering effective and accessible services for children, young people and their families.

The outcomes of the review have highlighted opportunities to improve service delivery through a number of practice and process changes.

These changes do not correlate to a Key Council Decision and will be embedded from January 2022. The Outcomes of the Review will be presented to Cabinet in January 2022 in order for Cabinet to note these outcomes.

A report outlining the scope of the review, the process and learning of the review, and the associated outcomes has been produced- 'Early Help Review- CE032'

2. Who are the main people that will be affected? Consider staff, residents, and other

The main people who will be affected by these decisions are:

- Current and future children, young people (aged 0-19 or up to 25 with SEND) and families accessing targeted early help services
- Partners making future referrals to targeted Hackney Council's Early Help services
- Staff working in Hackney Council targeted early help services

STEP 2: ANALYSING THE ISSUES

2. What information and consultation have you used to inform your decision making?

An extensive piece of engagement with stakeholders was completed in order to understand the current effectiveness of the council's Early Help provision. This included:

- Deliberative workshops with over 100 frontline staff and partners, including representatives from schools and health.
- A series of commissioned interviews with children, young people and families who were accessing or had previously accessed targeted early help from Hackney Council. Interviewers spoke to 26 people from 17 different families: 7 young people, 19 parents or carers.
- An on-line engagement survey providing an opportunity for stakeholders to share their views of Hackney Council early help services ran for 8 weeks, receiving 91 responses.
- Engagement with primary and secondary schools at key meetings, and follow-up 1:1 conversations with 5 schools to share their views of Hackney Council early help services

An analysis of recent engagement and consultation exercises completed by Hackney Council.

A secondary analysis was completed of the latest research on early help and work being done by other local authorities to identify evidence-based effective practice Hackney could adopt.

A number of service redesign workshops with senior leaders in Children & Education took place, to clarify the visions and principles of Hackney Council early help services, and identify key service changes for a new model.

An analysis of referral and assessment data in Early Help case management systems, to understand current demand, was completed.

A series of pilot projects to explore opportunities for changes to aspects of Hackney Council's future Early Help delivery model.

This engagement and wider analysis has informed the outcomes of the review.

Equality Impacts

4 (a) What positive impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?

- Improved understanding of services available to residents in Hackney, meaning families needing extra support are more likely and able to access the right services for them, and professionals working with vulnerable families are aware of what further support is available and how to access this support.
- Improved joined-up working between Hackney Council early help services, to ensure families do not have to repeat their story multiple times.
- Consistent pathways to targeted early help services, meaning vulnerable families are connected to the right help for them as quickly as possible, including families where a child has SEND needs.
- Improved evidence-base on the needs of families requesting support from early help services, in order for service development and resources to be led by those needs.
- Improved partnership approach to early help, ensuring that the early help system is working in a joined-up way to support families.
- Increased participation of young people and families in co-producing service development.
- Development of anti-racist practice specifically in Hackney Council Early Help services, to ensure that all children, young people and families receive a consistently high level of support from services.
- Improved early intervention practice should reduce cases where a child's needs escalated to requiring a statutory social care intervention.

4 (b) What negative impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?

Where you identify potential negative impacts, you must explain how these are justified and/or what actions will be taken to eliminate or mitigate them. These actions should be included in the action plan.

- There is a risk that improved access and communication could place increased strain on services and cause delays to the screening process (and hence the time for vulnerable families to get the support they need). This will be mitigated by a centralised and robust screening function, that meets regularly with services to understand demand and a contingency plan for increased staffing of this screening function has been identified within budget frameworks.
- There is a risk that changes to processes could undermine good relations with safeguarding partners. This is being mitigated by a roll-out period predicated on engagement with schools and health partners, and a wider piece of transformation and engagement across the safeguarding partnership in 2022- to develop a shared strategy for early help in Hackney.

The changes proposed do not equate to a reduction in service delivery of the breadth of the Hackney Council Early Help offer. There are no further significant negative impacts identified.

STEP 3: REACHING YOUR DECISION

5. Describe the recommended decision

The recommended decision is to embed the changes to service delivery associated with the review from January 2022, outlined in the associated Cabinet Report. This option has been preferred over making no changes to service processes which would undermine consistent practice standards, consistent and effective access to services for all equality groups and an enhanced oversight of the presenting needs of families accessing services, and the impact of interventions.

STEP 4 DELIVERY – MAXIMISING BENEFITS AND MANAGING RISKS

6. Equality and Cohesion Action Planning

The following actions will be delivered, as outlined in the associated Cabinet report. These actions will be underpinned by ongoing communication with staff on service changes.

Short-term priorities (to be embedded from January 2022):

1. All requests for Early Help will be made via one 'request for support' form and will be screened by the Early Help Hub in the Multi-agency Agency Safeguarding Hub. One assessment form and process will be embedded for all Early Help assessments delivered by Hackney Council.
2. The Council will embed consistent protocol for children whose needs and/ or risk of harm escalate from needing an Early Help intervention to needing a Children's Social Care intervention, and whose needs and risk of harm decrease from Social

Care to Early Help. This will ensure that children, young people and their families experience consistent timely and joined-up support as their needs change.

3. A single set of practice standards will be adopted across Hackney Council targeted Early Help services, in order to ensure that interventions are consistently of the same standard for children, young people and their families. This will include timescales for how quickly children will be seen, how quickly an assessment will be completed and a plan developed with the family.
4. Targeted Early Help services, including Young Hackney targeted units, Family Support delivered through Children's Centre multi-agency teams and Family Support delivered by FS Units will all allocate targeted cases on the same locality basis. This will ensure that families are able to receive holistic support from joined-up services, with a strong understanding of other local support and opportunities available. Work will also take place in 2022 to explore how synergies with the 'Neighbourhood' Primary Care Network localities could be built upon.
5. Targeted Early Help interventions will always involve work with parents and carers, or other key family members.
6. Hackney Early Help Services will embed a single performance framework for targeted Early Help services overseen by an officer oversight group. This will include a shared Quality Assurance framework, service Key Performance Indicators and the use of a common measure for the impact our services have for children, young people and their families.
7. Hackney Council will develop a brand for Hackney Council targeted Early Help services, in order to have a clear delineation between the targeted Early Help that the council offers and the extensive Early Help delivered across the borough by other organisations. We will work with partners in 2022 to develop communication and branding around a borough-wide Early Help strategy.

Medium-term priorities (delivered April - September 2022)

1. Ongoing development of 'children & family hubs' through key workstreams, linked to the Early Years strategy
2. Evaluation capacity of parenting groups available across Hackney Council and ensure these are being targeted- audiences
3. Multi-agency Early Help Strategy developed through engagement with partners (including schools, health, police and the Community and Voluntary Sector) , led and agreed by an Early Help Partnership Strategic Group- ensuring a shared responsibility for the delivery of Early Help.
4. Multi-agency training programme developed and delivered to embed Early Help Assessment across the partnership
5. Local Early Help performance framework developed and agreed, to provide oversight of local datasets related to children, young people and their families.

6. Review approach to commissioning in Early Help, to ensure evidence-based and impactful.
7. Ongoing review of presenting needs through Early Help hub versus evidence-based interventions available. Identify gaps and how these can be met through training and resources continually.
8. Partnership locality Early Help teams will be brought together to periodically review specific locality needs, trends and resources available.
9. Develop principles and associated actions for embedding effective and consistent co-production of Early Help service delivery with families and young people, so that families are able to shape the support that Hackney Council Early Help offers, and how we can best approach and work with them.
10. Identify and embed actions for the delivery of anti-racist practice in Hackney Council Early Help services, linked to the Anti-Racist Action Plan being delivered across the Children & Education directorate

Longer-term priorities (6-12 months)

1. One case-management system for all Early Help services, with the ability for improved information-sharing with partners, in-line with GDPR and consent.
2. Greater alignment of management structures to deliver seamless targeted Early Help.
3. Regular review of performance and quality assurance of Early Help by the 'Early Help sub-group'.
4. Yearly recommissioning of Early Help delivered in-line with a shared evidence-base and framework.
5. Ongoing co-production of service improvements, working with families to understand how we can continue to shape how Early Help services work with families.
6. Ongoing delivery of actions identified, to embed anti-racist practice in Early Help services.

