

Equality Assessment (EA)

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| Service Area: | All service areas across Achieving for Children (including Operational Area 1 Richmond and Kingston) and Operational Area 2 (Windsor and Maidenhead) |
| Name of service/ function/ policy/ project being assessed: | Signs of Safety Project |
| Officer leading on assessment: | Edwina Gregory-Johnson, Project Officer |
| Other staff involved: | Daniela Acosta – Head of Integrated Working, Deborah Glassbrook – Director of Improvement, Alison Twynam – Director of Children’s Services (Operational Area 1) |

BACKGROUND

1. Briefly describe the service/ function/ policy/ project:

Signs of Safety is a collaborative practice model which focuses on a solution and strengths based approach.

Signs of Safety was developed to enable practitioners to work in partnership with families in building effective relationships, using everyday language to ensure everyone understands the issues and works together to find a sustainable solution.

Signs of Safety has been chosen by Achieving for Children as it fits with our principles of putting children and families at the heart of what we do. It will be rolled out throughout the organisation, including both Operational Areas (Richmond and Kingston, Windsor and Maidenhead).

The implementation plan will span across two years, with a further three years allowed to embed the new way of working within practice.

2. Why is the equality assessment being undertaken?

- To consider ways of mitigating or avoiding any adverse impacts on staff that are required to attend training and implement the framework
- To consider ways of mitigating or avoiding any adverse impacts on service users/clients that access or receive services from AfC
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics;
- Identify the required steps needed to meet the needs of people from protected groups; where these are different from the needs of those not in those groups

3. What sources of information have been used in the preparation of this equality assessment? (e.g national research, local needs assessment, user feedback) Please provide the details in the table below:

| <i>Information source</i> | <i>Description and outline of the information source</i> |
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| Signs of Safety website and available documentation produced by Signs of Safety | www.signsofsafety.org.uk |

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT

4. Assess the relevance of each protected characteristic group to the service/ function/ policy/ project and explain what the data, customer feedback, complaints or discussions with stakeholder groups tells you about the impact.

Other questions to consider:

- *How well are diverse needs met?*
- *Have any differences in access to services/functions been identified for any group?*
- *Has the area identified any disadvantages experienced by groups, which need to be addressed?*
- *Have there been any complaints about a failure to receive an appropriate and fair service?*
- *Is there any other evidence of differential impact or different outcomes which needs to be addressed?*
- *Is there any evidence that participation in areas of public life is disproportionately low for any particular relevant protected characteristic group?*
- *Have the needs of disabled people been identified and addressed where these are different from the needs of non-disabled people?*
- *Have you identified any need to tackle prejudice or promote understanding between different relevant protected characteristic groups?*

Remember that equality assessment is not simply about identifying and removing negative effects of discrimination but it is also an opportunity to identify ways to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

| <i>Protected Group</i> | <i>Findings</i> |
|------------------------|--|
| Age | The new framework will have a positive impact on age. The ethos of Signs of Safety includes making information available and written in a way in which it can be understood by the youngest member of the family. |
| Disability | Workforce development ensure that any special requirements are met for delegates attending training with regards to disability. The framework is flexible and the tools which are used with families (e.g. the three houses) are adaptable so that they can be in a user friendly format based on parent/carer, child/young person's ability. |
| Gender (Sex) | The framework is flexible and the tools which are used with children (e.g. the three houses) are adaptable so that they are cognisant of gender when relevant. |
| Gender reassignment | The framework is flexible and the tools which are used with families (e.g. the three houses) are adaptable so that they |

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| | can be cognisant of gender reassignment. |
| Marriage and civil partnership | The implementation of Signs of Safety is considered to be of low relevance to marriage and civil partnership. |
| Pregnancy and maternity | <p>Workforce development ensure that any special requirements are met for delegates attending training with regards to pregnancy.</p> <p>Staff who are currently on maternity leave will have the opportunity to attend training on their return and will be informed of any changes throughout Keeping in Touch days.</p> |
| Race/ethnicity | <p>Achieving for Children will continue to ensure that any conversations take place with families where English is not their first language are translated, where appropriate (including any documentation).</p> <p>As Signs of Safety ethos is simplifying the language used (i.e. avoiding the use of generic terms and acronyms, example, CSE (child sexual exploitation), DV (domestic violence)) this should help to improve the understanding of families where English is not their first language, and material or dialogue is translated.</p> |
| Religion and belief including non-belief | <p>The framework is flexible and the tools which are used with families (e.g. the three houses) are adaptable so that they can be in a user friendly format based on families' beliefs and values.</p> <p>There is an image of a wizard within the range of tools – practitioners will need to be sensitive to using this tool with some children and families where such an image is offensive.</p> |
| Sexual orientation | The framework is flexible and the tools which are used with families (e.g. the three houses) are adaptable so that they can be in a user friendly format based on individuals' sexual orientation. |

5. Summarise the key findings of the equality assessments of impact- have you identified any data gaps in relation to the relevant protected characteristics and relevant parts of the duty?

Other questions to consider:

- ***Are there findings of unlawful discrimination?***
- ***Can you address any identified adverse impact?***
- ***Can you mitigate any negative impact?***
- ***Please provide rationale if you are unable to address any adverse impact.***
- ***Have you identified any ways of advancing equality in this area? For example, meeting diverse needs?***
- ***Is there a need for any actions to promote understanding between different protected groups?***

There are no significant issues identified that will require further action. Signs of Safety puts families and children at the centre of the work when professionals have child welfare concerns which will help to bring greater equality to the relationship between service recipients and providers. It will ensure families are part of the solution and are supported to become more resilient and self-sufficient.

In addition, the ethos of Signs of Safety is to make information available and written in a way that it can be understood by all- this will have a positive impact on any groups who may otherwise struggle to engage such as young children, and any children, young people or parents/ carers with disabilities. Also the approach, and the tools that are used as part of it, are adaptable so it can fully take into account families' ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.

CONSULTATION

6. What consultation have you undertaken with stakeholders or critical friends about the key findings? What feedback did you receive as part of the consultation?

Liaised with Signs of Safety Consultant and Practice Leads who have had experience of using the signs of safety framework in other local authorities.

ACTION PLANNING

7. What issues have you identified that require action?

| <i>Issue identified</i> | <i>Planned action</i> | <i>Lead officer</i> | <i>Completion Date</i> |
|---|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| Need for sensitivity and awareness about use of wizard tool | Check that trainer is aware if this issue | Deborah Glassbrook | 31/08/17 |

MONITORING AND REVIEW

8. How will the actions identified above be monitored and reviewed and where will the actions be captured i.e. Business Plan, project plan, service and improvement plan, service plan poster or Personal Development Plan?

The overall Project Plan is monitored at monthly Steering Groups and an evaluation framework is in the process of being developed which will gather feedback from families and staff about their experiences using the Signs of Safety approach.

PUBLISHING THE COMPLETED ANALYSIS

When completed, the equality assessment should be approved by a member of AfC Management Team and published on the Achieving for Children website. Please provide details below:

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| Approved by | Deborah Glassbrook |
| Date of approval: | June 2017 |
| Date of publication: | July 2018 |