

Assessment No	1063	Owner	rickeera.kaur
Resource	HSCP	Service	Joint
	FirstName	Surname	Job Title
Head Officer	Rickeera	Kaur	Contracts & Commissioning Officer
Members	Neil McKechnie: Contracts, Commissioning & Quality Manager: West Dunbartonshire HSCP Mark Mulvenna: Children's Services Manager: West Dunbartonshire HSCP Jean Cameron: Children's Services Team Leader: West Dunbartonshire HSCP		
	<i>(Please note: the word 'policy' is used as shorthand for strategy policy function or financial decision)</i>		
Policy Title	Framework Contract for Commissioned Providers of Foster Care & Continuing Care Services		
	The aim, objective, purpose and intended out come of policy		
	A Framework is being developed that will encapsulate the contract for commissioned foster care provisions. This will replace the existing national framework provision. Outcomes: -A framework that better meets local need and is more responsive to the needs of children and young people from West Dunbartonshire -Improved working relationships with commissioned providers of foster and continuing care, through clear roles and responsibilities detailed within the framework -Improved commissioning processes, based on ethical commissioning principles -Adherence to local and national strategy and policy, such as the Promise.		
	Service/Partners/Stakeholders/service users involved in the development and/or implementation of policy.		
	Commissioned Providers of foster care services, currently working in partnership with the HSCP - provider forums are being facilitated as the framework is developed. Children and young people's views regarding their needs will be sought through children's rights and participation processes.		
Does the proposals involve the procurement of any goods or services?			Yes
If yes please confirm that you have contacted our procurement services to discuss your requirements.			Yes
SCREENING			
<i>You must indicate if there is any relevance to the four areas</i>			
Duty to eliminate discrimination (E), advance equal opportunities (A) or foster good relations (F)			Yes
Relevance to Human Rights (HR)			Yes
Relevance to Health Impacts (H)			Yes
Relevance to Social Economic Impacts (SE)			Yes
Who will be affected by this policy?			

Care experienced children and young people from West Dunbartonshire, and their families and carers.

The children's services workforce within the HSCP fostering services teams, and that of commissioned Providers.

Who will be/has been involved in the consultation process?

As above

Please outline any particular need/barriers which equality groups may have in relation to this policy list evidence you are using to support this and whether there is any negative impact on particular groups.

Specific group to consider	Needs	Evidence	Impact
Age	<p>The framework will contract commissioned foster care and continuing care services, that is largely for children and young people aged 0-21 years. However there may be exceptions when care placements are extended beyond this, to allow for transitions to adult support services, determined by an assessment of the needs of the young person.</p> <p>Older children are more likely to experience changes in foster care placements, therefore the framework must be mindful of containing a service specification that allows for the needs of all ages of children and young people.</p> <p>Similarly, the needs of young people will vary, hence the provision of continuing care placements will also be included within the framework. This allows young people to chose to remain in their foster homes, with a progressively independent care plan that is aligned to their assessed needs, in consultation with the young person and their carers.</p> <p>The Framework should incorporate the support required by foster carers of the fostering Provider.</p>	<p>Part 11 (Continuing Care) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014</p> <p>Staying put Scotland: providing care leavers with connectedness and belonging: Scot Gov, 2013</p> <p>The Promise: Scot Gov, 2020</p> <p>Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009</p> <p>National Care Standards: Foster Care and Family Placement Services</p> <p>"Stability": The Fostering Network Policy Positions, 2024</p> <p>Lifelong Rights for care Experienced People: Who Cares? Scotland, 2022</p>	<p>Positive - embedding ethical commissioning principles will allow for progressive practice more aligned to the needs of children and to local and national policy and legislation.</p>

Disability	<p>The framework must incorporate the needs of children with disabilities into the service specification, with emphasis on the rights of the child.</p> <p>Evidence shows that it can be more challenging to find suitable family based care placements for children with disabilities and that they are more likely to reside in residential care as a result.</p>	<p>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>Children's Social Work Statistics 2022-23 – Looked After Children: Scot Gov, 2023</p> <p>Are Disabled Children Visible in Scotland's Children's Statistics? CELCIS, 2024</p> <p>Supporting disabled children, young people and their families: guidance. Scot Gov, 2023</p>	<p>Positive - the local framework can be tailored to local needs and strategy. Being cognisant of the needs of children and young people with disabilities in West Dunbartonshire, and local supporting services, will allow service specifications and roles and responsibilities of commissioned fostering services to be tailored to need.</p>
Gender Reassign	<p>Evidence shows that fostering Providers should incorporate additional training to their workforce to ensure that the diverse needs of foster families are understood and appropriately responded to, and that foster carer assessments are fully informed.</p> <p>Evidence shows that trans people face many barriers to accessing and participating in health and social care services, and to having their views and opinions heard within. This can be exacerbated for care experienced people, who have higher levels of contact with services and who often have had experiences of adversity, trauma, change and inconsistent care and nurture.</p>	<p>Assessing and supporting transgender foster carers and adopters: CoramBAAF, 2024</p> <p>Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People: Trans Report, LGBT Youth Scotland, 2024</p>	<p>Positive - the framework will place emphasis on rights based approaches in the provision of foster care, from commissioned providers.</p>

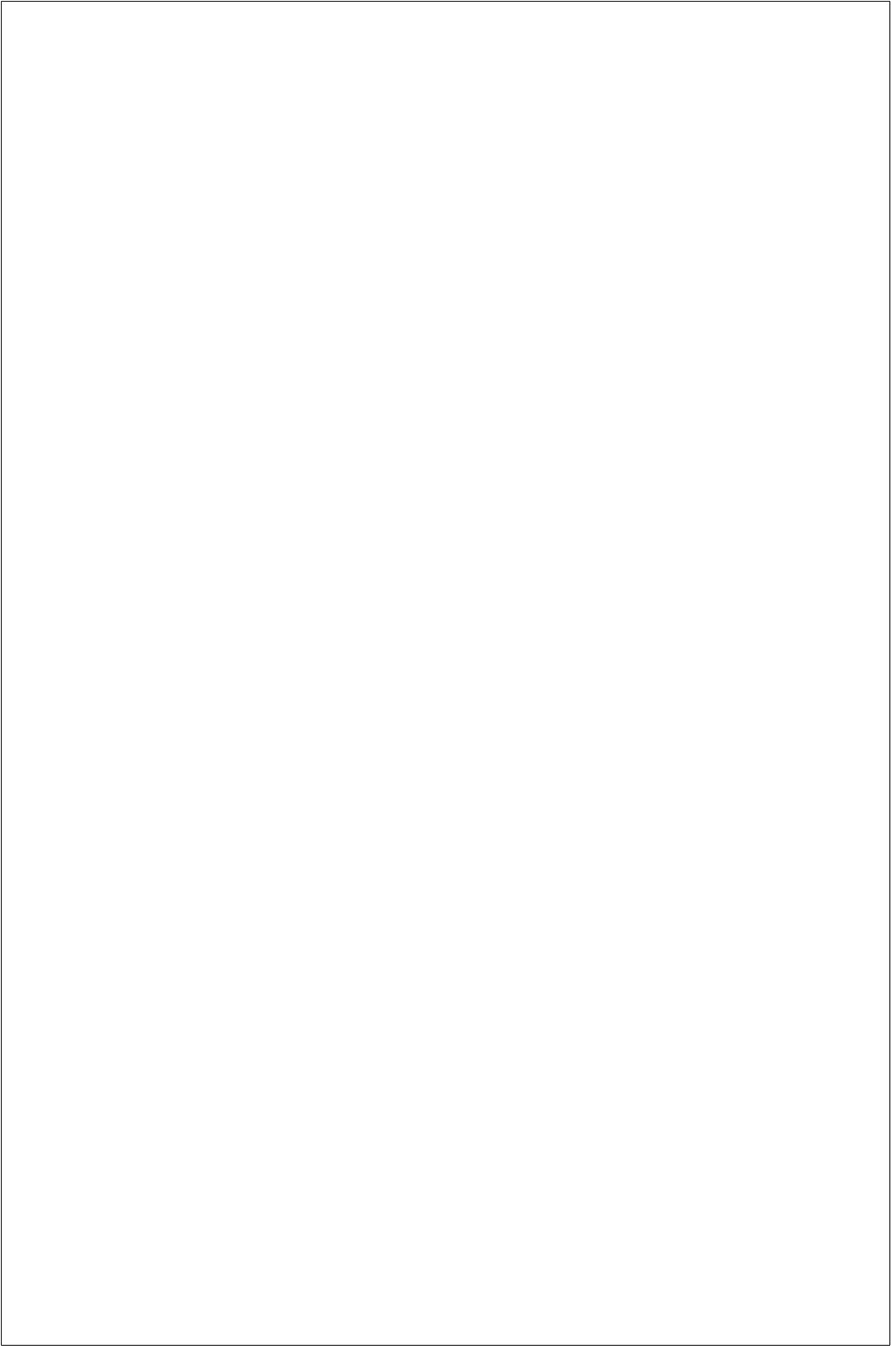
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<p>Foster carers marital status is a consideration in their assessment process and ongoing support, in terms of analysing any impact on their caring for children and young people.</p> <p>Care experienced children and young people will have varied experiences and perceptions of family life and their views and opinions, and life experiences, should be considered in the assessment of placement matching in order to support healthy attachment relationships and stability in placements.</p>	<p>Practice Information Note Foster Carers and New Partners: the Fostering Network, 2022</p> <p>The demographic characteristics of foster carers in the UK: Motivations, barriers and messages for recruitment and retention. Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre, Loughborough University, 2012</p>	Neutral - development of the framework is unlikely to impact.
Pregnancy & Maternity	<p>The currently utilised framework for commissioned foster care includes provision for Parent & Child care placements. This will require to be included in the local framework, to allow for the needs of West Dunbartonshire's young people. There are often challenges in sourcing suitable parent and child placements.</p> <p>Parents with care experience are more likely to have contact with services during pregnancy and early years parenting in particular. They are less likely to have social support networks that can support the challenging role of being a new parent. Pregnancy can be a reason for some foster placements requiring to end if the placement is not registered or suitable for the parent and child together. This can mean loss, change and disruption for the parent in particular.</p>	<p>Briefing Paper Parent and child placements: The Fostering Network, 2021</p> <p>Long-term outcomes for care-experienced parents and children: Evidence of risk and resilience from two British cohort studies. Centre for Longitudinal Studies</p> <p>Care-experienced Parents Unite for Change: Barnardos, 2022</p> <p>Births to care experienced teenagers and women aged 14-24 in Scotland: an estimation. CELCIS, 2023</p>	Neutral - the framework is unlikely to impact on this area, though may allow more specialist placements to be accessed without bespoke commissioning.

Race	<p>Children from ethnic minority backgrounds are known to have additional vulnerabilities in terms of accessing supporting services and outcomes from service involvement.</p> <p>Children from minority ethnic groups are disproportionately represented in care experienced groups and there is some evidence that it can be more challenging to source permanent care placements for black and Asian children. However research also shows that black and Asian children are more likely to remain in foster care than to live in residential care. Evidence also shows that over emphasis on race and culture in matching process can cause increased delays for children who require long term care away from home.</p> <p>Foster care providers are required to be informed of the evidence when recruiting, assessing and supporting carers to meet the needs of children placed with their families.</p>	Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnicities in Adoption and Fostering: CoraamBAAF	Neutral - development of the framework is unlikely to impact.
Religion and Belief	Article 20 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly, by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language".	Race, religion and representation among care-experienced children: Nuffield Foundation, 2022	Neutral - development of the framework is unlikely to impact.

Sex	<p>There is some evidence that male children are more likely to remain in care than female children, particularly in teenage years, indicating that male young people are more likely to need long term care placements. The commissioning framework must support the local children's services What Would it Take strategy in supporting services to promote family relationships and community connections, particularly through joint working and permanent care planning.</p> <p>There is also evidence there are far more female foster carers, or main carers, than male.</p>	<p>National Care Service - children's social services: overview - Scot Gov, 2022</p> <p>State of Scotland's Foster Care: The Fostering Network, 2019</p>	Neutral - development of the framework is unlikely to impact
Sexual Orientation	<p>LGBTQ+ young people report significantly higher levels of mental health problems, are frequently subjected to bullying in school, and experience issues at home – nearly one in ten LGBTQ+ young people have had to leave home for reasons relating to their sexuality or gender identity.</p> <p>LGBTQI+ youth are over represented in care systems and report more difficulty in having their needs understood and heard.</p> <p>LGBTQI+ people are under represented in the foster carer population and have previously reported barriers to becoming approved foster carers, both from societal stigma, lack of focused recruitment and through service processes. There is a lack of up to date evidence since legislative changes have been applied.</p>	<p>The recruitment, assessment, support and supervision of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender foster carers An international literature review: University of Oxford, 2015</p> <p>SPEAKOUT: A STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUESTIONING YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE – AND THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE - University of East Anglia, 2018</p> <p>IMPROVING LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF CARE - What Works for Children's Social Care, 2021</p>	Neutral - development of the framework is unlikely to impact, though can include detail of providers' responsibilities in terms of foster carer recruitment processes.

Human Rights	<p>There are numerous relevant human rights issues for children receiving intensive support from services. These are guided by the principles of GIRFEC and the UNCRC, which should be incorporated into the commissioning framework to ensure children's rights issues are forefront in commissioned foster care services.</p>	<p>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>Children (Scotland) Act 1995</p> <p>Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014</p> <p>Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011</p> <p>Children's rights legislation in Scotland: Scot Gov</p> <p>National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland: Scot Gov, updated 2023</p> <p>National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People: Scot Gov, 2012</p>	<p>Positive - the development of a local framework can allow recently updated legislation, policy and guidance to be incorporated into commissioning processes. Foster carers views are relayed through providers forums, to ensure co produced framework contracts.</p>
Health	<p>Research and evidence has consistently shown that people with care experience have poorer health and wellbeing outcomes than their peers. It also shows that care experienced people have unique barriers and challenges in accessing health care support.</p> <p>Supporting foster families to maintain wellbeing and resilience is a crucial role of the fostering service provider, in relation to supporting healthy and long lasting attachment relationships for children.</p> <p>The commissioning framework and contract then must detail the roles and responsibilities of fostering providers in promoting health and wellbeing of children referred to their services.</p>	<p>Care experienced children and young people's mental health: Iriss, 2020</p> <p>A qualitative analysis of goals set by foster carers seeking support for their child's emotional well-being: Adoption & fostering journal, 2021</p>	<p>Neutral - development of the framework is unlikely to impact</p>

<p>Social & Economic Impact</p>	<p>Developing a local framework allows for some market research into local social care provision, needs of the fostering provider's workforce. Fair working policy will be included within the local framework. The roles of both the paid and unpaid persons involved in the foster care system can be further analysed to better understand local need.</p> <p>People with care experience are more likely to suffer financial adversity in their futures and to have experienced the impact of poverty in their childhoods. Exposure to poverty can have lasting affect on future health and wellbeing and social outcomes. Similarly, foster carer allowances from a variety of providers can be explored on the basis of the national guidance.</p> <p>People with care experience are over represented in criminal justice systems, mental health services, youth pregnancy statistics, and in other social issues such as homelessness and employability. Therefore there is evidence that robust support is needed when children are cared for away from home to mitigate against these risks. Commissioning continuing care services alongside foster care services allows longer term planning with less systemic barriers to planning children's futures.</p>	<p>Poverty: The Promise. Scot Gov, 2020</p> <p>The life chances of young people in Scotland: evidence review. Scot Gov, 2017</p> <p>Scottish Recommended Allowance, Guidance: Scot Gov 2023</p>	<p>Positive - development of a local framework can ensure that recent policy guidance can be incorporated is commissioning processes and in contracts with foster care providers. A local framework will also allow other providers not currently commissioned by West Dunbartonshire children's services to join the framework should this be assessed as suitable to local need.</p>
<p>Cross Cutting</p>	<p>There are several cross cutting considerations, as children, young people, their families and foster families will have different life experiences, identity and individual support needs.</p> <p>Therefore the framework must allow for flexibility in allowing provision for the assessed needs of each child or young person requiring foster or continuing care support from providers.</p>		<p>Positive - co-producing a local framework allows those involved in foster care services to highlight areas of unmet need within current commissioning processes, in order for these to be accommodated within a new framework.</p>



Actions

Policy has a negative impact on an equality group, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Will the impact of the policy be monitored and reported on an ongoing basis?

Each commissioned care package will have regular reviews involving the child/young person, their families or carers, and other relevant persons as per local policy and procedure. Providers are also expected to regularly review foster care placements. Quality assurance monitoring processes will be agreed within the framework and foster care providers are expected to commit to West Dunbartonshire's contract monitoring processes.

Q7 What is your recommendation for this policy?

Introduce

Please provide a meaningful summary of how you have reached the recommendation

Co production and implementation of a new framework to commission foster care services should allow for a more nuanced process that aligns with local need of care experienced children and young people from West Dunbartonshire.