

Assessment No	1323	Owner	rickeera.kaur
Resource	HSCP	Service	Joint
	FirstName	Surname	Job Title
Head Officer	Rickeera	Kaur	Contracts & Commissioning Officer
Members	Sharon Laing, Children's Services Manager, WD HSCP Lesley James, Head of Service, WD HSCP Val Tierney, Chief Nurse, WD HSCP		
	<i>(Please note: the word 'policy' is used as shorthand for strategy policy function or financial decision)</i>		
Policy Title	The Bairn's Hoose - contract		
	The aim, objective, purpose and intended out come of policy		
	West Dunbartonshire aims to commission a service to deliver the Bairn's Hoose national model in our area.		
	Service/Partners/Stakeholders/service users involved in the development and/or implementation of policy.		
	Children and young people living in West Dunbartonshire who are assessed as needing Bairn's Hoose support to manage criminal justice processes and to support recovery - and their families/carers. Partner services - NHS, Education, Police Scotland, Argyll & Bute Council children's services. The service development is aligned to the Bairn's Hoose National framework/standards - Scottish Government.		
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?			
The primary focus is to develop a Service in which West Dunbartonshire's children and young people who have been victims or witness of abuse, and children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused harm, will have access to trauma-informed recovery, support and justice. This will affect children and young people assessed as requiring support from the service. Their families/carers who may also be offered support. Workforce within children's services at the HSCP and partner agencies, who will refer to and work in partnership with the new service. Workforce of the appointed provider.			
Who will be/has been involved in the consultation process?			

Providers delivering the service in other areas.
Children's services management team.
Scottish Government guidance/consultation/ framework.

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	Who is eligible for referral to Bairns' Hoose will be determined within the statutory child protection framework. Where information is received by police, health or social work that a child may have been abused or neglected, or is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, an interagency referral discussion (IRD) must be convened as soon as reasonably practicable. Initial Referral Discussions (between relevant professionals in response to child protection concerns) will be a critical factor in ensuring that every eligible child has access to Bairns' Hoose. It is expected the service will be in place for children age under 18.	Healthcare Improvement Scotland & Care Inspectorate: Bairns Hoose Standards, May 2023	Positive - new service for children providing specialist support as directed through Scottish Government framework
Disability	Children with a disability have additional vulnerabilities and some studies have found that they are significantly more likely to be harmed than their non disabled peers. Children with disabilities may also experience more barriers to disclosing abuse and receiving appropriate support.	Disabled Children and Child Protection in Scotland: An investigation into the relationship between professional practice, child protection and disability - Research Findings. Scot Gov, 2014	Positive - specialist service with expertise in managing the varying needs of different individual children and their families.

Gender Reassign	82% of transgender young people had experienced bullying in school on the grounds of their sexuality or gender identity. Trans people experience additional vulnerabilities in the justice system and in accessing support. Studies have found that trans people are more likely to have struggles with ill mental health - 63% of transgender young people experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviours.	Supporting Transgender Pupils In Schools Guidance for Scottish Schools. Scottish Government, 2021	As above - support to access and navigate complex systems due to recognition of barriers and requirement for specialist support.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Family composition and dynamics may impact a child's experiences during times of adversity and this will be assessed as required. This will not impact access to the service, however there may be unique considerations for each family, to enable them to access support. This is in relation to family composition and not marital status.	N/A.	Neutral.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Pregnant young people may access the service, or pregnant family members may be supported alongside the child referred. There can be additional vulnerabilities in relation to child protection during pregnancy that will be assessed as required by the lead professional referring to the service. The provider must make best effort to manage any additional support needs identified that will enable the family to engage with the service. The provider must undertake their own assessment and plan if required for pregnant staff.	National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023, Scottish Government.	Neutral.
Race	Project Esperanza undertook a funded research study and concluded that "Scotland's child protection system and social work sector face significant racial disparities that disproportionately affect Black and Minority Ethnic children and families. Research	Addressing Racial Disparities in Scotland's Child Protection System, Project Esperanza Race, racism and safeguarding children; The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2025.	Positive - if the service is able to act on this info to remove barriers to support and support planning.

highlights systemic biases in child protection assessments, over-surveillance of Black families, and a lack of cultural competence within social work practice (Bernard & Gupta A 2008). These issues contribute to higher rates of Black children being placed into care, often without adequate consideration of kinship networks or cultural identity needs (Sebba et al., 2020).

A critical factor exacerbating these disparities is the underrepresentation of Black social workers in Scotland. The social work workforce remains overwhelmingly white, young, and inexperienced in engaging with racially diverse communities (Scottish Government, 2023b). This deficit limits the sector's ability to provide culturally appropriate interventions, erodes trust between Black families and social services, and perpetuates racial inequalities in safeguarding decisions (Agbaje et al, 2024).

Black social workers face barriers to recruitment, retention, and career progression, often encountering workplace discrimination, microaggressions, and exclusion from leadership roles (Akel, 2021).

Further compounding these challenges is the adultification bias that affects Black children in schools and the child protection system. Black children, particularly girls, are often perceived as more mature and resilient than their white peers, leading to diminished safeguarding responses and harsher disciplinary measures (Joseph-Salisbury & Connelly, 2020). Schools and public institutions have

	been criticised for their failure to acknowledge institutional racism, exclusion of Black-led expertise, and reluctance to co-produce equitable policies with affected communities (Eddo-Lodge, 2017). Additionally, the needs of unaccompanied migrant children arriving in the UK are often overlooked, with many experiencing inadequate care provision, cultural isolation, and vulnerability to exploitation (Ögtem-Young, Ö., 2024)." Research has shown similar barriers and impacts for children from travelling communities and other minority groups.		
Religion and Belief	As above, the same study found that there are significant challenges in services being able to understand and respond to cultural needs and religious needs of children and their families.	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990.	As above.
Sex	Recent statistics show that there is an almost even number of male and female children supported under child protection procedures in Scotland. However outcomes can vary and needs vary for each individual child/young person therefore child centred assessment and planning is a key function of this new service.	Child Protection Statistics, Scottish Government, 2024.	Neutral.
Sexual Orientation	Barnardos research completed in 2014 showed that "LGBTQ+ children and young people face the same risks as all children and young people, but they are at greater risk of some types of abuse. For example, they might experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or hate crime. They might also be more vulnerable to or at greater risk of sexual abuse, online abuse or sexual exploitation".	Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people, NSPCC 2024	Positive, if the service is able to recognise each child's particular needs and improve outcomes in relation to providing specialist support for justice processes, and recovery support.

Human Rights	There are many human rights considerations for children involved in justice systems. The service must be cognisant and responsive, particularly in managing referrals and allocations.	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990.	Neutral.
Health	There are a range of health considerations, when supporting children and their families. The provider must account for assessing impact and supporting engagement with the Bairn's Hoose by providing necessary support to overcome barriers. Children, young people and their families may particularly be struggling with emotional or mental wellbeing during times of crisis of recent traumatic events and the service must be specialised in responding to this with a trauma informed and up to date and evidence based approach.	Healthcare Improvement Scotland & Care Inspectorate: Bairns Hoose Standards, May 2023	Positive - a specialist service should be able to respond to the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of children and young people, and somewhat to their families. Therapeutic recovery support is aimed at this.
Social & Economic Impact	The impact of poverty and oppression can have significant impact on resilience and on child welfare assessment and planning.	Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. West Dunbartonshire: Local Child Poverty Action Annual Report 2023-2024	Neutral - the service can signpost or refer to other supports needed, however has a refined role and criteria relating to Bairn's Hoose service.
Cross Cutting	There are several cross cutting considerations. For example lone parent families, people with disabilities, or families from minority ethnic backgrounds, are more likely to experience poverty or different affect from social oppression.	West Dunbartonshire: Local Child Poverty Action Annual Report 2023-2024	Positive - there will be an assessment of each child's needs utilising experience, skills and tools that will allow the unique needs of each family to be explored.

Actions

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

N/A

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

Reporting is required by the funder and by WDC. Contract monitoring meetings should consider accessibility, trends and unmet need.

Q7 What is your recommendation for this policy?

Introduce

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

1323 The Bairn's Hoose is a national policy and service model being rolled out by Scottish Government. It is an evidenced effective intervention that has improved outcomes for children and young people who require such support and can provide personalised support which will be of benefit to those with particular protected characteristics.