



## Equality Impact Assessment

### What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) ("the Act"), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give 'due regard' to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid 'due regard' to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
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Title:	Proposed changes to respite provision for children with disabilities
Related EIAs:	None

EIA for Savings Programme:	Yes EIA - Childrens Services - Respite - October 2022
Service affected	Changes to the provision of respite services for children with disabilities, including the potential closure of Firvale Residential Respite Unit
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	<p>In March 2020, during the national coronavirus lockdown, the Ofsted registered social care Firvale residential respite unit was temporarily closed. Prior to closure, 12 children were receiving Overnight Respite (ONR) provision at Firvale. A further 14 young people were awaiting ONR provision. These children and their families have received ongoing support from Social Workers to identify alternative services to meet assessed social care needs. Hampshire County Council (HCC) has a statutory duty to provide respite support for children with disabilities and their families. Respite can be provided in many forms and is provided on the basis of assessed need. HCC has provided respite through both in-house capacity and through commissioning services from the provider market. Respite can be provided as an overnight break, in the child's home with support from Direct Payment workers, in external settings, or through other interventions such as Foster Care, or Family Therapy; in some cases, a combination of support is used to meet assessed needs. HCC is recommending that Firvale remains closed and alternative services and provisions used to meet assessed respite needs. HCC believes that the assessed needs can continue to be fully met through alternative, more cost-effective provision. For Firvale to remain closed, alternative provision will need to be commissioned. Alternatives may include respite purchased from external providers, the offer of a Direct Payment or Personal Budget, the use of Specialist Respite Care with foster carers, care support, or the use of technology in the home and the community. Since closure in March 2020, social workers have worked with children, their families and carers, and the provider market to meet assessed respite needs. Where appropriate interim measures have been put in place, such as the provision of Care Support workers or access to an alternative residential respite setting. Families who may have used Firvale in the future will also be offered respite provision from these alternative services where they have been assessed as being appropriate to meet their needs. These proposed change form part of the wider Savings Programme to 2023 – Revenue Savings Proposal. These proposals were approved by the Executive Lead Member for Childrens Services in September 2021. The detailed savings proposals were</p>

submitted to Cabinet in October 2021 and subsequently full County Council in November 2021. At the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Decision Day, held on 14th January 2022 permission to consult on proposals for social care provision for overnight short breaks at Firvale Residential Respite Childrens Unit to remain closed were approved. Following this approval both public, and staff consultations were undertaken both of which ran for 10 weeks, from January - March 2022.

New/changed service/policy/project

Since the outbreak of Coronavirus in March 2020, social care provision at Firvale Overnight Residential Respite Unit has been closed. It is proposed that Firvale is permanently closed. Throughout the current closure social workers have supported service users to access respite either through alternative overnight respite from commissioned third party providers, or through alternative forms of support. The proposed closure would mean that ONR is provided through third party services. Children's Services has a commissioning framework in place ensuring that providers have met agreed standards and quality requirements. The tender ensures that due diligence has been undertaken and that pricing is agreed with each provider. The proposed service changes will have the following:

- No overnight social care respite will be provided at Firvale
- The social care capacity at Firvale would be permanently closed
- Families will receive alternative services which could include respite purchased from external providers, the offer of a Direct Payment or Personal Budget, the use of Specialist Respite Care with foster carers, the use of technology in the home and the community or care support provided in the home or the community, or a combination of these provisions, assessed according to need.
- The distance some families need to travel to access their alternate respite provision may change, for some this could remove the need for any travel if respite in the home is appropriate for others the journey may increase.
- Families who are current users of Firvale may have to experience a period of adjustment as they become familiar with the new services which will meet assessed needs.

The proposed changes will mean that children and their families will benefit from increasingly modern and efficient services, enabled through further use of technology and, where appropriate, delivered within their own homes. Children and their families may have greater flexibility and choice in terms of the services available to support them. Children and families may find that the services they need are delivered in different locations, by different organisations and in different ways. External service providers would share greater accountability for supporting children and their families, with

commissioning increasingly focussed on achieving outcomes and supporting the development of independence skills. The way in which services are paid for may change if voluntary and community organisations are commissioned directly by families due to increased use of personal budgets. Please note, HCC will continue to meet its statutory requirements, and the assessed needs of children and young people. The means and location of assessed needs being met may, for some service users, be subject to change. These are examples of potential impacts; specific impacts will depend upon the options considered and agreed, and the assessed needs of each child in receipt of respite.

## Engagement

In January 2022, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gave approval to undertake a public consultation on the proposal for the social care respite provision at Firvale, to remain closed. In addition to the public consultation staff were also engaged in a consultation process. Consultations ran for 10-weeks from 17 January – 28 March 2022.

To ensure access to the public consultation both in-person and online sessions were facilitated during the consultation period. The consultation was publicised through social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor. The consultation was also publicised through School Communications updates, and with the Hampshire Parent and Carer Network (HPCN) to ensure that there was sufficient and widespread awareness of the consultation.

In addition, a letter was sent to a parent/guardian of each child who had been accessing respite provision at Firvale up to its closure due to the pandemic in March 2020. Social Workers also ensured that all affected families were aware of and had the opportunity to respond to the consultation.

In total 58 responses were received during the consultation period. The breakdown of these responses is set out below.

Of the responses that were provided 56 were submitted via the Response Form, and 2 'unstructured' responses via email were also received. 52 responses were received from individuals, 3 responses were received from Councillors in Hampshire and 1 response came from an organisation.

Of those who provided a response we learned that:

### Respondents' relationship with Firvale

- 91% had used, or were related to someone who had accessed overnight respite at Firvale
- 7% were support workers for families with a child with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities,
- 2% worked at Firvale

## Children and Young People

- 41% live with children or young people under 26
- 35% had Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
- 15% had use overnight respite services
- 8% had use overnight respite services at Firvale

## Age of respondents

- 5% were aged under 25
- 36% were aged between 25-44
- 48% were aged between 45-64
- 9% were aged over 65

## Gender

- 73% of respondents identified as female
- 27% of respondents identified as male

## Respondents' health problems or disability

- 37% had a health problem or disability,
- 63% did not declare a disability

## Respondents' household income

- 45% had a household income of up to £30,000 per year,
- 50% had a household oncome of £30,001 to £60,000 per year,
- 5% had a household income of over £60,000 per year

## Respondents' ethnicity

- 7% were from ethnic minority groups
- 93% were from White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British groups

The staff consultation exercise was undertaken by HR, it followed the agreed and established principles, including engagement with relevant Trade Union representatives. All affected staff were given the opportunity to review, comment and provide feedback on the proposals.

## Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

### Age

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Negative - Low
Rationale	<p><b>Public impact</b></p> <p>Respite services at Firvale have been provided for eligible children between the ages of 5-18 who live at home with their parents or carers and who have been assessed and are approved for overnight respite. Due to restriction imposed due to Covid Firvale was closed to service users in March 2020. At this time there were 12 children and young people using Firvale, and a waiting list of 14 children and young people. The average age across these groups was 13 years old, ages ranged from 6 – 16.</p> <p>The impact of the proposed change has been assessed as negative low for the following reasons; due to their age, the impacted children and young people may have found the move to alternative respite provision challenging; they may have difficulty in acknowledging and understanding the change in their provision, they may find it difficult to manage the endings and goodbyes, and they may have difficulty settling into new and unfamiliar care surroundings. The changes proposed will mean short term disruption for some who access these types of service which could have a negative impact, however, the longer-term impact is likely to be neutral.</p> <p><b>Staff impact</b></p> <p>Based on staffing data as of 20 July 2022 there are 8 individual members of staff who work at Firvale. These members of staff are contracted to work a variety of hours.</p> <p>The staff age profile for Firvale staff is broadly in line with both the averages for all Hampshire County Council staff and for the Children's Services Department.</p>
Mitigation	<p><b>Public impact mitigation</b></p> <p>If the decision is made to close Firvale, Social Workers will continue to support children through a managed transition to a new service, agreed with their family, which is appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding. Opportunities will be put in place to enable 'goodbyes' to be managed.</p> <p>Children will be supported to build trusting relationships with new staff and supported to settle into a new environment. There would be opportunities for the child to be visited by staff from their new provision at home, to make visits to the</p>

provision and for HCC staff, as well as parents to share information about the children they care for with the new provider.

### **Staff impact mitigation**

It is anticipated that the majority of the 8 members of staff affected by the proposals will be permanently redeployed into alternative roles within Children's Services. A small minority of staff members have been invited to apply for enhanced voluntary redundancy as, due to the specific nature of the roles these individuals hold there is no anticipated suitable alternative role available. Subject to a decision to permanently close Firvale it is proposed that these members of staff leave on grounds of redundancy in February 2023. If they do not apply for enhanced voluntary redundancy (EVR2), they will be eligible for redeployment support and compulsory redundancy would be a last resort.

## Disability

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Negative - Low
Rationale	<p><b>Public Impact</b></p> <p>No respite has been delivered from Firvale since March 2020 because of restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The children who have received social care respite provision from Firvale have a range of mobility, learning, physical and sensory disabilities. Most users are recorded as having one or more types of disability. Conditions include: severe learning disability, profound and multiple learning disabilities, and complex health care needs; often in combination with other disabilities such as ADHD; Autism; Cerebral Palsy; and Down's Syndrome.</p> <p>Due to their disability, the impacted children and young people may have found their move to another overnight residential respite setting or alternative form of provision difficult; they may have experienced difficulties in acknowledging and understanding the change in their provision, they may also have found it difficult to manage the endings and goodbyes, and they may have experienced difficulties settling into new care surroundings.</p> <p><b>Staff Impact</b></p>

A small number of Firvale staff members have declared a disability. As a proportion of staff this is higher than both the departmental and organisational wide averages. It should, however, be noted that whilst higher than HCC averages, it is based on a very small cohort, of 8 members of staff.

## Mitigation

### **Public Impact Mitigation**

If the decision is made to close Firvale, Social Workers will support children to have a managed transition to a new service, agreed with their family, which is appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding.

Opportunities will be put in place to enable 'goodbyes' to be managed. Children will continue to be supported to build trusting relationships with new staff and supported to settle into their new respite provision. There would be opportunities for familiarisation visits with staff from their new provision, children and their families have been offered visits to their new provision. Social workers will ensure that parents and carers are able to share relevant information about the children they care for with the new provider.

### **Staff Impact Mitigation**

Hampshire County Council is a Disability Confident Employer. We seek to:

- Build a workforce which reflects the diversity of the local community. We encourage applications from people from all backgrounds
- Remove discrimination against any employee, worker or job applicant in their access to employment, training, working conditions, treatment at work, promotion or dismissal
- Ensure our recruitment processes are inclusive and accessible
- Communicate and promote our vacancies in methods accessible for all
- Offer interviews to any disabled person who meets the essential criteria for the role
- Anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments for staff and candidates, as required
- Support any existing employees who acquire a disability or long-term health condition

In addition, the EVR scheme would be open to all eligible staff and consideration of all applications would be carried out fairly, regardless of any declared disabilities of the applicant. The terms of the EVR scheme represent an enhancement ameliorating the adverse impact of the reduction of staff numbers (FTE).

In line with HCC policy, reasonable adjustments would be made for any member of



staff with a declared disability who takes up a role offered through redeployment.

## Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	For both the public and for staff this proposal is considered neutral in relation to the protected characteristic of Gender Reassignment.
Mitigation	

## Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>For both the public and for staff this proposal is considered neutral in relation to the protected characteristic of Pregnancy &amp; Maternity.</p> <p>In line with HCC redeployment policy any staff member on maternity leave would hold a priority redeployment status.</p>

Mitigation

## Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Of the cohort of 26 children and young people who were accessing or awaiting access to respite provision at Firvale at the point of its closure due to coronavirus restrictions in March 2020, 23 identified as 'white British'.</p> <p>This figure of over 10% of service users coming from non-white-British heritage is higher than the general population in Hampshire.</p> <p>HCC will work with its provider partners ensuring that the alternative services and provision offered is culturally appropriate for all service users.</p>
Mitigation	

## Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There is no data available on these elements for either service users or staff.</p> <p>For both the public and for staff this proposal is considered neutral in relation to the protected characteristic of religion and belief.</p>

Mitigation	
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## Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Negative - Low
Rationale	<p><b>Public impact</b></p> <p>Firvale has supported both male and female service users. The cohort of 26 children and young people who were accessing, or awaiting access to respite provision at Firvale at the point of its closure due to coronavirus restrictions in March 2020 included 15 males, and 11 females</p> <p>All alternative respite services are open and inclusive to both male and female service users.</p> <p><b>Staff Impact</b></p> <p>All Firvale staff are female. Across all Hampshire County Council staff 76.44% are female, within Childrens Services Department this rises to 85%. Figures from Skills for Care (2020) "The State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England" indicate that in 2019/20, women made up 83% of care workers and home carers ( <a href="#">Social-care-gender-and-Covid-19.pdf (wbg.org.uk)</a>). It should be noted that whilst higher than the averages for this sector, it is based on a very small cohort, of 8 members of staff.</p>
Mitigation	<p><b>Staff Impact Mitigation</b></p> <p>The EVR scheme would be open to all eligible staff and consideration of all applications would be carried out fairly, regardless of the sex of the applicant. The terms of the EVR scheme represent an enhancement, ameliorating the adverse impact of the reduction of staff numbers (FTE).</p>

## Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	For both the public and for staff this proposal is considered neutral in relation to the protected characteristic of sexual orientation. There is no data available on these elements for either service users or staff.
Mitigation	

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	For both the public and for staff this proposal is considered neutral in relation to the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership.
Mitigation	

## Poverty

Impact on public	Negative - Low
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Impact on staff	Negative - Low
Rationale	<p><b>Public impact</b></p> <p>Research published in January 2022 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (<a href="https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/58886/download?token=8bgbK-4t&amp;filetype=full-report">https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/58886/download?token=8bgbK-4t&amp;filetype=full-report</a>) found that poverty rate for individuals who live in families where someone is disabled is 31%, 12 percentage points higher than those who live in families where no-one is disabled. Of all families in poverty, just under half contain someone who is disabled, compared with 3 in 10 of families not in poverty.</p> <p>The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has identified several drivers of poverty for disabled people in the UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• disabled people face higher costs of living</li><li>• there is a sizeable difference in the highest level of qualification between those who are disabled and those who are not: 19% of disabled adults have a degree or above, compared with 35% of non-disabled adults</li><li>• disability, ill-health, and society's response to these conditions often prevent people from working. For example, disabled people tend to earn less than their non-disabled counterparts even if they have the same qualification levels.</li></ul> <p>Poverty varies by who is disabled within the family and is especially high where there are both disabled adults and children. At 40%, it is more than double the rate of families where no-one is disabled. The risk is also high among families where there is a disabled adult only, at 31%. Given this is a large population group, this equates to just under six million people in that family type living in poverty.</p> <p>Some children and families may need to travel further to access overnight respite with a different provider, potentially increasing travel costs incurred by families. As a result, families on low incomes or experiencing financial hardship may experience an increase sense of financial pressure.</p> <p><b>Staff Impact</b></p> <p>Of the 8 members of Firvale staff 5 are working in D or E grade roles. This is a higher proportion of staff (62.5%) than the departmental and organisational average (of 33%, and 31% respectively). These roles attract a pay range between £21,778 and £30,101. In 2021 the median wage for a social care worker was £15,522 (<a href="#">Social-care-gender-and-Covid-19.pdf (wbg.org.uk)</a>).</p> <p>It is anticipated that the majority of the 8 members of staff affected by the proposals will be permanently redeployed into alternative roles within Children's Services. The proposal could lead to enhanced voluntary redundancy or compulsory redundancy</p>

	for a minority of staff members, leading to a loss of earnings and confidence in going for further employment.
Mitigation	<p><b>Public Impact Mitigation</b></p> <p>When planning for alternative provision, transport to or from overnight respite has been considered with families where appropriate and in some cases travel support/assistance has been provided. The County Council is committed to ensuring that families remain able to access provision that will meet their child's needs.</p> <p>The County Council would continue to actively work with independent providers to develop the marketplace for overnight residential respite and a range of other services, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity going forward.</p> <p><b>Staff Impact Mitigation</b></p> <p>It is anticipated that the majority of the 8 members of staff affected by the proposals will be permanently redeployed into alternative roles within Children's Services. A small minority of existing staff have been invited to apply for enhanced voluntary redundancy as there are no anticipated suitable alternative roles available. If these staff members do not apply for enhanced voluntary redundancy, they will be at risk of compulsory redundancy and will be eligible for redeployment support. Compulsory redundancy would be a last resort.</p>

## Rurality

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p><b>Public impact</b></p> <p>Using the district council areas as an indicator of the service user's home location:</p> <p>As of March 2020, of the 12 Firvale service users 6 lived in Basingstoke, 2 in</p>

Eastleigh, and 1 in each of East Hants, Hart, Rushmoor and Southampton areas of the county.

The location of the provisions that are now being accessed has changed for all service users, and for some service users this may mean that additional travel time is required. In the consultation users have mentioned the negative impacts of needing to travel further to access alternative provision if Firvale were to close. Potential impacts that were highlighted included the extra financial, time and stress burdens placed on service users and their families by the need to travel further to access respite. Respondents were also concerned about the loss of valuable respite time due to the additional journey length.

**Staff Impact**

For staff, this proposal is considered neutral in relation to the protected characteristic of rurality.

Mitigation

**Public Impact Mitigation**

All children and young people who previously accessed respite provision at Firvale, and those on the waiting list have now been offered a meaningful and suitable form of respite provision that meets the assessed needs.

When planning for alternative provision, transport to or from overnight respite has been considered with families where appropriate and in some cases travel support/assistance has been provided. The County Council is committed to ensuring that families remain able to access provision that will meet their child's needs.

Geographical Impact:All Hampshire

## Equality Statement

Additional information:

None

Overview Statement:

Assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA:

EIA reference number: 00272

Date of production of EIA for publication: 27/09/2022