

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	8 June 2021
Title:	Willow Activity from April 2020 – February 2021
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact – Sarah Marston

Contact number – 07740 517002

Email – Sarah.marston@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this report

1. To provide an overview of Willow activity from April 2020 to end of February 2021. This will include some statistical data and analysis, updates on team growth and function and Willow input to policy decisions on child exploitation and beyond, including modern day slavery, violence reduction, new risk formats and missing children.

Executive Summary

2. This report seeks to provide an overview of child exploitation development and current practice and the impact of the Willow Team on supporting practice and policy for child exploitation across the Hampshire area. The analysis will review how the team can continue to develop and support all aspects of child exploitation for the future.

Contextual information

Relevant Background and information

3. The Willow Team was set up in 2015, through innovation funding and as project with Health and Hampshire Constabulary partners. The original purpose was to gain a better understanding of the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and its impact in Hampshire, following some high profile and well publicised abuse cases in other local authorities.

4. Since this time, the team has evolved and expanded its remit and scope of work. Innovative and reacting to an ever-changing landscape of child exploitation, this team is now firmly embedded in the mainstream work of Hampshire Children's Services, at both the strategic and operational level. The team works across all multi agency forums and supports working across the SHIP wide area.
5. Performance, in respect of exploited children, is a key concern due to the nature of the abuse on short, medium and longer-term child development. It is an area that the whole country is having to tackle, including the impact of organised crime groups using children for financial gain. Youth culture has changed dramatically over the last decade, with a greater emphasis on the use of, and reach of, social media and negative lifestyle aspiration for some children. Changing family structures and a greater recognition of childhood trauma is now better understood around children being 'pushed' out of their family homes to their communities, often to unsafe places and spaces where grooming and exploitation takes place.
6. Willow structure is made up of qualified and non-qualified staff and takes cases directly from MASH for S47 and S17 assessments. These cases need to have an emphasis on exploitation, usually high risk. The team also takes cases as 'nominations' from district teams who already have these cases open subject to either CIN, CP or CLA planning. Willow is a Tier Four service and has a statutory role in assessing, as well as offering direct work and consultancy on case management where exploitation is a significant concern. Caseloads are deliberately kept low so that workers have the time and space to engender a trusted relationship to allow for direct work to take place, using different resources such as social education, videos, case examples, lived experience, contextual focused work and more latterly Trauma/ACE considerations.
7. The team is made up of a Team Manager and newly appointed Assistant Team Manager. There are currently three qualified social workers who can support taking cases from CRT/MASH for assessment. There is currently a Child & Family Support Worker (CFSW) who is linked in and works with children placed in Swanwick secure unit. A second CFSW has been seconded to support Willow with the missing work.
8. Willow have utilised funding from the VRU for two projects. Firstly, the PRU work which involves two YCP workers from YOT supporting medium risk cases in the county's 7 PRUs. Secondly, 1.5 St Giles workers again offering 'lived experience' and mentoring to hard-to-reach children around county lines and peer drug networks. There have been some challenges with health support, however, one FTE CAMHs worker started in March 2021 with funding secured for one year. The OPCC has funded a 0.5 Catch 22 drug worker to be seconded into Willow, this starts from April 21. This will link in the increasing focus on criminal exploitation around drug use and distribution, which is the primary driver for this type of child exploitation. The drug worker will take cases and offer support and consultation across the Hampshire districts.

9. **Assessments** - Willow has taken 15 cases at S47 and 16 cases at S17 for assessment. These cases are usually always linked to high-risk children and operations that involve other children at risk and those children linked to risky adults.

Table 1. Willow S47 and S17 Cases directly from MASH

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21
S17	-	2	2	-	2	-	1	1	1	2	4
S47	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	1	-	2

10. **Nominations** - The team consider nominations for direct work each week. Cases are predominantly from CAST teams, but we have a high number of cases also from the care teams. Children in the care system are consistently over presented in the missing and exploitation tables. This work may include a set of direct work as well as sending over resources and supporting practitioners to offer direct work at the lower level. We have worked on 165 nominations for the reporting period.
11. Cases nominated to Willow has stayed consistent despite differing lockdown regulations, the team has remained working safely face to face, rather than virtual work. This cohort of children find it far too easy to avoid our support by virtual working only. Nominations declined slightly towards the end of lockdown in June 2020 but picked up again for July 2020.

Table 2. Nominated Cases to Willow.

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21
Nominations	22	16	7	21	11	6	16	19	17	13	17

Table 3. Cases Opened and closed as Nominations.

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21
Cases opened	6	9	19	7	16	27	15	7	8	15	13
Cases closed	13	16	13	3	6	27	10	13	12	12	3

12. **Consultancy** - Over this reporting period the team has offered a consultation process around all forms of child exploitation at both strategic

and the operational level. This has been not only to CSD teams, but wider across the whole county and beyond to agencies outside Hampshire. Any high-risk strategy meetings (HRSM) are supported across the county that includes child exploitation as an indicator as well as LSM and other child centred professionals' meetings, Willow has attended more than 90 HRSMs over the period.

13. **Training** - Willow is very active is delivering and supporting training across the Hampshire area, just over 1000 professionals delivered to in the last year. The Willow Team Manager is in discussion with Police educators around sessions for schools from the police surge fund. This requires a more local picture alongside outside speakers to make the content fit what is happening across Hampshire, this will be joined up with METT police.
 - a. CSD Districts – Missing, MET, NRM, Trafficking, CERAF, Resources for direct work.
 - b. GETS – Regular slot to the GETs programme.
 - c. NRM – Working to update the whole county in NRM process and recent changes and have NRM champions in each district.
 - d. CERAF – Supported CERAF roll out to the whole county and further training sessions this year.
 - e. Education – DSLs regularly each year and some head teachers
 - f. Universities – Regular slot with Southampton University Social Worker course
 - g. Magistrates - In the north of the county
 - h. Foster Carers – For Hampshire and date is booked for IOW for March 21
 - i. Pan Hampshire - Missing, MET, NRM, Trafficking, CERAF, Resources and again further sessions booked for this year.
 - j. MDS – Training on MDS issues across the Pan Hampshire area
 - k. Children's Homes – for Hampshire and private homes
 - l. Community Safety – We work to support community safety partnerships and offer training.
 - m. CAMHs – We have given CAMHs training.

Table 4. Individuals who have received Willow Training Sessions

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21
Professionals delivered to	0	120	100	60	60	230	252	25	40	80	25

14. **Risk Assessment** - During the last year, the CERAF (previously SERAF - a Barnardo's CSE Tool) has been updated to make it more inclusive to all forms of exploitation. The CERAF was updated and rolled out in September 2020 with a training programme across the HIPS area. This was achieved through work at the HIPS exploitation group and a task and finish group led by HCC. All four local authorities are now using the new CERAF tool.
15. The training programme continues, and we are now entering into a period of review and update, a questionnaire is being developed by the four LSCPs. Overall, this revamp of the tool has been a successful in that we now have a tool that considers all exploitation and is used HIPS wide. The task and finish group has an outstanding piece of work to consider and identify risk assessment tools for use in the future. Barnardo's are working on a more significant change in their risk assessing tools but are not supporting the continued use of their SERAF.
16. Willow continues to support practitioners in districts to with the use of CERAF. The Willow Team Manager has also been involved in supporting the MOSAIC roll out with exploitation links. The team have also produced its own Distance Travelled Form (DTT) which is specific in showing child participation in the work Willow completes. The Team Manager now supports strategy discussions in MASH where exploitation is a risk factor, this was agreed following Willow moving into Fareham Parkway in April of 2020.
17. **Policy** - The Willow operational manager has been active supporting policy changes and updates across most of the Hampshire policies that have an exploitation element, CERAF, Missing, National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and trafficking, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), Childrens Homes. This includes supporting the Strategic MET lead where needed.
 - a. Strategic MET – The Willow Team Manager is an active member of the HIPS group.
 - b. HIPS Operational MET Group – The Willow Team Manager is the chair of this meeting and reports to HIPS strategic group. Its multi-agency and

sits in between each HIPS group bridging updates between operation and strategic concerns and best practice.

c. Modern Day Slavery (MDS) Steering/Prevent & Training Groups – The Willow Team Manager is active supporting MDS policy changes across the county.

d. ICTG Steering – The Willow Team Manager offers support to this countrywide project including offer of training/best practice to authorities starting up ICTG Roll outs.

e. Police – Hampshire Constabulary are innovative in making changes to officer's front line activity around child victims of exploitation. Willow supports training and Task and Finish groups where needed.

- Op Salvus - Willow supports this operation through the Op METs and is high risk missing pilot whereby police target missing children with high levels of contact and diversion and so far, is proving successful.
- Missing – Support to the Constabulary current review of missing and 'safe and well' checks.
- Trauma, ACES and Context Safeguarding.

f. FIG – Full Independent Guardians – a think tank group to look at the impact of roll out of FIGs across the country for UASC/separated children.

g. ROCU – Police and drug Operations across the SE area.

h. SE Operations – such as UASC/trafficking/Knife crime.

i. OPCC – The Team Manager links into policy decisions around targeted funding projects, VRU and other projects for child exploitation.

18. The impact of policy updates continues to make sure that Hampshire services and policies are current and policy review ensures that we maintain and use policies that are consistent and effective. This supports our practitioners around planning and operational decision making.
19. **Operational MET** - In January 2020, the county Operational MET meetings were devolved to district level. Willow attend and support all nine meetings. These were recently audited by the LSCP with some clear recommendations around missing and intelligence sharing to better support highlighting local trends and emerging risks. Willow admin still runs the county list of at-risk children and supports the District Admin Officers (SAOs) in producing their individual meeting lists. Willow admin also acts as a conduit between High CERAF scores getting to Police MASH for grading and allocation to either Neighbourhood policing or the specialist police teams. Willow workers are each assigned two specific districts to

concentrate and target training sessions, supporting Op MET meetings and gathering intelligence and providing an overall picture.

Table 5. Current Op MET figures

OP MET	High	Medium	Low	Trafficked	New
Nov 20	52	86	36	1	29
Dec 20	54	87	31	1	35
Jan 21	52	85	38	0	35

20. **Operations** -The team continues to try and support exploitation focused operations where we can. This includes intel, information sharing and attending with officers to support them and to try and engage with children. This has recently included work around a ‘Gang Injunction’ for a peer drug network in the North of the county which is about to be put in place.
- a. Op Monument – Constabulary team working on phone line linking for county lines.
 - b. Op Salvus – High risk missing pilot that targets a small cohort of high-risk missing children.
 - c. Op Endeavour – Relates primarily to informing schools of missing events via PPN and how the police communicate with other agencies generally.
 - d. Op Jackal – Support to lorry searches across the county for clandestine entry.
21. **Police** - Willow continues to generate partnership working with different police colleagues, including joint visiting and training.
- a. Dare to Share – Police led project around information sharing across all agencies.
 - b. Child Centred Policing – new project headed up by the DI for METT – welcoming partner ideas.
 - c. METT – Willow continues to support a close working relationship with METT police, always open intel sharing and joined up working on the high-risk cases. Conversations continue about how we develop closer working so being in the same physical environment which will further support joined up working.

d. HHTs – The link to the High Harm Teams is positive and again we offer operational joint resources around visits and information sharing.

e. Monument – The County Lines team set up to look at and manage county lines activity and profiling within Hampshire. Willow Team manager is now active in working with the Monument managers meetings as well as a focus to support more joined up practice.

- 22. **Intelligence** -The use of the CPI form has increased over the past year to now be regularly over 500 submissions; Willow has this form embedded in all its training offers. When first introduced submissions were less than 20.
- 23. Willow, due to its whole county remit, maintains its ability to pull together oversight across the HIPS area for operations and emerging risk. The team pulls together children who may be crossing county and district boundaries, forming networks and visiting places, spaces and people that present harm. This includes issues relating to where we place our children in the care system.
- 24. **UASC/Separated Children** -The Willow Team Manager was involved in setting up best practice and continued support for asylum seeking unaccompanied or separated children in Hampshire. From the outset all unaccompanied children are deemed at significant risk for trafficking and a S47 is scheduled, and we complete a trafficking assessment as a priority and usually joint with METT. Willow continues to offer support around safety planning and asylum matters generally as well as submission of National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Willow social workers and the Team Manager act to support age assessing for the county. The Team Manager also ensures a robust age assessing process across all districts to stop cases coming back with a legal challenge. This includes Merton compliance, live face to face assessing and having the appropriate people in the room. This includes ending the habitual previous process that we must age assess on day 1 rather than allowing time to have a complete picture.

Table 6. Numbers of Unaccompanied Children presenting in Hampshire Borders.

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21
UASCs	-	-	1	-	2	19	2	1	-	-	5

- 25. The larger numbers for Sept 20 were our support to Dover and Willow was active is supporting this process with staff. We are also aware that there is a seasonal element to our work with UASC children which always goes up in the summer months. The now more common practice of boats coming across the channel has increased UASC numbers considerably.

26. **ICTG** - The Willow Team Manager sits on the ICTG steering group and works closely where possible with the RPC (Regional Practice Coordinator) for the Hampshire area. This is linked to training and case management. The current focus is on changes to the NRM structure and process across Pan Hampshire as well as setting up NRM champions in districts and across the constabulary.
27. **Frankie Team** - The agreement around CSD support for the Frankie Team continues with an offer of high levels of counselling across the whole county for children who have been traumatized through CSA/CSE/FGM. The Willow Team Manager remains the key day to day manager, offering formal/informal supervision and safeguarding guidance as the team are embedded alongside Willow. The team currently has six counsellors and one Play Therapist. The current provider is No Limits, who will hold the contract until end March 2023. Links remain close with the OPCC and the CCGs on this team.
28. **Missing** - Following OFSTED comments for Hampshire CSD missing process and recording, there has been a significant focus on case recording around missing episodes. The Willow Team Manager was part of the T&F supporting senior manager decisions for some changes to the process and has been involved in updating the policy for missing children, this has included a rewrite of the policy for staff in Hampshire children's homes. Willow went on to pick up daily management and oversight of missing children and supporting the process to embed within social care teams. This has significantly raised the performance around missing conversations. Willow will now be handing this tasking back to districts with support and there will be a monthly district dataset report to CFMT.

The below table shows the impact of Willow on missing recording.

Table 7. Return Conversation Offers

	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
% of missing episodes offered a return conversation (County)	57%	44%	61%	103%	81%	85%	72%	88%	68%	84%	82%

29. **Projects** - Willow is closely linked in with the VRU and have been working with a number of projects for example the Pupil Referral Unit Exploitation

Prevention Service (PRU EPS) and St Giles' workers embedded in Willow. Southampton University have started to audit the VRU projects.

a. St Giles – Willow has 1.5 St Giles workers embedded from VRU funding. This has been a very clear asset providing 'lived experience' around gang and criminal exploitation behaviours. The 0.5 is shared with Southampton and provides a very good MET link up operationally. There is a genuine benefit to keeping St Giles workers embedded in Hampshire continuing to offer work with County Lines and drug network victims. This brings in the St Giles wider experience from gang work in London districts.

b. PRU EPS – Funding from the VRU was provided for two YCP workers to be embedded in Willow to operate in the Pupil Referral Units (PRU). This has been a partial success given Covid impact and school closures. VRU conversation needs to take place to decide on next steps.

c. Video Production & Toolkit – A video project with accompanying toolkit has been mostly completed however Covid has stopped the ability to film safely but will continue as the restrictions decrease. This will be available across Hampshire schools to support exploitation discussions and learning.

d. Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE) – We have secured 10 full days of parents training to be set up once out of lockdown. This is to support parents being better able to keep their children safe.

Finance

30. There are no financial implications other than as identified above some aspect of the work is funded by project money from VRU or police surge fund and therefore subject to future funding arrangements.

Human Resources Implications

31. Team expansion would be a HR implication, additional staffing might be considered to better support care leavers and to continue supporting missing, both need not be qualified posts. We could also be better placed to target work on emerging and medium risk cases therefore stopping an escalation into more high levels of criminal exploitation.

Performance

32. Willow has evolved, the effect of child exploitation and of cases being highlighted has increased. The scope has moved away from just CSE and trafficking to criminal exploitation and county lines as well as peer drug networks and violent crime. Whilst Willow has expanded, coming into January 2021 it is still covering a large geographical area and has picked

up many functions which were not the team's initial responsibility when the project began. This means that at times performance is hampered by competing case management tasks and spikes in either operations or case referrals and distances travelled having to cover a large geographical area. The point around needing time with children and virtual sessions not being the best approach has been made elsewhere in the report.

33. The HIPS strategic plan does outline the need to reach more medium and emerging risk children and focus on them before the exploitation becomes entrenched behaviour. Willow is unable currently to do both so has had to work with the highest risk cases predominantly.
34. Covid 19 has had a significant impact on both Frankie and the Willow teams working from home. Virtual working does not lend itself to forming trusted relationships with children at risk of or being exploited and it becomes easy for them to avoid workers completing direct work. Lack of education and other venues for work has also been an issue. There has been a decrease in CPI and so intelligence gathering during the various lockdown periods. The converse is that Willow and Frankie have continued to offer a full safe visiting service and there are no notable negative patterns or tangible impact in terms of data.

Consultation and Equalities

35. Not applicable

Other Key Issues

36. **Isle of Wight implications** - Willow continues to offer IOW services but there is has been no current take up for direct work, in the past three weeks though there have been two nominations for IOW children living on the mainland. The Team Manager has made an offer of some training for foster carers and other practitioners and IOW colleagues can and do attend the HIPS wide training.
37. Wider CCE and drug network issues on the island are being monitored for intelligence through IOW and Portsmouth high risk meetings and the Op METS in place for all four authorities. Willow Team Manager continues to discuss operational intelligence at various meetings and updates senior managers on the IOW on any new intel.

Conclusions and recommendations

38. In conclusion, the Willow Team continues to be innovative and supportive of the child exploitation agenda across the county of Hampshire. Its work is multi agency and prides itself for setting good practice across the HIPS. The team year on year has expanded and tried to be innovative taking on board new ideas that support the 'what works' agenda. There is an abundance of joint working and conversations with key partners such as the OPCC, VRU and police colleagues to establish funding streams that complement the strategic MET agenda.
39. There is a need to consider that half the team is funded from project money which may not be in place year on year. The St Giles offer offers something additional with the emphasis on the 'lived experience' of the workers involved. The PRU EPS has the capacity to become a positive link around children at risk of being or excluded from mainstream education, a key push factor to criminal exploitation and something that will be a bigger focus in the coming year.
40. The team has become adept at offering training around MET so ensuring a commonality of language and understanding of the features of risk for children. The geographical extent and eight districts make up of Hampshire, requires an overarching picture of exploitation concerns which Willow offers and supports consistency in the Op MET process. The Team Manager pulls together the operational framework and focus to support to the strategic thinking and planning.
41. It is recommended that CFAP is asked to:
1. **Note the progress and work of the Willow Team.**
 2. **Service Manager explore co location of some MET police officers with Willow following lockdown.**

42. Case Studies

Case 1:

SL is a young man from Fareham area who Willow started working with in Summer 2019. Concerns at that point were him being involved with a high number of burglaries, robberies and thefts in the local area with an adult male who was known to the family and was considered to be grooming and exploiting him. SL also had a history of absconding, violence and was long term NEET and struggling with his mental health. He had also been connected to some street gang activity in Southampton previously.

In the time working with SL a strong relationship developed and work explored his past trauma experiences in his family home and how these impacted on him and the situations he ended up finding himself in. SL has gradually become more open about this and has started to move away from self-blame and have a higher opinion and more self-esteem through these conversations.

Worker has explored how people manipulated and took advantage of his vulnerability of being NEET and being angry at his past and that it had gotten him in to trouble whilst he was left alone in the community. Stanley has worked to better understand criminal exploitation as well as his experiences of being around gangs in Southampton and has moved away from this lifestyle and has not been in significant trouble with Police for a long time.

He is now enrolled full time at college on a carpentry course to learn a trade and recently applied and got a place on the Hampshire funded CSCS card course. He was unable to attend due to some technical issues but is on the list to do this in the next cohort. He now engages positively with his YOT appointments and has said that he feels Willow Team and YOT are the only people that have ever really helped him.

Case 2:

KP first became known to The Willow Team in Summer 2020. At the time she was 14 and living in Basingstoke. She was a very vulnerable girl who had been exposed to adverse childhood experiences including parental substance misuse, mental health, and inconsistent living arrangements which had had a significant impact on her self-esteem and her understanding of what was ok and not ok. The Willow Team had previously worked with her elder sister around Child Sexual Exploitation concerns and so had a good working knowledge of the family history which assisted in engagement.

A referral was received from Sexual Health Services and it was evident that KP had been the victim of Child Sexual Exploitation. She had been approached via Snapchat by an older male who was known to her sister and well known for his involvement in criminality and a local gang. After being complimented and made to feel special KP agreed to meet with this male who then arrived with a friend. KP was then coerced into sexual activity with both males, which the males filmed and later threatened to distribute.

Willow assisted the CAST Team with the initial Child Protection visit, implementing safety planning and after building a trusted relationship with KP supported her to speak to police about her experiences. This positive relationship with KP enabled her to share her thoughts and feelings allowing us to explore the push factors from home which increased her vulnerability. As a result, Willow was able to support planning and recommend a clear plan be put in place to reduce her underlying vulnerabilities such as a referral to the Frankie Counselling Service and regular support from wider family, particularly her aunt.

KP was then offered direct work to improve her self-esteem and ability to make choices which keep her safe moving forward. We completed sessions on anxiety, friendships, risk, exploitation, grooming and what she wants in a relationship. She engaged well in this work and enjoyed having that one-to-one trusted adult time to talk without judgement as this was something she did not have at home as relationships were strained. She has made great progress and now has an increased understanding of what the healthy relationship she deserves looks like. We were able to explore push and pull factors in the context of her own experiences and she is now also able to recognise these in other scenarios, including the experiences of her sister. This has improved her relationship with her sister and widened her support network but most importantly it helped her to recognise that she was a victim of exploitation and not to blame herself for this experience. Since her involvement with The Willow Team, she has demonstrated positive decision making, says she feels happier day to day and overall, her risk of exploitation has significantly reduced.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes
OR	
<p>This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:</p> <p><i>NB: Only complete this section if you have not completed any of the Strategic Plan tick boxes above. Whichever section is not applicable, please delete.</i></p>	

NB: If the 'Other significant links' section below is not applicable, please delete it.

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

1. *why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
2. *will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*

