

Appendix 2

Subject of assessment:	Regional Fostering Hub End-to-End Expansion			
Coverage:	Overarching			
This is a decision relating to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Process/procedure	<input type="checkbox"/> Programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Review
	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)		
It is a:	New approach:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Revision of an existing approach:	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is driven by:	Legislation:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local or corporate requirements:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description:	<p>The purpose of this EIA is to consider the potential impact in relation to the development of the Regional Fostering Hub. The project is for the council's fostering service to become being part of an expanded Regional Fostering Hub in line with the Department for Education (DfE) expansion programme. This will build on the Foster with North East (FwNE) pathfinder that has been in operation since 2023 and requires a move to an 'End-to-End' model encompassing all aspects of the Fostering process. This activity will involve the secondment of staff into a single regional service hosted by Together for Children Sunderland, in a short term arrangement until such time as the northeast's Regional Care Cooperative entity is set up, when staff will be TUPE'd across into that entity.</p> <p>We will also be expanding existing offers such as fostering 'refer a friend' and 'buddy scheme', reviewing the existing regional fostering comms and marketing plan, and introducing new Journey Guide roles to support foster carers through the recruitment, assessment and approval journey and beyond into post-approval support. This activity is related to DfE policy documentation published in February 2026 seeking to improve the availability of suitable family-based care for children and young people in our care: Renewing fostering: homes for 10,000 more children - GOV.UK</p> <p>There will be a structured engagement programme to seek the views of the fostering workforce, foster carers, children in our care and other stakeholders throughout April and May prior to the submission of our region's final costed plan to the DfE on 1st June 2026.</p>			
Live date:	April 2027			
Lifespan:	Permanent change			
Date of next review:	Annual			

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*	☒	☐	☐	<p>This activity is required by the Department for Education, and we will be one of several regions undertaking this activity for the first time. There is no precedent, but the DfE believes this activity will have a positive impact on recruitment of more foster carers to improve sufficiency of family-based care for children in our care and avoid children and young people moving out of their communities unnecessarily or living in children's homes when a family-based living arrangement is preferable.</p> <p>As proposals develop, we'll examine the effects of this activity and use this to determine both positive and negative impact for both staff and foster carers. Once staffing structures and proposals are understood, further details will be provided in an updated impact assessment.</p> <p>We will seek to use existing carer data across the region to understand the profile of our foster carers and how they may be either positively or negatively impacted by this activity, or whether there will be no impact.</p>
Equality Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*	☒	☐	☐	
Community cohesion Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*	☒	☐	☐	
Armed Forces Could the decision impact negatively on those who are currently members of the armed forces of former members in the areas of Council delivered healthcare, compulsory education and housing policies?*	☒	☐	☐	
Care leavers Could the decision impact negatively on those who are care experienced?*	☒	☐	☐	
Reducing Poverty Could the decision impact negatively on the Council's ambitions to reduce poverty in the town?	☒	☐	☐	

Assessment completed by:	Annabel Bates	Head of Service:	
Date:	7 April 2026	Date:	
