

# Equality Impact Assessment Form

1- Policy details	
<b>Name of policy</b>	Belonging in Education Strategy – consultation
<b>Department and service</b>	Children and Family Services, Education Strategy and Transformation
<b>Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?</b>	Olivia Dale, Head of Service - Education Strategy and Transformation
<b>Contact numbers</b>	01163050287
<b>Date of completion</b>	24 February 2026

2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change	
<b>What is the proposal?</b>	A new Belonging in Education Strategy for Leicestershire covering the period from 2026-2029.
<b>What change and impact is intended by the proposal?</b>	<p>The Strategy will aim to ensure that in Leicestershire, partners work together to ensure there is a commitment to belonging. All Leicestershire children and young people feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out the Council’s strategic approach to ensure children and young people feel a sense of belonging in the educational provisions they attend.</p> <p>The Strategy will clearly set out to stakeholders the four key priority areas, aligned to deliverables and outcomes for each and key responsibilities for implementation.</p>

	<p>This Equality Impact Assessment Form is completed prior to the public consultation, which is due to take place for 6 weeks beginning 20 April, subject to Cabinet approval. <b>The EIA will be updated following the consultation period.</b></p>
<p><b>What is the rationale for this proposal?</b></p>	<p>In Leicestershire, the council wants all county children and young people to feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives and be the author of their own life stories.</p> <p>In the current climate, the council have a responsibility to work together with partners agencies to support children to gain a sense of belonging through inclusive practice and adapting our responses to new challenges.</p> <p>To develop a sense of belonging in school, children and young people need to feel accepted and valued for who they are and to be offered a curriculum that is accessible and designed to help all children and young people successfully learn.</p> <p>Leicestershire’s Belonging in Education Strategy sets out how the council aim to achieve this goal for every child and young person in all educational settings across Leicestershire.</p> <p>This work aligns considerably to the Education Reforms White Paper “Every Child Achieving and Thriving” (February 2026)</p>

<p><b>3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement</b></p>	
<p><b>What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?</b></p>	<p>Leicestershire’s population was 712,336 at the latest census in 2021, a 9.5% increase to the county’s population over the last 10 years. This makes Leicestershire one of the fastest growing areas in the country in terms of population (national average 6.6%). Understandably, this has placed added pressures on services for Children and Young People in the County. The County has approx. 143,063 children and young people aged up to 19 years</p>

**What does it show?**

(including 36,154 0- to 5-year-olds). There were 296,400 households within the county. A further 10.2% growth in population is projected by 2031.

There are 101,247 children and young people educated in Leicestershire schools (aged 3-18) during the Autumn term census for 2025/26. This includes 54,454 Primary aged pupils, 44,722 Secondary aged pupils and 1,992 pupils in Special Schools. Children and Young People from minority ethnic groups account for 43.6% of all children living in Leicestershire, compared with 38% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups are Asian or Asian British and Mixed.

<b>From our School Census in Spring 2025, we know that</b>	
Percentage of Black, Asian and other ethnic communities of the total school population (excluding unclassified)	24.6%
Pupils eligible for free school meals	17.2%
Pupils needing SEN support	13.4%
Pupils with EHCPs	4.7%

The latest School Census, which includes all pupils on roll at a school within Leicestershire (aged 4 to 16 years), reports that there are now 13,983 pupils on a SEN Support plan and 7,196 with an Education, Health and Care Plan. SEND pupils account for 18.1% of the Leicestershire school population. Leicestershire has a proportion of children and young people with SEND (identified through EHCPs and SEN support) broadly in line with the English average.

In 2025, the annual school census (Spring term) reported that 13.4% of children and young people were identified at SEN Support level in the County, just below the England average. Previous longer-term trends had indicated a lower-than-average level in Leicestershire, but this gap has now largely closed.

<p><b>What engagement has been undertaken so far?</b> <b>What does it show?</b></p>	<p>The strategy has been developed in conjunction with key stakeholders and responsible bodies.</p> <p>The Department have used their feedback to help us to shape the strategy, ensuring it reflects shared priorities and processes and is aligned with the current educational landscape.</p> <p>The consultation/engagement period will focus some of the engagement activity to reach people with a protected characteristic. There will be paper copies and staff available to support engagement to encouraged participation in the consultation. Responses will be monitored through the information gathered and form part of the feedback to Cabinet on the Consultation, to understand whether responses are representative from all protected characteristic groups.</p>		
<p><b>4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action</b></p>			
<p><b>Group</b></p>	<p><b>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</b></p>	<p><b>What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?</b></p>	<p><b>How will the known concerns be mitigated?</b></p>
<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all age groups.</p>	<p>The consultation will predominantly be completed by young people and adults so likely not to include the voice of younger children specifically.</p>	<p>As part of the development work of the strategy, young people's direct voices have been fed into the work to help us understand impact of 'Belonging' in them. Further work is underway to</p>

	<p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>		<p>understand where and when children and young people feel a sense of belonging. This will be reflected in the final strategy and included in the final Cabinet report. This work will also seek to identify if there are issues, themes or patterns (particularly related to intersectionality) that indicate children of specific ages and living in specific areas of Leicestershire may be disadvantaged in experiencing the delivery of the Belonging Strategy.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all, however may be particularly paramount to those individuals who have a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>	<p>There may be less engagement activity with the consultation from those with a disability due to accessibility issues. This means we may be gather voice from this protected characteristic in the consultation.</p>	<p>There are paper copies and easy read versions of the Strategy available. An email address and a phone number will be made available. This will ensure there are multiple ways in which the public can help us understand if the proposed Strategy is meaningful to these families.</p>

<b>Race</b>	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all, however may be particularly paramount to those individuals who have a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>	<p>Under representation in response from ethnic minority groups – response does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.</p>	<p>This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.</p> <p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>	<p>Under representation in response from a particular sex, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.</p>	<p>This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.</p>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.</p>	<p>Under representation in response from those that identify from a different sex of that was assigned at birth, where the response rate</p>	<p>This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned</p>

	The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	Under representation in response from those that are from the LGBTQ+ community, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing	Under representation in response from those that are from a religious community, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.

	parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.		
<b>Armed Forces (including veterans)</b>	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
<b>People with lived care experience</b>	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	Under representation in response from those that have lived care experience, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	Established support groups and service users will be made aware of the consultation period and how they can contribute. This activity will be supported by the CFS Care Leavers Service.
<b>Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities</b>	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	All the comms and consultation will be in English and we know there will be hard to reach families that may not be accessing schools, educational providers and community groups.	The strategy and consultation will be available in other languages, if requested, to ensure we are capturing the views of asylum seeker and refugee communities and those with English as an additional language.

**5- Action Plan**

Produce a framework to outline how identified risks/concerns identified in section 4 will be mitigated.			
<b>What action is planned?</b>	<b>Who is responsible for the action?</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>
Seek approval to consult on the Belonging in Education Strategy	Education Strategy and Transformation	Cabinet – 24/03/26	Ensuring the Strategy is agreed with elected members prior to wider consultation.
Public consultation on the Belonging in Education Strategy following approval to consult by Cabinet	Education Strategy and Transformation	C&FS Scrutiny Committee – 02/06/26 Cabinet – 21/07/26	Feedback on proposed strategy to ensure feedback is fully considered before Strategy is agreed.

<b>6- Approval Process</b>	
<b>Departmental Equalities Group</b>	
<b>Corporate Policy Team</b>	
<b>Sign off by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Project.</b>	

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