

**BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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**Aggregated Equality Implications of  
Future Council Budget Reduction Proposals for 2014/15**

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**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview of the approach undertaken by the Council to ensure that the equality impact of any proposals being considered through the service and financial planning process are appropriately assessed and considered. It summarises the aggregated and inter-related impact of each of the budget reduction proposals and proposes how potential inequalities can best be mitigated.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Under equality legislation, public authorities have legal duties to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality with regard to race, disability and gender, including gender reassignment, as well as to promote good race relations. The law requires that this duty to pay "due regard" be demonstrated in the decision making process. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can show 'due regard'.

**3 The Budget Reduction Process**

- 3.1 The Future Council budget reduction process is clearly an area where we need to be able to demonstrate that we have given "due regard" to the equality impact of our decisions and avoid any unfair and/or disproportionate impact on key equality groups. Therefore, we have embedded an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) into the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLoE) identification and evaluation process.

This enables us to:

- ensure we have a written record of the equality considerations we have taken into account;
- ensure that our decisions include a consideration of the actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any unfair impact on particular equality groups;
- make your decisions based on evidence: a decision which is informed by relevant local and national data about equality is a better quality decision. EIAs provide a clear and systematic way to collect, assess and put forward relevant evidence;
- make the decision-making process more transparent. This should also help to secure better public understanding of the difficult decisions we will be taking;
- comply with the law: the duties are legal obligations which should remain a top priority, even in times of economic difficulty. Failure to meet the duties may result in the Council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.

- 3.2 Each individual KLoE has undertaken an “initial EIA” which identified the potential for the KLoE to have a negative impact on one of the groups protected by the Equality Act 2010. Those KLoE’s where an high or moderate degree of impact was identified were then required to undertake a “Full EIA” as part of the further development of the KLoE.
- 3.3 The “Full EIA” required services to:
- assess the evidence they had about the potential impact in terms of service take-up, service quality and customer access;
  - consider how they could seek the views of the local community (and in particular those groups most affected by the proposal);
  - identify potential mitigating actions where negative impact has been found.
- 3.3 Individual decisions should also be informed by the wider context of decisions in our own and other relevant public bodies, so that particular groups are not unduly affected by the cumulative effects of different decisions.
- 3.4 This “Aggregated Equality Impact Assessment” is an assessment of the cumulative impact of all the KLoE’s on different sections of the local community and should be taken into account when deciding whether to progress a proposal for a budget reduction.
- 3.5 The Aggregated Assessment however is dependent upon the completion of each of the individual EIA’s. Although in the majority of cases the EIA process has been completed for the appropriate KLoE (either Initial or Full EIA’s as appropriate), there are some KLoE’s where this is not yet the case. In a small number of cases the EIA has not yet been finalised, albeit the majority of those are deemed to be low risk for having a negative equality impact. Where there is a higher impact anticipated but not yet fully assessed this is due to the relevant contracted provider not having completed their part of the assessment process. These are currently being pursued to ensure the impact assessment is completed before the budget reduction is implemented. The current situation can be summarised as follows:

	CYPF	AC	DEC	Corp	X-cutting	Total
<b>EIA process up to date</b>	13	27	31	20	2	94
<b>EIA process requires action</b>	0	1	3	3	0	7
<b>% EIA requires action</b>	0%	4%	9%	13%	0%	7%

#### 4 The Decision-Making Process

- 4.1 Financial proposals which are relevant to the public sector equality duty such as those likely to impact on equality for the workforce and/or for the local community should always be subject to a thorough assessment. This includes proposals to outsource or procure any functions. The assessment should form part of the proposal, and Cabinet should consider it carefully before making its decision.
- 4.2 All reports outlining a budget reduction proposal include an outline of the key findings of the EIA undertaken for that KLoE. This should as a minimum describe:

- the main negative impacts anticipated;
- how this has been assessed and the evidence used;
- how the views of those negatively impacted have been sought;
- what options for mitigation should be considered as part of the proposal; and
- how the actual impact will be reviewed after implementation.

4.3 Services may include the full or initial EIA as an Appendix to the report but as a minimum this should always be available for consultation by elected members and members of the public as background information.

## **5 The Role of Elected Members**

5.1 Elected Members should ensure that they are familiar with the equality implications presented in any budget reduction proposal, and consider these in the context of the aggregated equality impact when making decisions.

5.2 The law does not mean that the Council cannot make budget decisions that negatively impact on sections of the community protected by equality legislation but that if we do take these decisions we can justify them, demonstrate that we fully understand the impact, and have tried to avoid or mitigate these negative impacts whenever reasonable to do so.

## **6 What happens if we don't properly assess the impact of relevant decisions?**

6.1 If the Council has not carried out an assessment of the proposal, or have not done so thoroughly, we risk leaving ourselves open to legal challenges, which are both costly and time-consuming. Recent legal cases have shown what can happen when authorities do not consider their equality duties when making decisions.

6.2 However, the result can often be far more fundamental than a legal challenge. If people feel that an authority is acting arbitrarily or without properly involving its service users or employees, or listening to their concerns, they are likely to become disillusioned with the Council. Above all, authorities which fail to carry out robust assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions that could discriminate against particular equality groups and perpetuate or worsen existing inequalities.

## **7 Evaluation of Equality Impact Assessments**

7.1 Of the numerous budget reduction proposals initially considered for 2014/15 there were 10 full Equality Impact Assessments undertaken which indicated there would be an expected significant equality impact if the proposal were to be implemented. These attempted to assess the anticipated extent of any negative impact and to identify which sections of the community would be most affected. The findings of these individual EIA's are outlined in table 1 and summarised in Appendix A.

7.2 Table 1 shows that disabled people, young people and carers are affected in significant ways by the greatest number of budget reduction proposals. Not surprisingly these are largely to do with budget reductions proposed for Social Care or Children's services. These budget reductions are to be implemented at the same time as major national welfare reform changes are being implemented which will affect the same groups of people (disabled

people and carers) in disproportionate and detrimental ways. In short, at a time when disabled people will be having their benefits reduced or losing them entirely, many will also face increased charges for social care services, fewer services available or their recourse to advice and advocacy reduced.

**TABLE 1**

<b>Equality Impact Assessments</b>		<i>Gender</i>	<i>BME</i>	<i>0-5 yrs</i>	<i>5-16 yrs</i>	<i>16-25 yrs</i>	<i>65+</i>	<i>Disabled</i>	<i>Carers</i>	<i>LGBT</i>	<i>Vulnerable</i>
◆ = High Impact	■ = Medium Impact										
LLAE/C1 & C2: Reconfiguration of Integrated Youth Support	◆	◆		■	■			◆	■	■	◆
LLAE/B1: Early Childhood Services (Reconfiguration)	◆		■					■			■
SSPC/A6/CCC1: Extended Services and Support	◆					◆		◆			◆
SSPC/A5: Review Moorland Plastics								◆			
SHSC/B3: Integrated Inclusion Services	■			■				◆			◆
AC/JC/21: Dispersed Community Alarm Funding							◆	■			
AC/JC/16: Reduced SWYPFT Funding for Mental Health								◆	◆		
AC/JC/19: Mental Health Community Floating Support								■			
AC/VA/8, AC/VA/9, AC/VA/13: Assessment and Care Mngmt							◆	◆	◆		
AC/JC/11: Review of Advocacy, Prevention and Involvement		◆						◆	◆		
AC/AS/24: Commissioning Review							■	■	■		
F&P/BT/1 & 2: Review of staffing (Benefits & Taxation)			■				◆	◆			
CC/TP/1: Third sector payments	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	

7.3 However, the impact experienced is not related solely to the number of proposals that have an impact but also the degree of impact those proposals could have. The budget reduction proposals with potentially the greatest equality impact on the people who currently use the affected services are those relating to Integrated Youth Support Services and the services

commissioned by Supporting People. In both of these cases it is people who are currently in vulnerable situations (and especially young people in vulnerable situations) who feel the impact most acutely.

- 7.4 Another group who will experience a disproportionate share of the impact is people with child care responsibilities, and especially those who may need the most support such as single parents or teenage parents (the majority of who are women). The potential reduction to day care, youth services, Community Learning Centres and Supporting People could all affect a significant proportion of single and teenage parents reducing their employment opportunities, their personal development and life choices as well as those of their children.
- 7.5 The most significant impacts and the groups most affected are essentially the same as they were for 2013/14. This is as to be expected as many of the KLoE's identified as having the greatest impact are continuations of budget reduction proposals which span over a number of years.

## **8 Improving Our Understanding**

- 8.1 It is essential that the Council give full consideration to how this detrimental impact on disabled people can be best mitigated against, not least to ensure it meets its legal responsibilities in this area as defined by the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.2 For many of these budget reduction proposals actions have already been identified to try to limit any negative equalities impact on people. These are detailed in each EIA associated with the relevant KLoE. However given that many of the anticipated or potential negative impacts that have been identified are inter-connected (eg welfare rights and social care charges, community learning and advocacy) and therefore very hard to predict we will only really be able to understand how this has affected people's lives once they have been implemented.
- 8.3 In December this year the Council worked in partnership with the NHS and the My Barnsley Too Disability Forum to evaluate the impact of austerity (including welfare reform and public service cuts) on disabled people in Barnsley. A conference to discuss these impacts and to propose actions that could help mitigate these affects to some degree was held on 3rd December 2013. The Forum are currently drafting a report to feedback the findings and proposals from the Conference. This will be circulated to all elected members and senior managers to inform ongoing and future EIA processes. It will also be considered by the Community Well-Being Scrutiny Commission, which has been looking into "how far vulnerable people are bearing the brunt of service reductions and is enough being done to protect them?".

## **9 Mitigation to Address Aggregated Impacts**

- 9.1 Every Equality Impact Assessment includes an outline actions already taken, or planned to be taken, to mitigate against any potential inequalities that could arise as a result of the KLoE's. These will not however be sufficient to completely offset any negative impact. Nor will they be able to deal with the supplementary negative impacts caused by the changes to welfare reform for example.
- 9.2 Consequently last year the Council agreed a number of priority areas where mitigation was required to either reduce the impact of the budget reductions on disabled people, or to

enhance the resilience of disabled people to cope with the perceived changes which will continue into 2014/15. They included:

- Development of Equality Forums network to support ongoing community engagement in service planning and decision-making thereby assisting with the budget reduction process.
- Provision of small Community Equality Grants to local community and voluntary sector groups to help build capacity and to promote equality.
- Establishment of a Deaf Forum to discuss the transition away from specialist services towards mainstream services.
- Provision of key information on mainstream council services in Easy Read and BSL video for Deaf customers and customers with learning difficulties.
- To develop and promote the role of Access Champion whereby local disabled volunteers provide a range of access advice and training to local shops and services.

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**BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Summary of Significant Equality Implications of  
Budget Reduction Proposals for 2014/15

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**LLAE/B1 Early Childhood Services**

**Groups Affected**

- Children under 5 and their families including vulnerable groups.
- Single parents, the majority of whom are women.

**Assessed Impact**

A full strategic review will continue during 2014/15 including consideration of a re-commissioning programme for implementation from the 1st April 2015. This currently will not lead to the closure of Children's Centres in 2014/15. If changes in service delivery are significant this will be subject to full statutory consultation

Each of Barnsley's 20 Children's Centre will face a further 2% reduction in their operational budgets during 2014/15.

During 2013/14 a number of Children's Centres reconfigured their daycare service resulting in some Centres providing term time only, term time only plus 4 weeks and changing the age range of provision.

The remaining savings will be achieved through a minor restructure in the central Early Childhood Services Team and a reduction in the capacity to support, monitor and challenge the wider PVI early education and care sector and schools.

This could have an effect on the quality and sustainability of the early years and childcare sector. There is a statutory duty to ensure sufficient high quality childcare is available to parents wishing to return to or stay in training or work. A reduction in capacity could prove challenging in ensuring that this duty is met

**Proposed next steps**

The actual cumulative impact of this KLoE should be assessed and reported with reference to the following:

- Number of vulnerable children under 5yrs and families registering and engaging in Children's Centre services
- Number of childcare settings opening and closing
- Assessment of childcare sufficiency and through the annual audit settings expressing challenges to sustainability
- Quality of early learning and childcare provision
- The number of parents expressing childcare as a barrier to accessing training or work opportunities

- The achievement levels of children at the end of their Early Years Foundation Stage
- The number of children accessing their early years entitlement at 2, 3 and 4 years old

## **LLAE/C1 & C2 Integrated Youth Support Services**

### **Groups Affected**

- Young people in disadvantaged communities inc. those in low income households
- Young people who are in or leaving care
- BME young people
- LGBT young people
- Disabled young people (learning, physical, mental health)
- Young people at risk or who are NEET
- Young people who are at risk of becoming or are teenage parents
- Young people who have caring responsibilities
- Young people who are dependant / reliant on alcohol and/or drugs

### **Assessed Impact**

Services will need to be reduced across the Borough which impact directly on children and young people in terms of reduced provision (including positive activities, volunteering, community and democratic engagement, information, advice, guidance and support and targeted services such as sexual health, substance misuse etc). It will also have a significant impact on the ability to deliver and support early intervention work, affecting negatively young people's attainment / achievement across all outcomes, such as:

- Negative impact on anti social behaviour in communities / localities – youth nuisance, public perception, youth offending rates etc.
- Negative impact on young people's health outcomes – physical and mental health and emotional well being, teenage pregnancy rates and prevalence of risky behaviours.
- Reduced capacity to ascertain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them.
- Reduced budgets to support individual young people to access EET e.g. travel, subsistence, hardship funds etc.
- Rising youth unemployment 16-19 and increased NEET levels.

Other services are targeted at particular sections of the community (such as BME, NEETS, LLDD, youth offenders and/or young people at risk of offending, young people from disadvantaged communities, etc) who are often described as either "Hard to Reach" or "Vulnerable".

The work of Integrated Youth Support Services targets those young people in the most deprived communities and those with the most challenging of circumstances. The service is focused on improving and promoting equality and social inclusion for young people deemed vulnerable, including young people with learning difficulties, mental health problems, at risk of



exploitation, becoming teenage parents, NEET etc. and as such, helps reduce social inequalities and reliance.

### **Proposed next steps**

The actual cumulative impact of this KLoE should be assessed and reported with reference to the following:

- Number of young people provided with support by equality group
- Outcomes achieved for young people, by equality group
- Incidence of anti-social behaviour, crime, NEETS, teenage pregnancy etc.

## **SSPC/A6/CCC1 Community Learning and Information Services**

### **Groups Affected**

- Lone parents and individuals / families with childcare issues, the majority of whom are women.
- Long Term Unemployed
- People aged 16-24 years and those aged 50+ years.
- Disabled people
- Disadvantaged Groups/Individuals

### **Assessed Impact**

Community Learning and Information Services (CLIS) provides a borough-wide infrastructure, which increases local access to a comprehensive range of multi-agency worklessness programmes including information, advice and guidance, employability skills, functional skills, foundation learning, and UK-Online programmes for children, young people, families and adults.

The first year measures consisted of £240k of savings, which incorporated the cessation of childcare provision within 6 Learning Centres, strategically located across the borough. The childcare facilities provided lone parents, women and long term unemployed with access to education, training and employment opportunities with free childcare, whilst they were accessing provision within the centre(s).

The second year measures within the KLoE sought to seek further employability contracts to offset the reduction of £140k in the budgets across the Learning Centres and Business/Youth Enterprise Centre Networks. This has been largely achieved through being successful in gaining sub-contracts to deliver the Work Programme with both A4e and Serco.

The third year proposals sought to reduce the Council's contribution to the Learning Centres and Business/Youth Enterprise Centre Networks budgets by £300k. However severe budgets pressures on CYPF has meant that a further £150k of savings have been brought forward from year 4 measures, making a total saving of £450k of savings in year 3. The measures included a reduction in the number of Business/Youth Enterprise Centres, which provide business support measures to Small/Medium Type Enterprises and apprenticeship opportunities to young people and a reduction in the staffing structures of the 10 Learning

Centres, delivering training, education and employment opportunities to residents across the borough.

The fourth year proposals reduce a the Council's contribution to the Learning Centres and Business/Youth Enterprise Centre Networks budgets by a further £160k. This will be achieved through further reduction in the staffing structures of the 10 Learning Centres and the 3 Business / Youth Enterprise Centres, who deliver training, education and employment opportunities to residents across the borough.

### **Proposed next steps**

The actual cumulative impact of this KLoE should be assessed and reported with reference to the following:

- Number of people using the service by equality group
- Outcomes achieved for people using the service, by equality group
- Incidence of a reduction in support to:
  - Local authority employees, specially manual employees in gaining level 2 skills for life qualifications in numeracy and literacy
  - Young people who are NEET or who are 'at risk' of becoming NEET in access training and Education in order to access employment opportunities;
  - Vulnerable young people and adults in accessing employment opportunities
  - Troubled Families across the borough;
  - Council employees who are 'at risk' of redundancy; and
  - Local people seeking employment with the Council, through its online recruitment process.

## **SSPC/A5 Review Moorland Plastics**

### **Groups Affected**

- Disabled people

### **Assessed Impact**

The current phase of this KLoE is to explore further increases in sales/income through other potential manufacturing processes, which could include: computer disposal/recycling; plastic decking and fencing; separation and grinding of plastics into pellet form for recycling; producing aids and adaptations; increasing services offered to schools around Foundation Learning, Alternative Curriculum and NVQ delivery.

However further diversification and the increased production will need further 'invest to save' measures to be agreed by Cabinet to enable Moorland to become self sustaining. The additional 'invest to save' measures will include the purchase of capital equipment, which will allow for increased production. A refreshed business plan is currently under development with support from an external business mentor and will be presented as part of the request for additional capital investment.

The introduction of flexible working patterns may need to be considered to enable production within the business to be increased, whilst Moorland Plastics' website will have

to be further developed, along with a revised Business Plan, including a new marketing strategy.

Other development work will also be undertaken on increasing:

- Fork Lift Truck training within the factory;
- work with schools, colleges and work based learning providers on the provision of Foundation Learning opportunities with Moorland Plastics;
- delivery of an Alternative Curriculum offer to schools and colleges;
- delivery of occupational NVQs to Level 3; and
- delivery of Functional Skills.

### **Proposed next steps**

The actual cumulative impact of this KLoE should be assessed and reported with reference to the following:

- Number of disabled people employed at Moorland Plastics
- Number of disabled people who have moved into mainstream employment from Moorland Plastics.

## **SHSC/B3 Inclusion Service**

### **Groups affected**

- People with Mental Health issues
- Children with disability and/or special educational needs.

### **Assessed Impact**

The KLoE would, in its current form, be likely to have a significant impact on the provision of non-core inclusion services such as advice, guidance and support strategies. If schools choose not to buy back the specialist service support this could jeopardise Barnsley's Inclusion Strategy which aims to retain children in mainstream schools within their own communities. As a result alternative options are being explored for delivering this budget reduction and should this be possible the Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed accordingly.

### **Proposed next steps**

- Review the EIA in light of any alternative approaches for making this budget saving.
- The actual cumulative impact of this KLoE should be assessed and reported with reference to the following:
- Number of occasions that schools access the Inclusion Services.
- Outcomes achieved for pupils in need of Inclusion Services.

## **AC/JC/5 Supporting People**

### **Groups affected**

- Older people

- People with mental health issues
- Disabled people (Learning Difficulties)
- Carers

### **Assessed Impact**

Dispersed Alarm Funding - funding for non-FACS eligible people to receive a Lifeline service. This funding has been withdrawn and the service is now charged for, at a cost of £3.24 per week; to date, 60% of current users have moved to the paid-for service and those who are unable or unwilling to pay are signposted to the Welfare Rights Service. There is no provision to refer for further assessment or to establish whether informal carers are available.

Potentially many older and disabled people may be left without a service, thereby increasing vulnerability. Further, at a time when many disabled people are seeing their income being reduced, this is an extra cost to them.

Supported Living, Learning Disability - no savings have been made to date and this KLoE is now part of a bigger supported living project that is tasked with making these savings and more

### **Proposed next steps**

March 2014: Assess scope and impact of supported living project

March 2014: Complete and report on full EIA for supported living project

July 2014: Report on number of previous alarm service users who are no longer receiving the service

August 2014: Establish and report whether reduction in service users has increased demand on other social care services and/or has impacted on independence and increased reliance on family, friends or neighbours

October 2014: Report on how many people have been assisted by Welfare Rights and how much extra income has been gained

## **AC/JC/16 Reduction in Funding to SWYPFT for Mental Health Services**

### **Groups affected**

- People with mental health issues
- Carers

### **Impact**

Savings of £140k+ have been achieved during 2013/2014 by deleting vacant posts, however, the same amount has to be saved during 2014/2015 from a much lower baseline.

Additionally, it could be expected that incidents of mental health will increase in the current economic and social climate.

The current CDW service is being re-tendered with a reduction to the budget that will result in the loss of 1.5fte posts and the new service will work with all equality groups rather than BME as at present.

SWYPFT are currently working on a re-configuration of community services, in collaboration with BMBC Mental Health Service. There is a proposal for the service to be managed by BMBC, working to BMBC standards and agenda.

Contribution of £30k from Supporting People for Mental Health Community Floating Support is to be withdrawn.

### **Proposed next steps**

December 2014: Assess and report on the number and types of services being provided, the number of people receiving services and the number of people waiting to receive a service

February 2015: Report on how outcomes are measured and what outcomes have been achieved for all equality groups

## **AC/VA/8, AC/VA/9, AC/VA/13 Re-configuration of Assessment and Care Management/Older People's Care Packages**

### **Groups affected**

- Older people
- Disabled people
- Carers

### **Impact**

It is unlikely that the level of saving identified could be achieved without placing the LA at risk of being unable to deliver its statutory functions in appropriate timescales increasing Safeguarding risks. The balance of qualified to unqualified staff would need to change; there would be a potential for stacked referrals to increase with the reduction in teams; reduced ability to carry out Scrutiny and Assurance and supervision processes for Guardianship, Capacity, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard, and Safeguarding.

There is currently no evidence of an increase in stacked referrals, however, there is further potential for stacked referrals with the likelihood of an increase as more reductions are applied.

There has been no reported increase in the level of complaints.

Potential for delayed discharge is high as demand for NHS services increases, particularly during the winter months; specific winter pressures funding has been gained.

It is likely that 1 x Reviewing Officer post will have to be removed from the structure, thereby affecting the ability to carry out reviews and re-assessments.

A further reduction in A&CM staff is expected during 14/15.

### **Proposed next steps**

October 2014: Plan to 'stress test' the revised structure to establish resilience against eg prolonged cold weather or pandemic

October 2014: Understand and report whether there is a causal link between reductions in capacity and reduced referrals

## **AC/JC/11 Review of Advocacy, Prevention and Involvement**

### **Groups affected**

- People with mental health issues
- Disabled people (Learning Difficulties)
- Carers
- BME people

### **Impact**

£20k reduction in advocacy funding: Intention is for a single, generic service. The new model will cover more client groups than at present, but there is a risk that some groups will not receive the same level of service as now, eg LD and MH. Approximately 45-55 people attend the weekly drop-in services.

Budget for older carers (LD) removed entirely: Impact on advocacy for LD carers expected to be mitigated by new service; Mencap continuing advocacy services until new service in place. With regard to the peer support element - the group are confident at being able to support themselves and a carers grant has been allocated to Mencap this year (2013/14) to develop sustainable peer support for families.. A re-profiling exercise will be undertaken to source money for 2014/15

Mental Health Making Space currently being re-tendered as a carers and befriending service, with a £9k budget reduction

As at January 2014, Mencap have stated that they will be unable to get their costs down to a level that will be viable, ie the unit cost will be too expensive for people to pay. Following discussions, Mencap believe that they could make the changes in the next financial year but will need a contribution of £25k. This proposal has been put to Senior Managers - outcome not known at 28 January 2014

Mental Health Community Support Workers: Service re-tendered with a 50% funding reduction; this is likely to lead to 1fte post and 1pt post rather than 3 posts as at present

### **Proposed next steps**

April 2014: Report number of users of services for 2013/2014, by equality group

December 2014: Report number of users of revised service to date, by equality group

December 2014: Report outcomes for users of revised service, by equality group

## **F&P/BT/1 & 2: Review of staffing within Benefits & Taxation service including Benefits, Taxation, Development and Support & Financial Assessments.**

## **Groups Affected**

- Disabled People
- Older People

## **Assessed Impact**

A reduction in the benefits service may lead to longer waiting times for the assessment of housing benefit and council tax benefit claims. This could lead to financial hardship and could impact on the services provided by Welfare Rights, CAB and the Credit Union. However, it is proposed that only 0.5 FTE be deleted from the structure and this should not have a major impact on service provision. The post is already vacant. However, it has been acknowledged that an increase in the workloads would put pressure on the team. This is possible during the current economic times. A reduction of one post in the non domestic rates sections will have an affect as the post is one of 3. However, it is anticipated that current workloads can be contained with 2 FTEs.

The reduction of one post from the Welfare Rights Team will have an affect on the advice and guidance provision to the people of Barnsley. However, it has been recognised that this is a non statutory service. The Welfare Rights Team has changed direction in recent years and has provided more 'over the phone' guidance. The post is a management/supervisory role and the work will be reorganised to accommodate the loss of this member of the team. However, it will have an adverse affect on service provision at a time when demand is on the increase given the magnitude of welfare reforms being faced by residents.

Work has been undertaken over the past 12 months to collect the equality profiles of our HB/CTB customers/clients. BME groups and the people over 65 appear to be under represented. A study has been done to try and establish the barriers and take up work has been carried out in an attempt to increase caseloads. Statistics show that the majority of people using the Welfare Rights Service are either elderly or disabled. There is no data collected on residential assessment clients, although all are disabled and/or elderly.

Many have to wait longer for an assessment of CTB/HB. More telephone advice as opposed to face to face. Longer wait times.

However, there are potentially groups who may not know the services exist for reasons such as learning difficulties or may be reluctant to apply for benefits because of the complexity of the system. There will be home visits available for those most in need although the capacity to provide this service will reduce and there may be longer wait times.

## **Proposed next steps**

The actual cumulative impact of this KLoE should be assessed and reported with reference to the following:

- Number of people using the service by equality group.
- Outcomes achieved by people using the service by equality group.
- Quality of service experienced by people using service (eg waiting times), by equality group.

## **CC/TP/1: Third sector payments**

**Groups Affected**

- Equality Forums
- Disabled people

**Assessed Impact**

A reduction in the funding available for the support service for the network of Equality Forums will reduce their potential to function effectively and to develop further so as to become more self-sustaining. A reduction in the budget for CAB means that those most in need of advice and support with their welfare benefits or debt issues (such as disabled people, single parents, young people) may either have to wait longer for the advice or are unable to receive the necessary advice in good time.

**Proposed next steps**

This KLoE requires a full Equality Impact Assessment to fully understand the likely effects of the proposed funding reductions.