

# Equality Impact Assessment

## Changes to Services – Community Impact

To identify whether a service change will impact on all sections of the local community equally and agree what action can be taken to better understand the impact and to reduce any inequalities.

### About the Service

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of Service</b>  | Welfare review – 2 <sup>nd</sup> stage   |
| <b>Name of Officer responsible for EIA</b>                                  | Jayne Hellowell  |
| <b>What outcomes does this service deliver for customers or the public?</b> | <p>The Welfare Rights Service offers a free confidential advice service to residents of the borough on a range of benefit and tax credit entitlements. This is delivered both centrally and through a range of outreach sessions. There is also a small team of dedicated Macmillan advisors who support cancer patients with a range of welfare issues.</p> <p>There are a range of other advice agencies across the borough where people can access advice around welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment and consumer matters. The main ones being CAB (Citizens Advice Barnsley), DIAL and Age Concern</p> |

### About the Service Change

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Why is the service changing?</b>                    | In 2016/17 there was a budget reduction of £250k against a service budget of £544k. Services were remodelled during this time to account for the reduction in funding. In 2017/18 the service faces further funding loss due to withdrawal of the MacMillan Grant that pays for 3 x FTEs.  |
| <b>How is the service changing / likely to change?</b> | The welfare Rights will need to further restructure to contain the budget reductions and remodel the service for customers. The proposals transform the service even further and merge the operational arm of the service that includes housing options and welfare into the safer communities structure. 'This The ultimate aim is to deliver a more holistic service |

model, with a focus on supporting people to help themselves and working in a more collaborative way with partners, key stakeholders and the community but doing so in a wider structure. This will result in a further reduction in budget of £70,000 and the decommissioning of externally funded advice currently delivered by CAB and DIAL Barnsley.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>What will this change mean for the service's outcomes for customers / the public?</b> | The changes will mean that there will be a co-location of multi-disciplined staff. The ultimate outcome will be a more joined up service with a range of ways to access the service and with protection for the most vulnerable. This does mean a reduction in service offer by the externally funded services. |
| <b>When will this be taking place (start and finish)?</b>                                | The budget reduction will commence from April 17.   |

## What We Already Know About the Equality Impact of the Service

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Service feedback:</b></p> <p>What do you already know about the equality impact of the service? This could be from consultation, complaints / compliments, stakeholder feedback, staff anecdotal evidence etc.</p>                         | <p>For the largest percentage of the local population and customers needing advice or guidance; it is expected that they will be able to self-serve. For the most vulnerable customers there will be the retention of the face to face service offer.</p> <p>The capacity for home visits will be significantly reduced. The service will be centralised which may have a negative impact on some members of the community who cannot travel to the available locations – due to mobility issues for example.</p> <p>There will be a retention of area based services through the services commissioned by Area Councils if they choose to do so in the future.</p> |
| <p><b>Data:</b></p> <p>What evidence is available about equality impact of the service area and what does it tell you? This could be service performance monitoring data, it could demographic data (as shown in <u>ward profiles</u>), etc.</p> | <p>Performance data is collected quarterly from the service but this is mainly around the type of advice and support that has been offered and the benefit gains as a result of the intervention.</p> <p>A high percentage of the support provided by the</p>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>welfare rights service is around sickness related benefits, tax credits and appeals/tribunals. There is also significant support provided to cancer patients and their carer's by the Macmillian advisors.</p> <p>Equalities data is currently being collected, and where there are gaps to enable more robust equalities motioning in the future.</p>  |
| <p><b>Previous EIA's:</b></p> <p>Has there already been an EIA on all or part of this service before, or a related service? If so, what were the main issues and actions it identified?</p> | <p>An initial EIA was completed as part of the review and this one builds upon that one.</p> <p>A CIA identified the following issues;</p> <p>There will be a reduction in the support available in the borough and the capacity to see customers in a timely manner will also be reduced. This could lead to increased waiting times and customers being unable to resolve issues within required timescales which could impact on entitlement. Residents may have reduced incomes which could lead to health issues both physical and mental, debt issues, increase in poverty, and pressure on other services.</p> <p>The main actions included;</p> <p>Avoiding duplication of provision, monitoring equality information, the need for community consultation and continuing the development of the service with key partners, community members and service providers. Providing support for those who need it and enabling those who can do it for themselves to do so by providing an online facility.</p> |

## Assessment of Equality Impact

Protection from unlawful discrimination is provided by the Equality Act in relation to the following characteristics:

- disability
- age
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

An "equal" service is one where those who **need** to use the service the most **do** use the service the most.

What do you know about the extent to which the above groups need to use your service? What do you know about the extent to which they do use your service? And is there a gap between the two? How will the service change affect this?

The welfare rights service does support a range of individuals from across the borough. Data is not collected on all of the categories above. This will be changed following the review from April 16. From the numbers of call, appointments, appeals and tribunals that the service supports there is a large number of disabled people who receive support and advice.

Strengthening the collection of equality information will ensure that the equality profile of customers is better understood. It will also allow us to ensure that the service is accessible to everyone (taking into account people's access needs). We can use this information to further understand any impact that the change is having, or has had, on various sections of the community and will enable us to subsequently plan any required mitigations.

An "equal" service is one where people are equally likely to receive a **good quality of service**, and one where the service leads to **good outcomes for the customer**.

What do you know about the quality of the service people receive (eg fair decision-making, waiting times, etc)? What do you know about the outcomes your service achieves for customers or the public? How will the service change affect this?

It is envisaged that by working closer together and ensuring effective referrals and signposting that the quality of the service will remain high and waiting times will not be impacted. There is a risk around the provision of home visits as this may not be routinely available in the future, but will still be made available in certain circumstances. There will also be more ways to access the service for those that can through web based provision, web chat facilities, email advice etc. This will potentially enable the service to reach more customers as the online information will be available outside office hours.

An "equal" service is one where people can find out about it, apply for it and use it **accessibly and independently**.

What do you know about the accessibility of the service? How will the service change affect this?

The potential impact on accessibility may be around access to community based provision. Some of this is currently available in some wards through area council commissioned work and through CAB pots of money which support community based support.

There will still be the availability of face to face appointments in an accessible central location.

Which of the following have you identified a potential inequality for? Is this currently the case, or after the service change, or both?

Please indicate the degree of potential inequality. (H – high, M – medium, L- low, N – none)

| Group | Now | After | Details |
|-------|-----|-------|---------|
| Men   | Low | Low   |         |

|  |     |        |  |
|--|-----|--------|--|
| <b>Women</b>   | Low | Low    |  |
| <b>Disabled people</b>   | Low | High   | If there is a reduction in home visits, outreach and appointments there is the potential to impact on disabled people. However this would be mitigated by working alongside other organisations to ensure services were still available and accessible.  |
| <b>Deaf people</b>   | Low | Low*   | *The potential inequality for Deaf People has been rated at low because of the planned mitigations, however if these had not been identified then this would increase to high.   |
| <b>BME people</b>  | Low | Medium | This has the potential to increase to medium as evidence shows that more people are approaching the service where English is not their first language, so they may encounter more issues with a web based system and fewer appointments.   |
| <b>LGB people</b>  | Low | Low    |  |
| <b>Trans people</b>  | Low | Low    |  |
| <b>Young People</b>  | Low | Low    |  |
| <b>Older people</b>  | Low | High   | As above for disabled people   |
| <b>Faith groups</b>  | Low | Low    |  |
| <b>Pregnancy / maternity</b>                                     | Low | Low    |  |
| <b>Other:<br/>Eg carers, homeless,<br/>military, low incomes</b> | Low | Medium | Some of these people can be vulnerable and a reduction in service may impact, however the focus of the remaining resources will be on supporting the most vulnerable and we would work with a range of agencies to identify these individuals  |
| <b>Low incomes</b>   | Low | Medium | There is a risk that some people, who are already on a low income, may not be able to access the service when they need it (i.e. if they don't have access to a computer for the use of internet, if they don't have the funds to travel or have access to a telephone facility – or having the funds to make a call). |

## Next Steps

### To improve you knowledge about the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: community engagement with affected groups, analysis of performance data, improve equality monitoring, stakeholder focus group etc.

| Action taken so far:   | Lead Officer                      | Completion date  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Joint workshops with key advice agencies across the borough to try and mitigate the impact of the cuts and co- produce a new service model   | Jayne Hellowell<br>/Michelle Kaye | Completed  |
| Working with area councils to recognise the impact of poverty and what might be needed locally to tackle this.   | Michelle Kaye                     | Ongoing.<br>North and South area council have commissioned welfare and advice services.<br><br>The south area council is welfare project participating in the social return on investment pilot. |
| Undertook a business review of the welfare rights and CAB service to consider capacity and risks and propose options for future service delivery   | Jayne Hellowell<br>/Michelle Kaye | Completed August 15  |
| Working with Macmillan to consider future options around welfare support for cancer patients and their carer's .   | Jayne Hellowell<br>/Michelle Kaye | Ongoing  |
| Undertook community consultation – a survey which was publicised through U-engage on the councils website  | Michelle Kaye                     | Jan 16   |
| Action we will take:   | Lead Officer                      | Completion date  |
| Work closely with the CAB and other partners over the next 12 months to undertake further design work to ensure resources are targeted, duplication is minimised while sustaining a quality customer focussed service. | Jayne Hellowell<br>/Michelle Kaye | By April 2017  |
| To undertake more community and targeted consultation the new service model evolves on the budget reductions to inform the future model.   | Jayne Hellowell<br>/Michelle Kaye | Aril 16-April 17   |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

### To improve or mitigate the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: altering the policy to protect affected group, limiting scope of service change, reviewing actual impact in future, phasing-in changes over period of time etc.

| Action we will take:  | Lead Officer  | Completion date |
|---|---------------|-----------------|
| To develop more robust equalities monitoring system for the service going forward so that impact and risks can be measured, evidenced and managed.  | Michelle Kaye | April 17        |
| Continue to consult with the key equity forums to ensure that the new service is accessible to different sections of the community                  | Michelle Kaye | Ongoing         |
| Consultation/discussion on the development of the new integrated service to ensure that it adheres to equalities and understands impacts and risks. | Michelle Kaye | April 17        |

## The Public Sector Equality Duty

### As a result of this EIA how have you demonstrated due regard to the need to:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation?   | By ensuring that all services work collectively and in partnership and that services and people know where to report any discrimination and have the confidence that it will be acted on.  |
| Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? | By identifying through more robust equality monitoring who is approaching the service and then by default who is not and trying to reach out and engage with those communities to ensure they are both aware of the service and that it is accessible to them. |
| Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?           | By 'myth busting' around some common misconceptions about which groups get services and assistance. Better information and clear messages to the public about what is offered and how to access it.  |

## Reporting and Publishing

Please summarise the main findings and next steps identified in this EIA.

The outcomes of this EIA must be summarised in the cabinet report or delegated decision report which approves the proposed service changes. You could also include the EIA as an appendix to the report or reference it as a background paper.

You must also record how you will inform all stakeholders of the outcome of this EIA. In practice this is usually best achieved when reporting the service change itself.

### Summary of equality impact

There is a need to ensure that as a result of the budget cuts to welfare that any revised service offer is targeted at those most in need whilst remaining accessible to all.

It is also important to ensure that the changes to the service do not disproportionately impact upon those with protected characteristics. The EIA has identified that Older People and Disable People are particularly at risk of significant adverse impact as a result of the proposed changes. Further to this the risk of inequality is also likely to increase for Carers, BME people and those on low incomes from low to Medium. Deaf People would also be high risk if mitigating actions had not been taken in order to minimise the potential impact – the current risk therefore remains low.

It will be important to monitor the impact that the service change is having on the community in order to resolve any issues that may become evident and to work to reduce the likelihood of any disproportionate impacts on the above sections of the community in particular.

### Summary of next steps

There will need to be a restructure of staff within safer and healthier communities and alongside this the development of a new integrated service model with all partner involved which will include seeking feedback from customers, the public and key equality groups.

Equality monitoring also needs to be implemented in order to ensure that any disproportionate impact can be mitigated – this will also need to be regularly reviewed in order to be effective.

The welfare review and the EIA therefore recommend the following mitigating actions be taken:

- Monitoring of equality information – and mapping this against current performance data (i.e benefit gains, type of advice required etc), to better understand the customer profile and customer needs;
- Monitoring the impact that the service change is having on the community to reduce the likelihood of any disproportionately negative impacts on those with protected characteristics;
- Continued consultation community to better understand the issues/barriers/concerns;
- Key partners, stakeholders, community members, customers and current service providers to be involved in the development of the new



|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation/discussion with the Equality Forums to be undertaken to consider any impacts of the changes to welfare services, as they evolve over the next year, and to plan to mitigate against any adverse impacts whenever possible.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>How stakeholders will be informed</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through targeted focus groups and attendance at meetings and forums to get the input of others in the designing of the future service model.</li> <li>• Through any consultation</li> <li>• Through key mutli agency group's around welfare should as Barnsley Advice Network (BAN), Anti-Poverty Delivery Group.</li> <li>• Through area councils and elected members.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>How Cabinet will be informed</b></p>      | <p>Through the cabinet process and key members are also linked into a number of the groups above.</p>   |