EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS (EqIAA)

HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

Housing Related Support (HRS), previously known as Supporting People, covers a range of support (but not personal or domestic care) services. Their purpose is to help people to sustain independent living in their own home within the local community. Housing Related Support may be provided in the short, medium or long term but aims to help people maximise what they are able to do for themselves. It is provided in people's own homes (known as floating housing related support) although some of these can be specialist accommodation (known as accommodation based housing related support) where people may need to receive a service for a longer period.

It is recognised that HRS is a preventative service which contributes to the health and wellbeing of residents. An effective prevention service can reduce demand for, and the costs of, housing and homelessness, health and care services. The over-riding successful outcome sought from HRS is that the person is able to maintain their tenancy without support, i.e. they no longer require the service. Therefore, in many respects, the more effective the service, the less support people will need.

HRS services aim to deliver targeted support services to disadvantaged and marginalised people, who are vulnerable on account of disability, life experience or illness to enable them to manage their tenancy and therefore continue to live independently in their own homes by providing:
• highly personalised services built around, and responsive to, the individual person's support needs;
• focus on re-building lives by supporting moves into training and employment, improving health and well-being, developing social networks and integration with communities, as well as finding and keeping a home;
• a preventative service which saves the public purse more than is invested.

The main activities currently delivered are 'primary eligible support tasks' and 'secondary eligible support tasks'.
Primary eligible support tasks, which qualify for Housing Related Support funding and are considered to be essential parts of the service are:
• Support with personal budgeting, debt counselling and accessing benefits;
• Support with responsibilities associated with maintaining the home;
• Support and advice on cleanliness, safety and security in the home including community alarm services;
• Move-on advice as appropriate;
• Liaising with other services;
• Good neighbour and social skills, including support with neighbour disputes.

These can be supplemented by secondary eligible support tasks (which cannot be provided alone or be a greater part of a service user's support than the primary tasks):
 Support to shop and cook in the context of maintaining the home;
• Support to access employment, education, training and daytime activities;
• Advice and encouragement in relation to personal care and appearance;
• Enabling the service user to maintain their physical and mental health;
• Assistance to establish social networks and links in the community that will increase service users' capacity to maintain their home;
• Supporting service users to engage with the probation service where needed.

Overall, success of the service is measured via:
- The number of individuals who successfully move into accommodation.
- The move on rate (for time limited services) into permanent accommodation.
- A reduction in the level of support required by individuals

SECTION 2 – RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

Data shows that at 1st September 2015 a total of 129 service-users were receiving HRS via the floating support service. Table 1 below, shows what we know in relation to service-user protected characteristics for the floating support service.

In addition, approximately 1600 users receive HRS as part of the accommodation based support service. Of these, approximately 1280 live within the Merlin Sheltered Housing Scheme. Detailed information regarding the protected characteristics of those in accommodation based schemes is not currently held by the Authority.

Table 1

Protected Characteristic		Number	Percentage
Sex	Female	73	57%
	Male	51	39%
	Unknown	#	4%
Disability	Disabled	43	33%
	Non-Disabled	0	0%
	Unknown	86	67%
Age	<20	#	#
	20 – 29	38	29%
	30 – 39	29	22%
	40 – 49	29	22%
	50 – 59	20	16%
	60 – 64	#	#
	65+	#	#
	Unknown	#	#

NB. Where there are fewer than ten in a particular group, data has been suppressed and is represented by the # symbol for reasons of confidentiality.

Other Protected Characteristics

In respect of race equality in mental health, The Mental Health Network NHS Confederation briefing report "*Race Equality in Mental Health*"[1] reports that '*rates of admission to inpatient units, and rates of detention, continue to be proportionally higher for Black African, Black Caribbean and other groups*'.

Similarly, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report "*How fair is Britain? Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations in 2010. The First Triennial Review*"[2] reports that '*In terms of ethnicity, evidence indicates that Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups are more likely to report 'poor' health than average. These groups are more likely to experience poor mental health, more likely to report a disability or limiting long term illness, and more likely to find it hard to access and communicate with their GPs than other groups*'

The EHRC report also goes on to state *"Research has suggested that there may be an association between harassment and poor mental health. Some evidence suggests that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) and transgender people, Gypsies and Travellers and asylum seekers, who are perhaps more likely than other groups to face hostility and misunderstanding, are all more likely to experience poor mental health"*.

This information highlights the following key points:-
* Both Females and Males access services.
* Disabled People make up a large proportion of service users. Indeed, it is recognised that bringing seven different services across South Gloucestershire together into a single service will specifically serve those with generic needs, older people, homeless people, and those with mental health needs. It is also noted that accommodation based schemes for people with learning disabilities/difficulties are to be considered as part of a separate review.
* The majority of service-users are aged between 20 and 49. It is recognised that people of all ages will benefit from services provided. It is also noted that services for young people are to be considered as part of a separate review.
* Race is a key issue for consideration throughout this review.
* Sexual Orientation is a key issue for consideration throughout this review.
* Gender Reassignment is a key issue for consideration throughout this review.

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[1]http://www.nhsconfed.org/~/media/Confederation/Files/Publications/Documents/Race_equality_in_mental_health_final_for_website_8_May.pdf

[2] http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/how-fair-britain/full-report-and-evidence-downloads

SECTION 3 - IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF EQUALITIES ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Overall, the key changes which are being investigated by this review involve:-
- Bringing several different services across South Gloucestershire together into a single service catering for those with generic needs, older people, homeless people, and those with mental health needs.
- New ways of delivering some aspects of the services, creating out-reach services in a range of different outlets providing surgeries, using webpages, phone and email communications, and drop-in sessions.

It is specifically noted that the review is intended to result in everyone continuing to receive a service where appropriate.

Equality issues arising from the research

The key equalities issues emerging as a result of the initial review are those of:
- Ensuring that all users, regardless of their protected characteristics can access the redesigned services (e.g. out-reach, telephone support, web based information, drop-in sessions etc.).
- Monitoring access to services for all groups and proactively identifying developments on an ongoing basis.
- Monitoring outcomes for all groups and proactively identifying developments on an ongoing basis.
- Using the council's established "Equalities in Procurement" approaches to select a provider with the capacity to deliver accessible services and successful outcomes for all, with management systems in place to continuously monitor equalities issues.

In respect of these issues:-
- Providers would be encouraged to supply HRS services in an imaginative and flexible manner to improve accessibility for the range of service users. This would specifically form part of the provider selection process.
- The range of services to be provided would be required to be accompanied by an assessment of how these will meet the needs of all, and in particular those groups identified in Section 2 of this EqIAA. These would include, but are not limited to:
  – Assessment and prioritisation approaches planned which ensure that service users with greater needs would be assessed, prioritised and responded to with an increased level of support.
  – Delivery of group session approaches.
  – Drop-in advice sessions, co-located with other services.
  – Provision of face to face support to users for whom group services are not appropriate.
  – Sign-posting methodologies and use of different media.

'Secondary' tasks currently provided by HRS workers would cease should these proposals be adopted. However, South Gloucestershire Council already commissions many of these services, or they are provided by voluntary or community organisations. It is expected that service users would be referred to these other agencies as appropriate. Examples include:
- Support to shop and cook.
- Support to access employment, education, training and daytime activities.
- Advice and encouragement in relation to personal care and appearance (other than for tenancy maintenance).
- Assistance to establish social networks and links in the community.
- Transporting service users.

The Council believes that these changes will make the service available to more individuals, including who have previously been unable to access the service. It will also enable the Council to provide more services within the funding available.

Equality issues arising from the consultation

During the consultation period four documents were available to download from the consultation webpage. The number of downloads for each paper is set out below:
- Consultation Paper – 264
- Consultation Summary – 122
- Initial Equalities Impact Assessment – 78
- Survey – 51

Overall, there were nine online responses to the survey. A further 15 paper copies of the survey were also returned, totalling 24 responses. Six other comments were made through other representations to the consultation. As part of the consultation, there have also been specific discussions with providers to provide them with the opportunity to feed back their views on the proposals.

Based on the responses to the survey, the characteristics of those responding are set out below. The number of responses is relatively small and it is therefore difficult to draw many conclusions from this. Given this factor, it is important that the service strengthens the quality of its equalities information in the future and this will therefore form a key part of any new service specification.

Protected Characteristic	Percentage
Gender	
Male	44%
Female	50%
Preferred not to say	6%
Age	
Over 75	38%
65-74	33%
25-44	14%
19-24	10%
Preferred not to say	5%
Disability	
Disabled	40%
Non-Disabled	55%
Preferred not to say	5%
Ethnicity	
White British	95%
White - Irish	5%
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	80%
Unknown	20%
Gender Reassignment	
Not identified as a transgender person	84%
Preferred not to say	16%
Religion	
Christian	79%
No religion	11%
Spiritualist	5%
Preferred not to say	5%

In addition to the equalities information, the respondents provided comments on a number of factors specific to the review. Full details are contained in the consultation report appendix which has been included as part of the Council's Committee report on Housing Related Support (27 January 2016). However, a summary of the main feedback and the Council's response to it is summarised in the table below. This summary is also included in the Committee report.

Summary of key comments and response / mitigating actions

Feedback	Response
How will the proposals impact you?	
Concern that people won't be supported, that there will be a negative impact and that current service provision would change.	People will still receive support if it is needed. Some floating support services may be provided differently to the traditional approach of face to face visits, e.g. use of a telephone helpline, drop in sessions, etc. However, this will be tailored according to individual needs. If the support provider changes, this will be discussed with users.
What matters most in relation to helping you meet your housing need?	
Having someone on site to provide peace of mind (those receiving in accommodation based HRS).	The landlord responsibilities will not change. Security of tenancy will remain unchanged.
Why is this important to you?	
Peace of mind, confidence, independence.	The services provided will still continue to help users have peace of mind, be more confidence and encourage greater independence.
What should the Council consider when drafting the new service?	
Accessibility, personalisation.	Services will continue to be provided but some floating support services may be provided in a different way. However, this will be tailored to individual needs. Some people may still receive visits from a support worker.
How strongly do you agree with the proposed list of services for Enhanced Housing Management?	
Positive response – most people agreed with the list.	N/A
How strongly do you agree with the nine objectives of the review?	
Positive response – most people agreed with the list.	N/A
Less positive - achieving a cost saving.	All local authorities are facing intense financial pressures and it is therefore important that we seek to ensure every pound of funding is spent wisely whilst still ensuring that we provide a high quality of service.
Less positive – focus HRS for those in accommodation based schemes on those with a high/medium need.	It is important that HRS services provided take account of, and are proportionate to, need. The proposals allow for the enhanced housing management service to meet the needs of people requiring lower level support.
Less positive - prompt the development of Enhanced Housing Management.	The development of enhanced housing management will help provide a more sustainable service that enables HRS to focus on those with higher needs.

Views on the intention to invite potential providers to submit bids on how they can provide the best service within the funding available	
Cheaper not necessarily better.	The new floating support service will be subject to the Council's commissioning process which will ensure that there is a clear balance between cost and quality. All new contracts will be underpinned by robust service specifications that set out the requirements of all parties.
Need to work closely with landlords.	

The Council has clearly reflected on the consultation feedback and to help allay any concerns about the changes, has therefore developed (in conjunction with provider representatives), a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) to be shared with service users. This is attached at Appendix 4 of the main Committee report.

It should also be added that the positive engagement with providers throughout the review has been paramount and should not be understated. They work closely with service users and their views are therefore very important. Before, during and after consultation, we have involved them in developing our proposals and have taken their advice to help inform our approach.

The following table provides an assessment of impacts.

Equality Group	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	No Impact	Unsure of Impact	Reasons
Women/Girls	☐	☒	☐	☐	By following the actions stated within this EqIAA, it is anticipated that there would be no differential impact in relation to protected characteristics. As the services are intended to remain in place, a continuing positive impact has been identified.

However, as part of the commissioning relationship with providers, quality of service delivery and parity of outcome amongst protected characteristic groups is something that will regularly be monitored so that actions can be taken as necessary.

Accommodation based schemes for people with learning disabilities/difficulties are to be considered as part of a separate review.

Services for young people are to be considered as part of a separate review |
Men/Boys	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Lesbians, gay men & bisexuals	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Transgender people	☐	☒	☐	☐	
White people (including Irish people)	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Asian or Asian British people	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Black or Black British people	☐	☒	☐	☐	
People of mixed heritage	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Chinese people	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Travellers (gypsy/Roma/Irish heritage)	☐	☒	☐	☐	
People from other ethnic groups	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Physical impairment, e.g. mobility issues which mean using a wheelchair or crutches.	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Sensory impairment, e.g. blind/having a serious visual impairment, deaf/having a serious hearing impairment.	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Mental health condition, e.g. depression or schizophrenia.	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Learning disability/difficulty, e.g. Down's syndrome or dyslexia, or cognitive impairment such as autistic spectrum disorder.	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Long-standing illness or health condition, e.g. cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy.	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Other health problems or impairments.	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Older People	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Children and Young People	☐	☐	☒	☐	
Faith Groups	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Pregnancy & Maternity	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☐	☐	☒	☐	It is not anticipated that there would be any impact in respect of this protected characteristic.

SECTION 4 – OUTCOMES

Outcome	Response	Reason(s) and Justification
Outcome 1: No major change required.	☐	
Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers or to better promote equality have been identified.	☒	The service will continue to seek to provide services to clients as before, although in some cases the way in which services are provided may be different. Providers will be encouraged to supply HRS services in an imaginative and flexible manner to improve accessibility for the range of service users. The nature of the service should be proportionate to needs. The approach adopted by providers will form part of the provider selection process for the new floating support service. No differential impact has been identified via this EqIAA. However, it is noted that actions have been identified on an on-going basis to ensure quality and parity of outcome for all protected characteristic groups – see actions shown in Section 5 below.
Outcome 3: Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality.	☐	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink.	☐	

SECTION 5 - ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS EqIAA

The Equalities in Procurement approach adopted by SGC will be followed throughout the commissioning process, requiring providers to monitor number, quality and parity of outcomes for all protected characteristic groups.

Methods of engaging with all will be a requirement of monitoring for providers in order to ensure appropriate engagement with all, in accordance with their needs.

Provider monitoring will be regularly assessed by the Council in order to ensure effective and appropriate services are in place for all.

Quality of signposting will be assessed and monitored in order to ensure that appropriate services continue to be available to residents.

We recognise that reviews and change can be unsettling and we have sought to address users concerns by the development of the FAQs which will be shared with service users as appropriate.

SECTION 6 - EVIDENCE INFORMING THIS EqIAA

- HRS service-user data as at 1st September 2015
- HRS Consultation report (November 2015)
- The Mental Health Network NHS Confederation briefing report "Race Equality in Mental Health"
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report "How fair is Britain? Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations in 2010. The First Triennial Review"
- South Gloucestershire Council Equalities in Procurement Guidance