

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Making Connections Walsall one year extension		
Directorate	Economy, Environment and Communities		
Service	Community, Equality and Cohesion		
Responsible Officer	Sarah Oakley		
Proposal planning start	01.03.2021	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	01.03.2021

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy		
	Procedure	Yes	
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Yes	
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?		
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change? <p>Making Connections Walsall (MCW) is about tackling loneliness and social isolation, improve wellbeing and reduce preventable health and social care service usage. It takes a “strength based approach” to improve the social connectedness of all residents across Walsall and also targets the social needs of all adults who are lonely and socially isolated rather than their social care or medical needs. The MCW project has been in existence since 2017 and was due to finish in June 2020. However, due to the pandemic, the contracts were extended to March 2021 in order to support Walsall residents. The proposal is to extend the MCW contract for one additional year in order to ensure continuity of service for the residents that are currently being supported. The types of support include befriending, signposting to food parcels, prescription collection, delivery of activity packs, advice and guidance and also signposting to community activities.</p> <p>In order to continue for one year, £135,000 of funding is requested which will fund 4 x hubs and West Midlands Fire Service.</p> <p>The four hubs are operating across the following areas:</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- NORTH - Bloxwich Community Partnership, (Bloxwich East, Bloxwich West, Birchills Leamore, Blakenall);- EAST - Manor Farm Community Association (Walsall Pelsall, Brownhills, Aldridge North, Rushall-Sheffield and Walsall Wood, Aldridge South, Streetly, Pheasey Park Farm);- SOUTH - Accord Age Matters (St Matthews, Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck);- WEST - Old Hall Peoples Partnership (Bentley and Darlaston North, Darlaston South, Willenhall North, Short Heath, Willenhall South).		
3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All	Yes	MCW was originally a social prescribing project for older people however due to the pandemic and the need to support more residents, the support is available for all Walsall residents
	Specific group/s		
	Council employees		
	Other (identify)		
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		
	<p>Residents who want support are referred to the West Midlands Fire Service, who take the residents details. This is then put on a computer system which is then sent to the relevant hubs.</p> <p>The data collected includes Full Name, address, date of birth, ethnicity, and gender, whether the resident has a disability and if so what and whether language support is required.</p> <p>Residents also have the option to complete a referral form on line which is accessed via the Councils website.</p> <p>MCW is available for all residents of Walsall. Walsall borough has a population of approximately 281,300 (2017 ONS Population Estimate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age - Compared to the England benchmark, Walsall has a higher proportion of children and young adults aged 18 years old and under, a lower proportion of working age adults, a higher proportion of people in their late seventies and early eighties, and a lower proportion of people aged 90 years old and over (NHS Walsall, CCG 2018).• Age - The age profile of residents is expected to increase over the next few decades, with a 44% increase in the proportion of older people aged over 85 (2017 ONS Population Estimate).• Disability - Within both the England benchmark Walsall borough, a higher proportions of people whose day-to-day activities were limited a little or limited a lot were present at older age bands, especially amongst those over 50 years of age (NHS Walsall, CCG 2018).		

- Ethnicity - Compared to the England benchmark, Walsall borough has a higher proportions of Asian British people and Mixed-race people, and lower proportions of White people, Black British people, and people of other ethnicities (NHS Walsall CCG, 2018).
- Religion / belief - Compared to the England benchmark, Walsall borough has a lower proportions of Buddhists, Christians, and Jews, and higher proportions Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and people of other religions (NHS Walsall, CCG 2018).
- Language - Compared to the England benchmark, the Walsall area has a higher proportions of speakers of English, Slovak, Shona, Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya), Gujarati, Pakistani Pahari (with Mirpuri and Potwari), Punjabi, and Urdu, as well as a higher proportion of people who used sign language (NHS Walsall, CCG 2018)
- Marital Status - Compared to the England benchmark, Walsall borough has a higher proportions of married people and widowers, and had lower proportions of single people, divorced people and people in a registered same-sex civil partnership (NHS Walsall, CCG 2018).
- Sexual Identity - Compared to the England benchmark, the West Midlands Region had similar proportions of heterosexual and LGBT people (NHS Walsall, CCG 2018).
- Deprivation - Walsall was ranked 33rd most deprived Local Authority out of 326 Local Authorities on the latest 2015 index of multiple deprivation.
- Deprivation - However, deprivation levels are higher in the town centre and the wards surrounding the town centre - Using the Indices of Deprivation 2015, ONS carried out analysis that ranked Walsall town as the 4th most deprived town or city in England. This focused on what they defined as the 'core' town centre area (rather than the whole borough), which has a workday population of 67,600. Over half of the neighbourhoods surrounding the town centre are amongst the most deprived 20% in England and some of those making up the town centre itself are among the 5% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally.
- Working age population - The Borough has a relatively low proportion of working age residents to support the town centre, but its high proportion of under 16's provides and an opportunity to develop a vibrant centre for young people and to drive future economic growth.
- Working Age Population - The working age population is more likely than the national average to be economically inactive or out of work and claiming benefits.
- Qualifications - Adults in Walsall have lower levels of qualification than the national average, with over 1 in 10 (12%) having no formal qualifications and only 27% of adults with degree level qualifications compared with 38% across England.
- Productivity - in the Borough (measured by GVA per filled job, 2017) is 20% below the national average and falls shorts of the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

5	<p>Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).</p>
	<p>There has been no engagement or consultation around this proposal as it is only a continuation of an existing contract. The MCW project will have to go through a new procurement tendering process during 2021/22 therefore this will be a priority then.</p> <p>At present, the MCW are making between 500-600 befriending calls per week and delivering approx. 50 food parcels. Due to the project now supporting all residents and not just older people, there is an increase in requests for advice and guidance particularly around crisis support.</p>

	Consultation Activity			
	Type of engagement/consultation		Date	
	Who attended/participated?			
	Protected characteristics of participants			
6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation			
	<p>The proposal to extend the MCW contracts for an additional year will ensure continuity of service to Walsall residents. We are still in the middle of a pandemic, and referrals to the hubs is gradually increasing as more families are struggling. Walsall has just over 20000 residents who have been told to shield by Government. The hubs are taking referrals through this work which will continue for a number of months.</p>			
7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.			
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes / No
	Age	<p>To continue this project for an additional year can only have a positive effect on all Walsall residents. The hubs have developed a wealth of knowledge and are able to signpost residents to various support groups or professionals if required.</p> <p>The project is inclusive of everyone.</p> <p>As the project has been in existence for a number of years, a lot of agencies are aware and will signpost</p>		
	Disability			
	Gender reassignment			
	Marriage and civil partnership			
	Pregnancy and maternity			
	Race			

	Religion or belief	residents in need to the service.	
	Sex		
	Sexual orientation		
	Other (give detail)		
	Further information		
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.		(Delete one) Yes / No
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?		
A	No major change required AGREE		
B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality		
C	Continue despite possible adverse impact		
D	Stop and rethink your proposal		

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
01.04.2021	To monitor the impact of MCW project on residents with protected characteristics	Sarah Oakley	31.03.2022	That the projects is accessed by all residents

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail

Contact us

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Inside Walsall: [http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service information/Equality and diversity](http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/Equality_and_diversity)