

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

Proposal name	Options Review of Employment Support and Day Services for people with Learning Disabilities		
Directorate	Social Care and Inclusion		
Service	Provider Services		
Responsible Officer	Gary Mack		
EqIA Author	Michael Hicklin		
Date proposal started		Proposal commencement date (due or actual)	

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Policy	Yes	
	Procedure	Yes	
	Internal service	Yes	
	External Service		
	Other - give details		
	To redesign the current service models so that they reflect best practice, are fit for purpose under the Care Act 2014 and cost effective and sustainable.		
2	What are the intended outcomes, reasons for change? (The business case)		
	<b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To deliver services in Walsall that targets the most vulnerable adults who are deemed as having an eligible need for social care services.</li> <li>To ensure all users have had a current review so that they are made aware of support services available to them and that they have received their Personal Budgets or Direct Payments which will enable them to pursue these.</li> <li>To support users who are no longer eligible for social care services to move to alternative community support services.</li> <li>To consolidate some of Walsall Councils Provider Services to make them more efficient and cost effective.</li> <li>Consult with users and carers so that they can make informed choices about which options they feel should be included in the next Cabinet Report.</li> </ul> <b>Reasons for Change:</b>		

- Walsall Council cannot continue to be everything to everyone therefore we need to be SMARTER with the limited resources we have. Therefore by redesigning services we will still be able to meet the identified outcomes for users with an assessed need but at lower costs.
- Ensuring future services are fit for purpose, cost effective, efficient and sustainable so that they can endure future pressures and challenges.
- Day Services are currently operating on reduced occupancy levels, which mean that it is not cost effective when we take into account the potential of the service.
- Links to Work needs to be reviewed in light of best practice in promoting independence, the fitness for purpose as it is struggling to meet expectations of Employment Pathways, as the current sheltered scheme provided is outdated.
- It is expected that by exploring different operating models users and carers will have more choice and control and a say in how future service provision is shaped.

#### **How and Who has formulated these options:**

The proposals are based on statistical data compiled over a significant period of time to ascertain occupancy levels, needs of customers, staffing ratios as well as assessing income generated and expenditure incurred in sustaining current level of services. Therefore areas of weaknesses have been identified which has resulted in the options to be discussed in forthcoming consultations subject to Cabinet approval.

Also Best Practice and findings of previous consultation events have also proven useful as they have given us an insight into the needs of carers as well as users. Other influences for this EQIA has been drawn from:

- **Carers Act 2014**  
Places responsibility on public services to assess the needs of carers in their own right
- **Health and Social Care Act 2012**  
Places emphasis on Providers to be Innovative and take the lead in designing services rather than commissioners, and empowers users of services
- **National Care Standards Strategy 2015**  
Provides a framework to ensure services are user led and effectively managed
- **Valuing People 2001 Valuing People Now a 3 year Strategy**  
Defines the responsibilities of care providers who provide services for people with Learning Disabilities

Options will be agreed with Councillors and Senior Officials, who are responsible for these services, Portfolio Holder for Social Care and Inclusion, the Director for Social Care and Inclusion, Assistant Director and relevant others

All options are subject to Cabinet approval and a summary of the outcomes of consultations with users, carers will be submitted to Cabinet in the Autumn.

Options that will form the basis of our consultation with users and carers:

#### **Day Services (6 Community Bases)**

- **Option 1**

To consolidate the 6 community bases we have in the Borough of Walsall into 2 Community Hubs which will be Fallings Heath and Goscote Centre. It is anticipated that this option will facilitate community integration and access to improved facilities as both buildings meet DDA regulations and therefore are equipped to meet the changing needs of our users as they get older or if their health care needs change.

All of the users in the Community Bases have visited Goscote Centre to access resources on site, and a few have attended Fallings Heath for Respite Care.

This option will facilitate efficiencies in overheads and staffing, and create further opportunities to develop employment and vocational pathways.

- **Option 2**

To continue to provide a service from all 6 Community Bases, but reduce staffing in line with low occupancy levels.

This option is inefficient and would have a significant impact on the choice and variety of activities currently provided to users.

- **Option 3**

To de-commission all the Community bases and ensure that through Personal Budgets and Direct Payments users and carers have access to a wide range of personal support and opportunities.

This option may prove difficult for a significant amount of users whose needs are complex, as the current market for day care providers in Walsall is weak and requires further investment. However Option 1 can be a basis for outreach support whereby Personal Assistants can be used to develop community links which promote external providers.

- **Option 4**

A variation on the options above would be a community initiative whereby we would explore with community associations or other organisations, opportunities for the users and carers not eligible for a resource centre service under option 1, to create social activities on a self-funded or voluntary basis.

## **Links to Work**

Links to Work is based at Electrium Point and provides a sheltered work scheme which simulates a factory environment. The lease with New Street LLP who owns the building is due to expire in January 2016, therefore we need to look at the future of employment opportunities and how these will be promoted within Walsall Council.

- **Option 1**

	<p>Support those users who are not eligible to receive a social care service to access alternative community and vocational support services which will continue to promote their independence (An estimated 50%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Option 2</b> Facilitate transition for those users who are eligible to receive a day care service to a Community Hub as identified in Option 1 for Day Services. This transition would ensure independence was maintained and would enable more choice and control in accessing meaningful opportunities and social engagement.</li><li>• <b>Option 3</b> To develop close links and networking with external partners such as local colleges and employment training providers so that new referrals and school leavers can be sign posted to alternative support services. To access support mechanisms in place such as Personal Assistants to overcome barriers such as transport and communication so that meaningful opportunities can be accessed by everyone.</li></ul> <p>Transition pathways for users at Links to Work should take into account the length of time they had been at Links to Work therefore a specialist transition plan would be required to ensure all support needs were addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Option 4</b> Re-provision of Links to Work so that it changes form and location. This would mean a different approach in the future towards employment pathways, so that it is affordable and sustainable.</li></ul> <p>Transformation would incur staff redundancies and a transition programme would be required for all of Links to Work users who were not eligible for a social care service, whilst those who are we would look at Option 1 for day care services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Option 5</b> Retaining the current service, which includes those who are not eligible and those whom the current model does not fully meet all their needs.</li></ul> <p>This option is less effective and maybe difficult to sustain.</p>												
3	<table><tr><th colspan="3">Who is the proposal potential likely to affect?</th></tr><tr><th>People in Walsall</th><th>Yes / No</th><th>Detail</th></tr><tr><td>All</td><td>No</td><td>N/A</td></tr><tr><td>Specific group/s  Adults with LD who currently access the services identified in</td><td>Yes</td><td>Adults 18yrs plus with Profound Multiple Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairments, Mental Health  Users of services may find transition to alternative</td></tr></table>	Who is the proposal potential likely to affect?			People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail	All	No	N/A	Specific group/s  Adults with LD who currently access the services identified in	Yes	Adults 18yrs plus with Profound Multiple Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairments, Mental Health  Users of services may find transition to alternative
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	this document.		services or locations upsetting and confusing resulting in distress and anxiety.
	Council employees	Yes	<p>Employees may be at risk of redundancy if services are redesigned and downsized.</p> <p>Employees may become distressed and find it difficult to become motivated and focused at work leading to performance issues.</p> <p>Risk of increased absenteeism for work related stress</p>
	Carers of Service Users	Yes	<p>Carers may feel under more pressure to provide support, where they cannot meet the costs of purchasing alternative services, creating pressure on family units increasing the possibility of them refusing to provide any care which would place additional burden on the council if they have to fund the full cost of care packages.</p> <p>Carers often have to manage the impact of changes which may result in having to deal with increased challenging behaviours.</p> <p>Carers will require support so they understand this transition process and can support users effectively into alternative services.</p>
	Stakeholders	Yes	<p>Community Associations and other partners whom we currently share buildings with may have become financially dependent upon us to generate revenue to cover their building expenses and overheads. Therefore terminating lease arrangements may put them at risk of closure.</p>
	Users who currently access Goscote Centre for Day Care Services	Yes	<p>Providing additional accommodation for community bases within Goscote Centre would impact on current activities, the internal environment would need to be redesigned to accommodate other users.</p> <p>This would reduce the opportunity to move customers with challenging behaviours to quieter areas of the building to help them recover if they are distressed or agitated.</p> <p>Moving more than one community base into the two Hubs would mean relocating other services within Goscote Centre such as the Rehab Unit or</p>

	Staff and visitors	Yes	<p>Goscote Community Base (Physical Disability Group) to free up capacity.</p> <p>Although Goscote Centre has got designated parking capacity would need to be increased.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Summarise your evidence, engagement and consultation.</b>		
	<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <p>The Options discussed in this document enables Provider Services to make the target savings that it has been asked to attain which is part of a wider agenda to introduce efficiencies and SMARTER working, in line with Corporate Directives.</p> <p>There is now extensive data that clearly shows that Day Services and Links to Work have got significant flaws in the way they operate, and although users and carers are happy with our front line service delivery it is not sustainable. Some of the flaws include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paying for lease of buildings where occupancy levels are low Links to Work (Electrium Point) 77% Community Bases 66%</li> <li>• Current level of referrals to these services.</li> <li>• Not reflecting guidance and good practice with regards to employment pathways.</li> </ul> <p>Therefore it is essential that in order to continue to provide these front line services is some shape or form that they are redesigned and more focused on the most vulnerable users who are assessed as having an eligible need for social care services.</p> <p>In order to do this it is important that we understand what users and carers want so that the right options are taken forward to Cabinet for implementation. Below are some of the key functions that will form part of the consultation process to ensure users and carers have a voice and are listened to.</p> <p><b>Consultation</b></p> <p>There will be phased timetable of events to ensure that all target audiences have been reached, and a variety of communication aids and expert facilitators will be utilised to support the consultation process such as Advocacy Services. This is subject to the outcome of the initial report.</p> <p>Care and Assessment teams will be involved in reviewing and signing off Support Plans to ensure they reflect the needs and wishes of users and identify their support needs. Support Plans will also ensure that Personnel Budgets and Direct Payments are in place where there is an assessed need.</p> <p>As well as formal planned consultation events, there will also be 1:1 meetings offered to ensure that everyone has had the opportunity to express their views. These will take place at times and locations suited to the needs of users and their carers.</p>		

If a transition to another support service or if someone is exiting the service altogether every effort will be taken to ensure users and carers are kept informed and supported.

As well as face to face meetings, information will be available electronically, and there will be printed versions to suit the needs of individuals (large print, Braille, Makaton) sent out to users and carers.

The Consultation Process will be lead by Senior Officers from Walsall Council and supported by Managers and staff from services areas affected.

Questionnaires will also be sent out to assess customer satisfaction on the consultation process to ensure support needs have been addressed.

Carers may also be concerned about relationships and friendships that service users may have established as they may believe that it would be difficult to replicate elsewhere. Therefore it will be important to carers to understand how relationships and friendships will be encouraged and supported in the future if services are redesigned.

Current status:

**Community Bases** are currently located within:

- Moxley People Centre
- Blakenall Community Centre
- St. Pauls Church in Pleck
- CHART Centre in Willenhall
- Manor Farm Community Centre
- Brownhills Piers Street Centre is owned by WMBC but shared with the local Senior Citizen Group who use this building on evenings and weekends.

All users in community bases have Learning Disabilities and are eligible for a social care service. However there is potential for some to move onto more independent services with support.

- Goscote Community Group

Again there is potential for some users of this service to access more independent services with advice and support.

### **Links to Work**

Based at Electrium Point where we have leased industrial units and office space to provide Employment Opportunities.

There are users of this service that could be supported to access mainstream services in the local community with advice and support.

Background details;

Most of the carer's are immediate family members, and composition is made up of:

- Lone carer's

- Elderly Carer's
- Working Carer's
- Carers with childcare responsibilities

Some of the conditions service user's may present are:

- Downs
- Autism
- Physical Disabilities
- Learning Difficulties
- Behaviours that Challenge
- Mental Health
- Dementia

There is no intention to withdraw services for users who are eligible to receive a social care service as previous consultations carried out in 2014 clearly indicate that the services we provide is the main source of integration and support for people with substantial and profound learning disabilities. Feedback has shown that Day Services plays an important part in meeting the needs of it users and their carers

The positive impact will be relating to work undertaken to find the best alternatives and personal outcomes for service users affected. This process will enable service users to consider options not previously discussed which may have better longer term benefits.

Every effort will be made during the consultation period to ensure services offered are fair and equitable and that is one of the reasons why Advocacy services will be utilised throughout this process.

5	<b>How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group?</b> <b>The affect may be positive, negative or neutral.</b>			
	<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Affect</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Action needed Y or N</b>
	Age	No		
	Disability	Yes	Difficulty in getting access to specialist services. Potential break in continuity of service (new location, unfamiliar staff, problems with transitions, which for some clients (autism spectral or presenting difficult challenging behaviour) may be disproportionately distressing and disruptive.	
	Gender reassignment	No		
	Marriage and civil partnership	No		
	Pregnancy and maternity	No		



	Race	Yes	Difficulty in accessing services that are culturally sensitive.	
	Religion or belief	Yes	Difficulty in getting services that are able to cater for specific needs	
	Sex	No	May be issues of intimate care for users that will need to be gender sensitive. Alternate providers may not be able to consistently deliver this.	
	Sexual orientation	No		
	Other (give detail)			
	Further information	Support needs will be addressed for those users who may wish to access alternative services through the care and assessment management processes.		
6	<b>Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details below.</b>			Yes
<p>The options to redesign Links To Work and Day Opportunities would enable Provider Services to redefine its key functions for the Authority, so that the quality and efficiency of services can be improved. The focus will be to provide our statutory obligations rather than optional add-ons.</p> <p>The majority of all service user's live at home and therefore the impact on the dynamics of the family would need to be assessed during any period of transition as part of the consultation process.</p> <p>The above information makes us aware of the diversity of the service user's, and therefore the impact change is likely to have a significant effect on service user's and carer's, if not managed sensitively.</p>				
7	<b>Which justifiable action does the evidence; engagement and consultation suggest you take? (Bold which one applies)</b>			
	A	No major change required		
	B	<b>Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality</b>		
	C	<b>Continue despite possible adverse impact</b>		
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal		

Now complete the action and monitoring plan on the next page

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail