

Initial Equality Impact Assessment – Policy Change.

Department	Adult Social Services
Policy	The Future of Supporting People Services in Sheltered Housing Schemes
People involved	A.Rush, P.Khwaja, C.O'Connor

1. What are the aims of the policy and what changes are being proposed?

Supporting People services provide people with assistance to live independently and to contribute to the community in which they live. In relation to older people over 55 there are a number of service delivery models which are used to provide housing support within sheltered housing schemes.

Services delivered exclusively to a specific housing scheme can vary from scheme to scheme but, traditionally, will include support via a warden or housing officer. The warden or housing officer may be dedicated to one scheme or work across a number of schemes. The warden or housing officer will usually provide a combination of services that are both housing management and support related. There are some services provided which could be classed either as a housing management service (e.g. providing concierge to a scheme) or support (e.g. having a dedicated on site warden service). The main characteristic of the warden/housing officer services is that all tenants are charged the same rate for the support service provided.

A floating support service is not based within a physical location but can be provided wherever it is needed, covering a range of housing support services including assistance with completing official forms and education to support the development of effective skills to allow individuals to maintain an independent tenancy, for example, relationships with landlords, utility companies, benefit offices, the management of household budgets etc. The Council currently funds a floating support service for older people with support needs.

Hub and Spoke services provide support from a specific location to older people who live in the scheme and others living independently within the community thereby covering a wider geographical area and population than a single housing scheme.

2. What is the rationale behind these changes?

To ensure that the service commissioned meets the demands across the whole Borough a review was conducted on the way in which services are commissioned and delivered. This identified that a significant amount of the functions allocated to Housing related support could be ascribed to Housing

'This review identified a number of functions that would be more appropriately designated as housing management functions rather than as housing support and are as follows:-

1. Communal contracts – services that benefit all residents within a scheme but are not directly linked to the objectives of Supporting People
2. Health & safety – including risk assessments, daily inspections and record keeping
3. Concierge scheme/security – including the security of the scheme, monitoring and maintenance of CCTV and access telephones
4. Scheme equipment testing – includes fire alarm, warden call, emergency lighting, small electrical appliances, lifts, IT equipment
5. Managing scheme services – includes, laundries, shower rooms, lounges, communal IT services and administration of scheme inventory
6. Emergency and out of hours warden Cover

However this review has only addressed the issue of the function of the service therefore it is appropriate that the issues of need and demand are also reviewed to ensure that Wandsworth continues to provide the best quality services at the lowest possible price.

Following feedback from older people via Supporting People reviews and scheme visits over the past 9 years, it indicates that, older people want to live in a safe and secure environment. Indeed many older people cite the security and safety of sheltered schemes as their prime motivator in moving into a sheltered housing scheme. The perception for older people that where they live is safe and secure is vital to their well being. However, this primary need is addressed through maintaining the security, safety and fabric of the building all of which can be legitimately charged through rents and service charges in line with standards set out within Housing Benefit regulations.

To meet the specific and variable housing support needs of residents a specialist floating support service, that responds to the individual and personal needs of people who live in sheltered housing schemes or in their own home, is considered the most cost effective approach to delivering appropriate, personalised services to the largest population. This support can be tailored to the first few crucial months of a person moving into a sheltered housing service, to help them set up benefits or financial arrangements and ensure that they are connected to relevant support services or community based services, for example culturally relevant groups or social groups. Likewise, when specific issues arise in a person's life, such as a bereavement or an illness, requiring immediate support, a floating service can respond

more appropriately, flexibly and personally.

Where longer based support needs are identified, the flexibility of a floating service means that a menu of support can be offered, whereby a variable amount of hours can be selected on a weekly schedule and delivered on a flexible basis depending on need.

The floating support service delivery model also provides an additional benefit of allowing services to be delivered to older people within their own homes regardless of tenure, as well as within the sheltered housing schemes, therefore support can be offered to a much wider range of people than is currently possible and supports older people to remain living in their own homes, retain their independence, social and family networks and assists in preventing the need for more costly social care interventions.

3. What information do you have on the policy and the potential impact of your policy change in relation to the following?

	List information you have.
Race	Breakdown of current service users by race http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/downloads/download/1249/2011_census_data_and_analysis as well as more detailed information collated at the time the EIA was completed, see below.
Gender	Breakdown of current service users by gender
Disability	Breakdown of current service users by disability
Age	As the service is targeted at older residents all current service users are aged over 55.
Faith	Data not currently collected locally but the census data is being used as a guide
Sexual Orientation	Data not currently collected locally but the census data is being used as a guide

4. Thinking about each group below please list the impact that the policy change will have.

	<u>Positive</u> impacts of policy change	Possible <u>negative</u> impacts of policy change
Race	30% of current service users are BME. This is above the borough profile for residents aged 55+ which shows that 22.7% are BME. The Floating Support model is a more personalised	A potential negative impact on residents from BME communities is one of communication and language particularly in services geared up for specific groups. This will be mitigated by the

	<p>approach which will allow for race and cultural factors to be taken into consideration for each service user. It also allows for support to be provided as and when required by the person when required, including in their own homes rather than in sheltered schemes, for example when moving accommodation or coping with a bereavement or illness.</p>	<p>requirement in the service specification for potential providers to be able to provide support for all people regardless of background, race, ethnicity and language.</p> <p>Providers will also be required to link residents into culturally specific service and groups where necessary.</p>
Gender	<p>53% of current service users are female. This is broadly in line with the borough profile which shows 56% of the population aged 55+ are female.</p> <p>The Floating Support model is a more personalised approach which will allow for race and cultural factors to be taken into consideration for each service user. It also allows for support to be provided as and when required by the person including in their own homes, regardless of tenure rather than in sheltered schemes, for example when moving accommodation or coping with a bereavement or illness.</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any negative impact with regards to gender from this change in service. Services are currently utilised largely inline with the borough profile for people over 55 years old</p> <p>Potential service providers will be expected to link people into any relevant service that they require as a part of the service specification and support them as required.</p>
Disability	<p>13% of current service users are registered disabled.</p> <p>. The Floating Support model is a more personalised approach which will allow for race and cultural factors to be taken into consideration for each service user. It also allows for support to be</p>	<p>There is potential for negative impact depending on the type of disability and how it affects particular service users. As part of the service specification potential service providers will be expected to give due regard to disability factors when linking people into any service that they require accordingly.</p>

	<p>provided as and when required by the person including in their own homes, regardless of tenure, rather than in sheltered schemes, for example when moving accommodation or coping with a bereavement or illness.</p>	
Age	<p>As the service is targeted at older residents all current service users are aged over 55. The current average age is 73. There are currently 2003 service users across 54 services.</p> <p>As the population over 55 grows so the needs of this population are changing and becoming more varied. A floating support model as opposed to a generic service will allow support to be tailored to individual needs and also to times when support is most needed, for example when moving accommodation or coping with a bereavement or illness.</p> <p>A floating support model can also be delivered to older people within their own homes regardless of tenure, as well as within sheltered housing schemes. This means that support can be offered to a much wider range of people than is currently possible and supports older people to remain living in their own homes.</p>	<p>The main shared characteristic of all the groups is that of age which determines who can access the service.</p> <p>A possible negative impact therefore for all groups following the consultation is that, current service users maybe unsettled and concerned by the change from a model of support they are used to. In order to mitigate this we will continue to engage with the people who are affected to reassure and get their feedback on how the changes are affecting them.</p> <p>During consultation it emerged that that the safety and security aspects on sheltered schemes was the issue that most concerned people. These aspects will not be affected by the change.</p>
Faith	<p>A more personalised approach will allow for people' faith to be taken into consideration for each service user.</p>	<p>The selected provider/providers will be required through the council's contract to comply with equality legislation.</p>

		<p>There is no perceived negative impact on a person's Faith as a consequence of the changed model of floating support as providers will be required as a part of the service specification to take into account people's Faith when providing or arranging their support.</p> <p>Potential service providers will be expected to link people into any relevant service that they as required including Faith based ones.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The selected provider will be required through the Council's contract to comply with equality legislation.</p> <p>The Floating Support model is a more personalised approach which will allow for support to be tailored to an individual's needs. It also allows for support to be accessed when required for example when moving accommodation or coping with a bereavement or illness.</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any negative impact with regards to Sexual Orientation from this change in service.</p> <p>Potential service providers will be expected to link people into any relevant service that they require as a part of the service specification and support them as required including Faith based ones.</p>

5. Is a full EIA required? No

- Does the policy support a frontline service? Yes
- Is it clear what impact the policy change will have on all the equality groups? Yes

As part of the original consultation with service users which was held in the summer of 2012 an initial EIA was completed and no equality issues were identified at the time. This EIA is to ensure that that position has not changed over the ensuing period.

- Overall will the change have a negative impact on any of the equality groups?

The change to the new floating support model has not identified any negative impact that could not be mitigated by providers adherence to specifications within their contracts. These are routinely monitored by

the council. During the change the council, will continue to engage with those affected to reassure them and obtain feedback about the quality of their support.

Comments - Please give the rationale here for not undertaking a full EIA

<i>A full EIA was carried out in 2012. This EIA updates the EIA previously completed and confirms the conclusions reached earlier.</i>
--

6. Through the initial EIA have you identified any actions that needed to be implemented to improve access or monitoring of the policy? (please list)
--

Yes, continued engagement with those affected to provide reassurance and obtain feedback
--

Monitoring of provider contracts

Signed: Alistair Rush

Date: 10.06.14

Approved by: Clare O'Connor