

## Equality Impact Assessment

Reference: EQIA136198764

Submitted: 08 August 2019 16:05 PM

### Executive summary

**Title of policy or decision:** Homelessness Accommodation Based Support Service

**Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):** There are currently 11 accommodation based support service providers which provide housing related support services across parts of the County of Essex. The proposal is to undertake a competitive procurement for a single contract to provide a countywide Homelessness Accommodation Based Support Service (the Service). This is with a view to the contract being for a seven year period.

It is intended that this will create greater flexibility and targeting of the Service, and intended to increase the numbers being supported across the County. It will also enable Essex County Council to meet its obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and its Vision for Essex County.

However, a caveat to this is that due to their specialist nature and their ability to take input cross-district, the intention is to keep the two current night shelters outside of this procurement. This will enable all services across Essex to continue their efforts to reduce rough sleeping, and will be subject to a separate decision.

The Service will provide generic temporary accommodation based support to homeless single adults (aged 18 and over) and families who have a range of complex needs which may alter or fluctuate over a period of time. Support will be flexible to enable those needs to be met accordingly.

Clients will be supported to gain or regain the necessary skills to enable them to live independently, and which in turn will reduce homelessness and incidents of repeated homelessness.

Clients will be supported in a range of ways (including but not limited to):

- improving tenancy sustainment across a range of tenures;
- improving management of debt and housing arrears;
- access to education, employment and volunteering opportunities;
- access to health services;
- access and engagement with appropriate services eg substance use support services
- reduce re offending behaviour
- improve social/community connections

**What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?:** Help people get the best start and age well

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help people get the best start and age well:** Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care, Improve the health of people in Essex

**Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?:** a change to an existing policy, practice or project

**Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates:** Not applicable - finalised documentation to be provided separately

**Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents:** Not applicable -

finalised documentation to be provided separately

## Assessing the equality impact

**Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision):** There has been a range of activity to assess the potential impact on those likely to be affected included the following:

Work with homeless people has been undertaken through the Significant Multiple Deprivation pilot, homeless people said that they valued targeted and intensive support. Particularly, they valued having someone to assist them negotiate the complexities of housing, social care and other such systems. They liked the fact that services came to them;

We have consulted with Have you consulted/ involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the proposed changes during which we received the following feedback:

What people want to improve

Service users disliked the amount of time they often had to wait to be seen, and requested more leniency around their own punctuality when they were expected to wait for key-workers. Service users also highlighted the desire for support in evenings and weekends, even if this was in the form of a peer support or buddy system. Other elements that they desired to be improved included better multi-agency working to reduce repeating their information, a clearer picture of their options, consistent staff qualities such as confidentiality, empathy and warmth.

As part of the new specification, the new provider will be expected to co produce the new service with service users.

**Does or will the policy or decision affect:**

**Service users:** Yes

**Employees:** Yes

**The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities:** Yes

**Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?:** All Essex

**Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?:** Yes

**Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?:** No

**Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?:** Yes

## Description of impact

**Description of Impact. If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank.:**

Disability - learning disability, Disability - mental health issues, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment

## Disability - learning disability

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** The existing service already supports this client group. Under the new Service, it is proposed that this client group will continue to be supported. It is also proposed that the Service will be more flexible in the way that support is delivered, and will allow for greater equitable provision across the County. This may in turn result in greater numbers within this client group being

supported, hence the assessment of impact as positive.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** As outlined above, the proposed new Service will allow for greater flexibility in the support delivered, and increased provision across the County. While it is intended that this will result in greater numbers being supported, including those within this client group, it is not possible to quantify the precise impact at this time, hence the assessment as medium.

## Disability - mental health issues

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** The existing service already supports this client group. Under the new Service, it is proposed that this client group will continue to be supported. It is also proposed that the Service will be more flexible in the way that support is delivered, and will allow for greater equitable provision across the County. This may in turn result in greater numbers within this client group being supported, hence the assessment of impact as positive.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** As outlined above, the proposed new Service will allow for greater flexibility in the support delivered, and increased provision across the County. While it is intended that this will result in greater numbers being supported, including those within this client group, it is not possible to quantify the precise impact at this time, hence the assessment as medium.

## Disability - physical impairment

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** The existing service already supports this client group. Under the new Service, it is proposed that this would continue. However, it should be noted that there is alternative specialist provision specifically for this client group which is commissioned by Adults Commissioning, hence the assessment of impact as neutral.

**Extent of impact:** Low

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Although this client group will continue to be supported under the new Service, as stated above, there is specific provision which is commissioned separately to support this particular client group, hence the assessment as low.

## Disability - sensory impairment

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** The existing service already supports this client group. Under the new Service, it is proposed that this would continue. However, it should be noted that there is alternative specialist provision specifically for this client group which is commissioned by Adults Commissioning, hence the assessment of impact as neutral.

**Extent of impact:** Low

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Although this client group will continue to be supported under the new Service, as stated above, there is specific provision which is commissioned separately

to support this particular client group, hence the assessment as low.

## **Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts**

**Does your EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?:** No

## **Details of person completing the form**

**I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance:** I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

**Date EqIA completed:** 08/08/2019

**Name of person completing the EqIA:** Claire Bartoli

**Email address of person completing the EqIA:** Claire.Bartoli@essex.gov.uk

**Your function:** Economy, Localities & Public Health

**Your service area:** Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities

**Your team:** Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities

**Are you submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?:** No

**Email address of Head of Service:** Ben.hughes@essex.gov.uk