

Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

The **public sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the council to better understand the potential impact of the budget proposals and consider mitigating action.

<p>Name or Brief Description of Proposal</p>	<p>Housing Related Support services:</p> <p>Southampton City Council currently commissions a range of housing related support (HRS) for vulnerable single adults, young people and young parents. The current contracts expire in June 2022.</p> <p>Following a strategic review of the Housing Related Support services in Southampton in 2020-21, it is proposed that comparable HRS services for vulnerable single adults, young people and young parents continue to be commissioned to commence from 1st July 2022. There will be a new Housing First provision that builds on best practice and evidence based approaches for entrenched rough sleepers. Commissioned services will sit alongside other new services annually commissioned through Ministry of Housing, Communities and local Government (MHCLG) funding. The review and future commissioning plans take account of learning and potential changes that may arise from MHCLG funded services.</p> <p>This ESIA considers the impact of specific changes arising from the review and recommendations, notably</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in the available units for young people and single vulnerable adults - A change in the offer of some units of accommodation from current use to a Housing First approach - Stronger engagement of young people through
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	development of a Tenancy Board
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	<p>Housing related support provided to people living in Southampton is currently delivered through a number of different service elements and contracts and is separated into young peoples’ and young parents’ services and vulnerable single adult services.</p> <p>The housing related support services engage with individuals who are experiencing difficulties associated with accessing, managing or sustaining their accommodation. The services balance the needs of different groups including those who are homeless, those at risk of homelessness and those who are accessing support as part of their route to independent living. These are individuals who may have complex needs and vulnerabilities around mental health, substance misuse, disability, learning disability and homelessness.</p> <p>Current commissioned services:</p> <p><u>Vulnerable Single Adults</u></p> <p>Commissioned HRS services for single adults comprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hostels covering over 125 units of accommodation with 24-hour staffing, • 1 hostel with staffing 7 days per week (26 units) • 147 units of supported accommodation. • Non accommodation HRS (floating support) to over 200 individuals • Alcohol specific accommodation (24 units) <p><u>Young people and young parents</u></p> <p>Accommodation options for young people and young parents in Southampton are broader than just the current housing related support commissioned offer. A cross authority Post 16, semi-independent accommodation service is in place and provides accommodation options for young people aged 16 years and over. Commissioned HRS services for young people and young parents comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 foyer/hostel offering 40 units of accommodation • 30 units of accommodation for young parents, including 7

	<p>units with 24-hour staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87 units of supported accommodation. • Non accommodation HRS (floating support) to 25 individuals • Supported Lodgings for up to 12 young people <p>Contracts commenced in 2016 for 3 years, with 2 one-year extensions applied in 2019.</p> <p><u>Rough Sleeper Initiatives</u></p> <p>In addition to the current commissioned services, SCC has successfully bid for grant funds via MHCLG providing year on year funding for services to target rough sleepers. Initially part of the governments drive to end rough sleeping the focus was heightened as the pandemic took hold and the government asked Local Authorities to get ‘Everybody In’ in March 2020. Annual funding rounds have supported a range of new services to be commissioned, albeit on a year by year basis.</p> <p>Future Commissioning Intentions:</p> <p>Framework</p> <p>New contracts will be sought from July 2022 through a Framework approach. A Framework will provide additional flexibility to support short term funding opportunities, access to additional funding (if available) through children and adult social care budgets and stability for well-established and valued services.</p> <p>The Framework will allow for a number of contracts to be set up as block purchase arrangements, which will give providers a level of certainty for some contracts over the life to the Framework. It also allows a degree of flexibility alongside the stability of block contracts to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand services as funding becomes available - Offer additional call off options to prevent breakdown of tenancy or better meet higher, more complex need. - Allows new initiatives to be explored where the opportunity arises.
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Summary of Impact and Issues

- In the period since the current Housing Related Support offer was commissioned, costs – including property repairs but particularly of staff support hours - has risen. This needs reflecting in the contract values. In order to ensure that the overall cost of the HRS remains within the available budget, the number of units of accommodation for young people and single vulnerable adults will decrease.
- This will impact most on the young people’s estate which it is estimated will reduce by 29% of bed spaces. During the current contracts the Young people’s supported accommodation was operating with an average of 22% voids. The upper age limit was raised to 22 years to reduce voids. In addition, a 5 unit property was re-provisioned for use by single vulnerable adults. A return to the original upper age limit (21 yr olds)) will help mitigate the impact of the reduction, but there will still be some impact upon the capacity of the young people’s offer.
- During the course of the service review it was noted that a number of single adults had been in residence for periods far in excess of the proposed timescales for HRS services. This has contributed to an inability to move tenants through the supported housing pathway in a timely way and impacts on other single vulnerable adults needing to access HRS services. As part of the reduction to single vulnerable adults pathway, steps are being taken to transition the residents and the properties they reside in to a floating support model rather than being part of a supposedly HRS pathway. Tenants of such properties will be assessed and will continue to receive floating support as necessary in the new contracts.
- Procurement processes are likely to result in a degree of instability in the run up to the tendering exercise and for a period after the new contracts are awarded. Some service users, staff and providers may feel anxious and uncertain about the future. Engagement since the start of the review and throughout

	<p>the process should help mitigate concerns. Providers will be monitoring staffing levels to ensure services are able to maintain the capacity of the current services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced capacity, in the unlikely event this occurred, could impact upon all service users. However, some of the most chaotic or those who have complex needs and who require greater support and motivational work undertaken with them in order to keep them engaged may be affected disproportionately. Groups who may fall under this category could be drug and alcohol users, those with mental or physical health problems and particularly young people and young parents. • The government has made their intentions clear about their aim to end rough sleeping by the end of the parliament and the need for the LA to develop strategies to deliver this. The HRS provision is fundamental to the delivery of that aim and RSI projects have been aligned accordingly.
<p>Potential Positive Impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing contract values in line with wider market rates and service costs will ensure providers and the necessary workforce are available to support these groups of vulnerable people. • Commissioning a flexible housing related support offer will allow SCC to align with national strategy and guidance around ending rough sleeping and supporting those often excluded from services. • With any review, it enables services to review and re-focus on quality, safeguarding, strengthened partnership working and greater service user engagement. Features that are captured in the proposals for new services. • It will also offer an opportunity to test the market for new and innovative providers and to obtain best value for money by potentially increasing service capacity, and therefore increasing the offer for those with protected characteristics to access services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing first will provide evidence based, government backed approach to supporting some of the most excluded young people and single vulnerable adults known to be homeless. • Single vulnerable adults who have been resident in properties for periods in excess of 4 years, will be subject to a review and consideration given to how their current accommodation can become their long term place of residency through change in contracting arrangements, HRS status and offer of floating support. • Close working with Adult Social care and Children Services will support improved support and placement options for young people and single vulnerable adults through additional support hours being available to enable difficulty situations to be better support and managed. • Commissioning of services will enable all current residents and homeless people to continue to have access to HRS services.
Responsible Service Manager	<u>Sandy Jerrim - Senior Commissioner</u>
Date	

Approved by Senior Manager	<u>Stephanie Ramsay – Director for Quality and Integration</u>
Signature	
Date	

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	<p>For young people and young parents, the available units of supported accommodation will decrease by up to 29%.</p> <p>An estimated 17 single vulnerable</p>	Upper age limit will return to 21yrs (from temporary 22 yrs) bringing numbers in line with available accommodation levels.

	<p>adults may see a negative change in their accommodation status and options as a result of addressing long term residency in a short term HRS pathway. Some individuals will have a positive impact from this change, others may find it distressing and have other impacts emerge (e.g potential move)</p>	<p>Adult providers will continue to put in place appropriate measures to support any young person aged 18 yrs upward, with suitable accommodation and support.</p> <p>Support providers, landlords and commissioners will work together in order to ensure that all individuals are appropriately assessed and offered support as required to ensure a safe transition to the new services with the appropriate level of support provided.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>This proposal could potentially impact individuals with a mental illness, learning disability, autism, physical and sensory disabilities, substance use disorder and long-term condition if continuity of care is not maintained. Continuity of care and knowledge of the individual's disabilities is important to some of these groups.</p> <p>There is also the potential for positive impacts for this group of people as the new contract will include a greater focus on promoting and facilitating access to a range of services that will minimise the need for more intensive support.</p>	<p>Any change in provider would be subject to a transition plan, this will ensure the management of the transfer is completed in a way that places high priority in providing reassurance to individuals.</p> <p>A communications plan will be developed which will include ensuring all individuals are kept informed of any changes, the timescale and who to contact with any concerns.</p> <p>An implementation period (6 months) has been factored into the timescales that will allow transfer of support where necessary.</p> <p>Staff delivering the current services are likely to be entitled to TUPE opportunities if a new provider were appointed. This will help provide continuity of care to the majority of individuals.</p>

<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>No specific detrimental impact upon individuals undergoing gender dysphoria or reassignment has been identified. Culturally appropriate services will be delivered by the provider.</p> <p>This protected group are often subject to discrimination and there is a risk that they would be disproportionately affected by a change in care away from agencies and individuals with whom they have built up trust.</p>	<p>Service specifications include a requirement for services to work with people with a range of needs including issues of diversity.</p> <p>Transition arrangements will consider any individual need in relation to diversity and continuity of care will be actively considered e.g. where TUPE arrangements apply.</p>
<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership</p>	<p>No specific negative impact has been identified as regards the proposals for the new services.</p> <p>However, homelessness often has an impact on the individual's ability to sustain existing or commence new relationships. Women often have a background of domestic abuse rendering them vulnerable to further abuse.</p> <p>Service users frequently have problematic use of drugs and alcohol and this has a direct impact on relationships. In particular the relationship between Alcohol and Domestic Abuse is well evidenced.</p>	<p>Service specifications include a requirement for services to work with people with a range of needs.</p> <p>Access to services by couples will continue and will be monitored to ensure that couples who find themselves homeless are provided with the support and advice needed to manage a joint tenancy appropriately.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>No specific negative impact has been identified as regards the proposals for the new services.</p> <p>Some female service users present as pregnant or become pregnant during their period of accommodation</p>	<p>Service specifications include a requirement for services to work with people with a range of needs. This includes pregnant women requires close partnership working with primary care and maternity services in order to ensure the best level of care for both mother and unborn child.</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>No specific detrimental impact upon individuals related to ethnicity or race issues is anticipated.</p> <p>This protected group are often subject to discrimination and there is a risk that they would be disproportionately affected by a change in care away</p>	<p>Service specifications include a requirement for services to work with people with a range of needs including issues of diversity.</p> <p>The provider will be expected</p>

	from agencies and individuals with whom they have built up trust.	to support and match individuals' cultural needs such as language and support etc.
Religion or Belief	No specific detrimental impact upon individuals related to religion or belief issues is anticipated.	Service specifications include a requirement for services to work with people with a range of needs including issues of diversity. The provider will be expected to support and match individuals' cultural needs such as language and support to access religious activities/requirements.
Sex	No specific detrimental impact upon individuals related to gender is anticipated. Services currently provide gender specific support as required.	There will not be any changes to the eligibility criteria based on gender. Service specifications include a requirement for services to work with people with a range of needs including gender specific issues. There will be consideration of personal choice for gender of key worker where possible.
Sexual Orientation	No specific detrimental impact upon individuals related to their sexual orientation is anticipated. This protected group are often subject to discrimination and there is a risk that they would be disproportionately affected by a change in care away from agencies and individuals with whom they have built up trust.	Service specifications include a requirement for services to work with people with a range of needs including issues of diversity. Transition arrangements will consider any individual need in relation to diversity and continuity of care will be actively considered e.g. where TUPE arrangements apply.
Community Safety	No specific detrimental impact upon individuals related to community safety is anticipated. The service will work with individuals to reduce their vulnerabilities enabling people to keep themselves safe.	Improved joint working between agencies to ensure individuals have access to support services linked to prevention and intervention.
Poverty	No specific detrimental impact upon	Contracts will continue to

	<p>individuals related to poverty is anticipated.</p> <p>People covered by these proposals are at risk of poverty, the provision may relieve the impact of that potential poverty by offering support to address practical needs such as helping with benefits and developing life skills.</p>	<p>provide individuals with support in developing life skills and managing finances.</p> <p>The specification includes approaches to support those experiencing social and financial issues.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>No specific detrimental impact upon individuals related to their health and wellbeing is anticipated.</p> <p>The service will work with individuals to reduce their vulnerabilities enabling people to keep themselves healthy.</p> <p>Unhealthy behaviours are known to cluster in populations and are a key driver of health inequalities. People who have experienced homelessness often have considerable issues around poverty which good quality accommodation and support can help to address. Individuals on a low income and unemployed individuals are also more heavily represented in problematic drug and alcohol use.</p>	<p>Contracts will continue to build good joint working arrangements between agencies to ensure individuals have access to support services linked to prevention and intervention.</p> <p>Current services are required to promote the engagement of service users in structured activities in order to encourage employability. This is particularly beneficial for those who are unemployed or who have never worked and will continue into future contracts.</p> <p>Current services are also required to have regular “healthy conversations” as part of a “Making Every Contact Count” (MECC) approach to raise individual’s awareness of health and wellbeing issues that may be affecting them.</p>
Other Significant Impacts	<p>No specific detrimental impact upon individuals is anticipated.</p> <p>There is overwhelming evidence that addressing homelessness can have a major positive impact on mortality and morbidity and thus reduce demand for health and care services.</p> <p>Unhealthy behaviours such as long-term drug or alcohol use are known to cluster in populations and are a key driver of health inequalities. A reduced</p>	<p>Service specifications will continue to ensure providers offer signposting to services to address homelessness, substance use, social issues, and physical and mental health problems.</p>

	housing related support offer is likely to lead to higher demand on future health and social care services and may increase health inequalities.	
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