

Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening

Assessor(s) Name(s):	Ian Lloyd
Directorate/School name:	Adult Social Care
Date of Completion:	8 April 2022

Name of Policy/Strategy/Service/Function Proposal

To increase the amount the council charges service users for the provision of Wightcare service.

The Aims, Objectives and Expected Outcomes:

Wightcare provides a high quality, 24 hour, 365 day emergency support service via a Mobile Response Team to approximately 2200 vulnerable Island residents. The service enables clients to maintain their independence by enabling them to receive support at home in an emergency and has the potential to prevent hospital admission and admission to residential care in urgent or emergency situations.

The service also provides a call answering services for a number of strategic partners and operates the Isle of Wight Council's 'out-of-hours' service for Adult Social Care, Housing and other council services. 24 Hours per day seven days per week.

The council in its decision to increase Wightcare fees in August 2015 previously determined that an annual fee increase could be applied in subsequent years which could be in line with CPI. The last increase was applied in 2018/19, which has therefore meant the inflation costs of providing the service has not been achieved and further increased the level of subsidy the council has had to apply to support the service overhead costs.

There is an overspend approaching £170k predicted for 2022/23 that is currently subsidised by the council from within the Adult Social Care budget. There is a growing gap between the cost of delivering the service and recovering of income. Given the increasing level of subsidy from areas already under critical financial stress, Wightcare cannot remain sustainable with the council's budget without increasing the charges service users pay. The council is therefore seeking to implement its ability to activate planned fee charges and to move over time to a break-even sustainable model.

It is anticipated that an increase in the charge for the service will still make it affordable for most people and where the service user meets the eligibility/financial criteria they would be entitled to a financial assessment from Social Services.

Please delete as appropriate:

- This is a proposal to increase the fees charged for a service

Key Questions to Consider in Assessing Potential Impact	
Will the policy /strategy/service/council/school function proposal have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics or other reasons that are relevant issues for the local community and/or staff?	Yes
Has previous consultation identified this issue as important or highlighted negative impact and/or we have created a “legitimate expectation” for consultation to take place? A legitimate expectation may be created when we have consulted on similar issues in the past or if we have ever given an indication that we would consult in such situations	Yes
Do different groups of people within the local community have different needs or experiences in the area this issue relates to?	Yes
Could the aims of these proposals be in conflict with the council’s/school’s general duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not?	No
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how services, council or schools function/s is/are delivered?	No
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?	No
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment of resources?	No
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities?	No
<p>If you answer Yes to any of these questions, it will be necessary for you to proceed to a full Equality Impact Assessment after you have completed the rest of this initial screening form.</p> <p>If you answer No to all of these questions, please provide appropriate evidence using the table below and complete the evidence considerations box and obtain sign off from your Head of Service/Headteacher.</p>	

Protected Characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reasons
Age		x		The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those without) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Disability		x		The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Gender Reassignment			x	The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Marriage & Civil Partnership			x	The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Pregnancy & Maternity			x	The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Race			x	The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Religion / Belief			x	The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a

				disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Sex (male / female)			x	The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes
Sexual Orientation			x	The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes

Are there aspects of the proposal that contribute to or improve the opportunity for equality?	No
<i>If answered Yes, describe what these are and how they may be promoted or enhanced</i>	

Evidence Considered During Screening
Financial – The council’s budget paper and proposals setting out a review of the fees. The costs of the service and current income was undertaken using the Wightcare Community alarm data base and the Isle of Wight Councils financial accounting systems. Data considering the level of demand for the service was reviewed.

Head of Service/Headteacher sign off & date:	Laura Gaudion 20/04/2022
Legal sign off & date:	Garion Bird 20.04.2022

A signed version is to be kept by your team and also an electronic version can be published on the council's / school's website (follow the link from the EIA page on the intranet) unless it relates to staffing/specific individuals. In which case, it should only be kept by your team.

Stage 2 Full Equality Impact Assessment

Assessor(s)Name(s):	Ian Lloyd
Directorate/School name:	Adult Social Care
Date of Completion:	8 April 2022

Name of Policy/Strategy/Service/Function Proposal

To increase the amount the council charges service users for the provision of Wightcare service.

The Aims, Objectives and Expected Outcomes:

Wightcare provides a high quality, 24 hour, 365 day emergency support service via a Mobile Response Team to approximately 2200 vulnerable Island residents. The service enables clients to maintain their independence by enabling them to receive support at home in an emergency and has the potential to prevent hospital admission and admission to residential care in urgent or emergency situations.

The service also provides a call answering services for a number of strategic partners and operates the Isle of Wight Council's 'out-of-hours' service for Adult Social Care, Housing and other council services. 24 Hours per day seven days per week.

The council in its decision to increase Wightcare fees in August 2015 previously determined that an annual fee increase could be applied in subsequent years which could be in line with CPI. The last increase was applied in 2018/19, which has therefore meant the inflation costs of providing the service has not been achieved and further increased the level of subsidy the council has had to apply to support the service overhead costs.

There is an overspend approaching £170k predicted for 2022/23 that is currently subsidised. There is a growing gap between the cost of delivering the service and recovery of income. It does not remain sustainable with the council's budget without increasing the charges service users pay. The council is therefore seeking to implement its ability to review fee charges.

It is anticipated that an increase in the charge for the service will still make it affordable for most people and where the service user meets the eligibility/financial criteria they would be entitled to a financial assessment from Social Services.

The option presented as part of the Council Full meeting 23 February 2022 was to increase the fees to:

Installation £90.00 (inc from £80.00)

Monitoring £7.70 (inc from £6.80) per week

Monitoring & Response £11.00 (inc from £9.72) per week

Telecare £12.73 (inc from £11.25) per week

The options contained in the Cabinet report is to either confirm or not to confirm the revised fee structure changes as per the 2022/23 budget.

The impact assessment looks at the potential impacts of these proposals on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and has due regard to the broader council budget consultation referred to in the Full Council budget report dated 23 February 2022.

Please delete as appropriate:

- This proposal is to increase the fees charged for a service

Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

A EIA was completed in 2015 around proposals to increase the level of fees for the Wightcare service and to provide the ability to increase fees each year for the service.

The council budget paper dated 23 February 2022 sought approval from Full Council to consider a numbers of options to achieve a legal balanced budget. The proposals included a fee uplift being placed on the service users for the provision of Wightcare Services.

The initial assessment recognised that the service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly older people and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well of those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the change.

The Cabinet in considering the report, the EIA together with the Budget Paper and budget consultation responses summary, will consider the full equality monitoring information gathered below.

Wightcare currently has just over 2200 client service users.

Analysis and assessment

The proposed changes will have a negative impact on some of those service users who are elderly and/or have a disability. The negative impact will be greater for those self funding and there may be some impact for those on assessed care packages depending on their financial status. All other protected characteristic groups and those entirely publicly funded are neutral impact.

The Council published its budget consultation survey on 14 December 2021 and closed on 21 January 2022 with 682 responses (501 responses last year). The Council also ran 5 workshops with stakeholders from Town and Parish Councils, the business sector, Unions and voluntary sector. An invitation to discuss the budget was extended to all Councillors and briefing sessions held with the Conservative Group. In-person public consultation sessions were held to extend the reach of the consultation and to enable the widest possible discussions.

A summary of the results was set out in the Council's budget paper dated 23 February 2022, notably Fees & Charges for Specific Services:

- 73% of respondents would prefer to see an increase in charges for services to maintain them.

The recommendation to Full Council on 22 February 2022 as part of the budget proposals was to increase the Wightcare fees as set out. While the Full Council approved its budget, Cabinet wished to further explore the proposal of a fee increase for this service and had paused the introduction of the fee increase from the 1 April 2022 to enable further review of the impacts with the proposed fee increase.

The proposal may now see the introduction of a fee increase being introduced from 1 July 2022, with a further service options appraisal to be undertaken by the Autumn 2022 in how the business model could be achieved for greater sustainability and moving to a zero-subsidy model.



Recommendations

Following the further review by Cabinet and Scrutiny of the Full Council Budget proposals presented 23 February 2022, the recommendation is to approve the price increases of the fees as indicated for 2022/23.

The council will ensure financial assessments are undertaken in line with Care Act guidelines for those service users who request it, to make sure each person has sufficient money to meet their everyday needs.

A Wightcare service options review will be undertaken and concluded by the Autumn 2022 to determine the business model of Wightcare going forward.

Action/Improvement Plan

The table below should be completed using the information from your equality impact assessment to produce an action plan for the implementation of the proposals to:

1. Remove or lower the negative impact, and/or
2. Ensure that the negative impact is legal under anti-discriminatory law, and/or
3. Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups, i.e. increase the positive impact

Area of impact	Is there evidence of negative positive or no impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so why?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified impact (NB: please make sure that you include actions to improve all areas of impact whether negative, neutral or positive)
Age	Negative	YES. The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well as those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes	The current charges for the provision of the Wightcare service have been in place for a few years despite the ability to increase the fees annually having previously been agreed in 2015. The same charge applies to all service users and is not means tested. The Corporate Plan 2021 -2025 requires the council to look at all opportunities to generate income and operate commercially whilst ensuring that charging for services is fair and equitable.	Anyone who requests a financial assessment will be contacted by a visiting finance officer and, wherever possible, support is given to ensure their benefit income is maximised and living and disability costs identified.
Disability	Negative	YES. The service is delivered equally to all sections of the community and therefore available to all groups of protected characteristics. However in practice, the service users are mainly elderly and those with a	The current charges for the provision of the Wightcare service have been in place for a few years despite the ability to increase the fees annually having previously been agreed in 2015. The same charge applies to all service users	Anyone who requests a financial assessment will be contacted by a visiting finance officer and, wherever possible, support is given to ensure their benefit income is maximised and living and disability costs identified.

		disability. The ability of both users with protected characteristics (as well as those who do not) to afford the service may be adversely affected by the changes	and is not means tested. The Corporate Plan 2021 -2025 requires the council to look at all opportunities to generate income and operate commercially whilst ensuring that charging for services is fair and equitable.	
Gender Reassignment	No Impact			
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No Impact			
Pregnancy & Maternity	No Impact			
Race	No Impact			
Religion / Belief	No Impact			

Area of impact	Is there evidence of negative positive or no impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so why?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified impact (NB: please make sure that you include actions to improve all areas of impact whether negative, neutral or positive)
Sex (male or female)	No Impact			
Sexual Orientation	No Impact			
HR & workforce issues	No Impact			
Human Rights implications if relevant	No Impact			
<p>Please remember - actions should have SMART targets and be reported to the Diversity Board (this should be done via your Directorate representative) or school board and incorporated into your service/team/school Plans and /or objectives of key staff</p>				

Summary	
Date of Assessment:	8 April 2022
Head of Service/Director/Headteacher sign off & date:	
Legal sign off & date:	
Review date	
Date published	

<i>Publishing checklist</i>	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plain English – will your EIA make sense to the public?</i> • <i>Acronyms – check you have explained any specialist names or terminology</i> • <i>Evidence – will your evidence stand up to scrutiny; can you justify your conclusions?</i> • <i>Stakeholders and verification – have you included a range of views and perspectives to back up you analysis?</i> • <i>Gaps and information – have you identified any gaps in services or information that need to be addressed in the action plan?</i> • <i>Success stories – have you included any positive impacts that have resulted in change for the better?</i> • <i>Action plan – is action plan SMART? Have you informed the relevant people to ensure the action plan is carried out?</i> • <i>Review have you included a review date and a named person to carry it out?</i> • <i>Challenge – has your equality impact assessment been taken to Diversity Board/Call Over/school arenas for challenge?</i> • <i>Signing off – has your Head of Service/Director/Headteacher signed off your EIA?</i> • <i>Basics – have you signed and dated your EIA and named it for publishing?</i> • <i>A signed version to be kept by your team for review and electronic version to be uploaded on to the council's/school's website</i> 		