

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit

(January 2021)

Section 1: Your details

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Head of Section: Lisa Newman

Chief Officer: Alan Evans

Directorate: Regeneration & Place

Date: 5 February 2021

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Cessation of financial contributions to low-income pensioner households/vulnerable households on disability benefits, in support of their contribution for the provision of community alarms and response to calls within sheltered housing and some general needs housing.

To remove an annual programme of financial support of *£500,000* which is used to meet the shortfall for low-income older person households and other vulnerable disabled residents in sheltered schemes and general needs accommodation where the social landlord is providing an alarm service. This contribution is to help with their costs for the community alarm service and a support response if they are unwell and/or need assistance. Payments are made direct to social landlords on behalf of the low-income households. This is payable to eligible clients in receipt of housing benefit and a very small number of vulnerable households in receipt of Universal Credit that also receive disability benefits. The number of households who receive this support at any one time varies, depending on eligibility, but around 2,500 residents would be affected. These payments are made for the shortfall in Housing Benefit eligible Intensive Housing Management costs and the none Housing Benefit eligible costs of providing support services. E.G. a percentage of warden costs and welfare checks.

Sheltered Accommodation (including an alarm service) is predominantly provided for those aged 55+ (and some younger people with disabilities). Sheltered housing consists of self-contained units with some shared facilities, assistive technology and a warden/independent

living advisor or Scheme manager. The schemes provide varying levels of support to help residents to sustain their accommodation and remain living as independently as possible for as long as possible. In addition, funding is also awarded in general needs accommodation that benefits from provision of a community alarm and response service for those aged 55+ and some younger people with disabilities.

This programme covers up to 233 people who have a community alarm charge; 3171 who benefit from warden/scheme manager and community alarm.

The Equality Impact Assessment identifies no disproportionate impact on gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation diversity strands and a low negative impact for the age, disability and socio-economic status strands as the level of services available to recipients will remain unchanged. Further, no changes to front line service delivery or eligibility criteria have been identified so sheltered housing tenants will continue to be offered the benefits of community alarms and a warden/Scheme manager. In the event that the charge is passed on to the tenant they would continue to enjoy the other additional services the schemes provide, to support them to sustain their accommodation and live independently. However, there will be an increased economic cost for individual tenants within the services. This proposal will place the onus for paying the full charge on the householders, most of whom will not be able to refuse a service as it is a condition of the sheltered scheme/tenancy they occupy, thereby increasing their financial burden.

Section 2a: Will this EIA be submitted to a Committee meeting?

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

.....

Hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13797>

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state e.g.: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

Housing Providers and their residents in receipt of a community alarm service.

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to engage@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any protected groups (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
<p>Age/disability : Socio-Economic Status</p>	<p>Negative impact on economic status:</p> <p>The majority of recipients of funding are over 55 years old, with a small number of younger people who receive disability benefits. Those individuals who had benefitted from subsidy toward their support/ community alarm costs will become responsible for paying the full charge from their own resources. This will result in a reduction in their disposable income and could result in financial hardship for some.</p> <p>However, it may be possible for providers to review the provision and charging policy to either reduce costs to the client or to absorb some of the cost.</p>	<p>Providers could be given a period of time to implement a gradual/phased reduction in Supported Housing Funding.</p> <p>This would allow clients and providers time to look for alternative, more cost-effective housing or methods of service delivery that would still continue to meet the clients need.</p> <p>Tenants would be notified that other low-income households who occupy</p>	<p>Sheila Jacobs</p>	<p>December 20 to June 21</p>	<p>In house staff time</p>

		other tenues do not get any form of Council contribution to these services and must fund this themselves			
Gender	None				
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	None				
Pregnancy & Maternity	None				
Race	None				
Religion and/or belief	None				
Sexual Orientation	None				

Section 4a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

These actions will form part of the delivery implementation plan if the budget option is approved by members. These actions will be monitored via Supported Housing consultation process with provider organisations and as part of Councils committee process.

Section 4b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

Not Applicable

Section 5: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

Households who are in receipt of the Social Care Alarm system have to pay the full contribution to this service, many of which will include low income households similar to those in the sheltered housing.

Consultation with Partner authorities within the LCR identifies that Halton, Liverpool, St Helens & Sefton partner authorities have withdrawn funding for support in sheltered housing. We have been advised by one provider that Knowsley continues to fund the alarm services, but this is currently under review. Local Authorities nationally have ceased these contributions to community alarm services. Implementing this process will bring Wirral in line with other Local Authority areas.

Confirmation has also been received from those Providers that operate in Wirral and outside of the LCR area, that the following authorities have also stopped funding these services:

Bury Council; Bolton; Cheshire East; Cheshire West; Kirklees Council; Lancashire; Leeds; Newcastle-Under-Lyme; Rochdale; Sheffield; Tameside; Telford and Wrekin; Warrington; Wyre/Lancashire (2 tier authority)

Section 6: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

Yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 7.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to engage@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 7: How will consultation take place and by when?

Consultation has been carried out as part of the wider public consultation for all budget options. As part of this notification a further collating of information and views on impacts has been conducted with those Registered Providers whose tenants would be affected by this Budget Option.

Provider organisation's will be required to complete further consultation with affected tenants once a decision regarding this savings option is agreed.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to engage@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal publishing requirements. The EIA will need to be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 4. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to engage@wirral.gov.uk for publishing.

Section 8: Have you remembered to:

- a) **Select appropriate directorate hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published** (section 2a)
- b) **Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts?** (section 4)
- c) **Send this EIA to engage@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer?**
- d) **Review section 4 once consultation has taken place and sent your updated EIA to engage@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**