

Integrated Impact Assessment Form
Promoting Equality, Human Rights and Sustainability



Integrated Impact Assessment Form

Promoting Equality, Human Rights and Sustainability

Title of Policy/ Proposal	Review of Welfare Rights and Advice Services
Completion Date	18/04/2018
Completed by	A Mathers
Lead officer	A Mathers

Type of Initiative:

Policy/Strategy ☐

Programme/Plan ☐

Project ☐

Service ☐

Function ☐

Other ...X

New or Proposed ☐

Changing/Updated ☐

Review or existing ☐

1. Briefly describe the policy/proposal you are assessing.

Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (e.g. objectives, aims) including the context within which it will operate.

The report presents proposals for the delivery of rights and advice services in Midlothian taking forward recommendations from the review of Welfare Rights and Advice Services commissioned by the Council, and subsequent budget options proposals presented to Council.

- What will change as a result of this service review/ budget proposal?

If approved,

The Council will create a “one stop shop” including staff working with specific service user groups and the Council Welfare Rights Team. This will bring a range of staff together to provide and more joined up approach in the delivery of welfare rights. In doing so it will transfer sufficient resources from the commissioning budgets to support the service while achieving the £143k saving target over the next 3 years as set out in the budget options paper.

The Council will establish appropriate IT systems support to facilitate internal personal data transfer between Mosaic (the current welfare rights system is embedded in this social work database to assist referrals) and equivalent data bases across Council. This will require data transfer arrangements compliant with GDPR.

Relevant Council staff will work together with procurement staff to establish an agreed contract specification to re-commission existing CAB delivered grant aided services as a single service. This process will clarify the scale of funding required and specify targets for client numbers, types of advice, geographic balance and income gained. Commencing when the extension to current grant aid comes to an end (April 2019). This contract to be focused on outreach and public access to advice complementing and collaborating with the Council ‘One stop shop’ and in common with the Council’s budget review approach seek to resource front line delivery as a priority higher than management or back office support.

The Council will cease externally commissioning ‘specialised client group advice services’, as standalone services or elements of wider external services that include “advice”, as each such contract comes up for renewal , noting that housing and revenues elements have already been included in the wider budget proposals as savings.

2. Do I need to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment?

High Relevance	Yes/no
1. The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people	yes
2. The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality	yes
3. The policy/ proposal has the potential to make a significant impact on the economy and the delivery of economic outcomes	no
4. The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact	no
Low Relevance	
5. The policy/proposal has little relevance to equality	no

6. The policy/proposal has negligible impact on the economy	no
7. The policy/proposal has no/ minimal impact on the environment	yes
If you have identified low relevance please give a brief description of your reasoning here and send it to your Head of Service to record.	

If you have answered yes to 1, 2, or 3 above, please proceed to complete the Integrated Impact Assessment.

If you have identified that your service will have a significant environmental impact (4), you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

3. What information/data/ consultation have you used to inform the policy to date?

Evidence	Comments: what does the evidence tell you?
Data on populations in need	Yes, demand is increasing as population increases. Midlothian has a higher % of people with disabilities affected by welfare reform than other Councils. Midlothian has a low wage local economy which Universal Credit will engage with as it covers both unemployed and low waged employed. The population is ageing and more adults are living with multiple health conditions. Families are affected by the Benefit Cap limiting assistance beyond 2 children.
Data on service uptake/access	The external review details levels of use, climbing demand, and patterns of income gained for service users. It identifies weaknesses in current systems which it proposes approaches to mitigate.
Data on quality/outcomes	The external review details income gained , number of referrals , nature of advice , type of client all linked to the MOSAIC internal data system
Research/literature evidence	Midlothian Council commissioned an external independent review which used benchmarks and national evidence, literature from Money Advice UK, Improvement Service and Scottish Government publications.
Service user experience	Case studies from a range of cases developed with service

information	users.
Consultation and involvement findings	The external reviewer consulted with service providers who provided a range of clear client feedback valuing the advice services funded by and directly delivered by the Council.
Good practice guidelines	Services are working towards the national standards for advice agencies which will become a requirement within the next 3 years for all such activity
Other (please specify)	
Is any further information required? How will you gather this?	No

4. How does the policy meet the different needs of groups in the community?

	Issues identified and how the service addresses these
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people, people in the middle years, • Young people and children • Women, men and transgender people (includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity) • Disabled people (includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems) • Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, migrant workers, non-English speakers) • Refugees and asylum seekers • People with different religions or beliefs (includes people with no religion or belief) • Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual 	<p>Benefits advice services target the populations eligible for such assistance , this includes older people on pensions , people with physical or learning disabilities (PIP/DLA/ESA) , homeless people, single parents, unemployed people , care leavers , adults with long term mental or physical health conditions , refugees and asylum seekers . The basic requirement for income is addressed by intervening to ensure income entitlements are received and where incorrect, decisions are challenged in appeals and tribunals hearings. For example : @ 60% of Disability Living Allowance transfers to Personal Independence payments have been challenged successfully avoiding loss of entitlements for the people concerned. People threatened with eviction for rent debt have been supported to address debts and retain their homes, people suffering from cancer have had their families income concerns addressed, and</p>

people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership 	women in abusive relationships have been supported with the new Universal Credit system which makes one payment per household.
Those vulnerable to falling into poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • People on benefits • Single Parents and vulnerable families • Pensioners • Looked after children • Those leaving care settings (including children and young people and those with illness) • Homeless people • Carers (including young carers) • Those involved in the community justice system • Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas) • People misusing services • People with low literacy/numeracy • Others e.g. veterans, students 	See above
Geographical communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural/ semi-rural communities • Urban Communities Coastal communities	The review identified the need to more clearly target communities most affected by multiple deprivation concentrations and recommends adjustments to external agency funding to achieve this.

5. Are there any other factors which will affect the way this impacts on the community or staff groups?

The report proposes to move to a single commissioned service rather than grant aiding the 2 CAB's, which could result in adjustment to staffing in the CAB's. The creation of a one stop shop approach will have an impact on Council staff.

6. Is any part of this service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

Yes the proposal is to commission a single external service alongside the Council in house provision

7. Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?

The standard Council approach of offering a range of versions on request will be used.

8. Please consider how this will impact on each of the following?

Objectives	Comments
Equality and Human rights	
Promotes / advances equality of opportunity e.g. improves access to and quality of services, status	If the proposal is approved, overall service scale will reduce but efficiency for service users should improve by a wider team around the client approach that will reduce the onward referral of clients from one part to another in the Council and focus on meeting their needs through a 'One Council' approach.
Promotes good relations within and between people with protected characteristics and tackles harassment	The delivery of effective advice services support adults to challenge decisions made affecting their economic conditions. As an example, in disability benefits advice work, the success rate in overturning of assessments demonstrates a system that has not yet become person centred but is often felt by users to be harassing.
Promotes participation, inclusion, dignity and self-control over decisions	Enabling people to understand and access the benefits system is a core goal of advice services. With welfare reform affecting those with disabilities in large numbers and the new Scottish Social Security agency coming into being to take control of disability benefits this is a crucial time to provide effective support and advice
Builds family support networks, resilience and community capacity	Partnership with the Midlothian financial Inclusion Network is core to the approach that has been taken in delivery of rights and advice. There is a risk that making changes and potentially reducing funding will affect this partnership working approach. The next year of redesign will include partners to seek to mitigate this risk
Reduces crime and fear of crime	Access to effective welfare systems is a factor that mitigates against acquisitive crime – there is evidence from Police Scotland and community safety partnership related to shoplifting in Dalkeith that an increase in this is in some cases related to lack of income and the 5 week waiting period for Universal Credit first payment. Good advice and assistance to access services such as foodbanks will mitigate this
Promotes healthier lifestyles including	Lack of income has a direct effect on health. Particularly vulnerable groups include young single homeless people and parents with more than 2 children following the introduction

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• diet and nutrition,• sexual health,• substance misuse• Exercise and physical activity.• Lifeskills	of the revisions to housing support as part of Universal Credit roll out and the capping of benefits for families with more than 2 children. Vulnerable adults with substance misuse issues require additional support to deal with the on line only Universal Credit claims system and maintenance of an on- line only “ journal “ cataloguing their work seeking activities , Failures lead to benefit sanctions for periods of up to 6 months. Advice services are crucial to avoid these consequences and integrated support with social care , health, employability , arears and housing colleagues as proposed in the one stop shop may assist in mitigating some of these impacts
Environmental	
Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in East Lothian (including carbon management)	n/a
Plan for future climate change	
Pollution: air/ water/ soil/ noise	
Protect coastal and inland waters	
Enhance biodiversity	
Encourage resource efficiency (energy, water, materials and minerals)	
Public Safety: Minimise waste generation/ infection control/ accidental injury /fire risk	
Reduce need to travel / promote sustainable forms or transport	
Improves the physical environment e.g. housing quality, public and green space	
Economic	
Maximises income and /or reduces income inequality	The main aim of rights and advice services are to maximise income to which resident are entitled IN the current 2018/19 year the combined Council/ CAB income gained for local residents by ensuring they received accurate benefits was

	@£7.5 million.
Helps young people into positive destinations	The report proposes closer joint working with LLE staff within the council to support young adults leaving school.
Supports local business	In – Work access to Universal Credit is a part of the welfare reform act, replacing tax credits. This is designed to make work always pay more than welfare.
Helps people to access jobs (both paid and unpaid)	The stated aim of the new welfare system is to encourage people to access work. There are complex issues around training and volunteering which can lead to issue with eligibility for benefit ,. This requires good accurate detailed advice for clients making such transitions
Improving literacy and numeracy	Using the on-line systems now mandatory create significant issues for clients with limited literacy and numeracy or poor digital skills. Support and advice is essential to prevent sanctions .
Improves working conditions, including equal pay	n/a
Improves local employment opportunities	n/a

9. Action Plan

Identified negative impact	Mitigating circumstances	Mitigating actions	Timeline	Responsible person
Detailed in answers above	Detailed in answers above	Detailed in answers above	Detailed in answers above	A Mathers

10. Sign off by Director Education Communities and Economy



Name

Date 18 April 2018