

Equality Impact Assessments Toolkit

EqlA Template



You must consider the [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance](#) when completing this template.

The EDI team can provide help and advice on undertaking an EqIA and provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EqIA documents.

EDI team contact email: edi_team@sandwell.gov.uk

Quality Control	
Title of proposal	Authority to Procure the Carers Support Service Contract
Directorate and Service Area	Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Directorate
Officer completing EqIA	Beverley Stevens – Commissioning Officer
Contact Details	beverley_stevens@sandwell.gov.uk
Other officers involved in completing this EqIA	Susan Eagle, Commissioning Manager
Date EqIA completed	14 Sep 2024
Date EqIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	2024
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EqIA	Rashpal Bishop
Date EqIA considered by Cabinet Member	22 Oct 2024

Where the EqlA is Published (Please include a link to the EqlA and send a copy of the final EqlA to the EDI team)	Democratic Services
--	---------------------

Section 1.

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required

The project is to tender for a new contract for a Carers Support Service in Sandwell.

The Contract is for a service to support carers in Sandwell. The principal aims of the Service will be to:

- Provide a central contact point for carers and for carers organisations to refer carers to, prior to approaching the council.
- Co-ordination and navigation of wide range of carers support in Sandwell and ensure there is a clear and accessible offer for carers, so the focus is not just on carers direct payment.
- Raise the profile of carers and caring in Sandwell.
- Provide a visible and accessible place physically and virtually where carers can access information advice and guidance.
- Support the Council to deliver its statutory duty under the Care Act 2014.

The contract is commissioned by Adult Social Care – it is estimated there are 30,000 unpaid carers in Sandwell.

The contract is new and planned contract award is on, or by 1 April 2025 and expires on 31 March 2030.

The new contract will deliver the services listed in the Cabinet Authority to Procure Report. Most of the services are not currently being delivered. The service will give information and advice, training, and peer support to carers in a timely way.

Section 2.

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data

The following evidence has been used to develop the new Contract:

- Data from Census 2021 on numbers of carers in Sandwell
- Review information from current grant funded activity for carers in 2023/24. This includes take up, new carers, activities, case studies and outcomes.
- Take up of requests for support, and Carers Assessments and Direct Payments, by carers to the Council in 2023/24, and costs to the Council.
- Analysis of take up of the carers support services in 2023/24 have been analysed to demonstrate current and future capacity, and expected demand across the services, in terms of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.
- The Actions in the Joint Carers Strategy 2022-26, which were developed using engagement feedback from carers and other stakeholders. These include the actions to review the need for a single point of access for carers, and to look at ways to better promote the carers offer.
- Findings of benchmarking survey of West Midlands Councils to find out their commissioning arrangements and costs for supporting carers.
- Findings of the consultation and engagement as outlined in the Appendix to the Authority to Procure Report. This includes 159 survey respondents, 132 of whom were carers. In addition, approximately 50 carers and staff who support them, and others attended focus groups and drop – ins at libraries, community and day centres.
- Findings of the Department of Health and Social Care Survey of Carers in Sandwell
- The services in the new contract are not statutory. The Care Act 2014 requires the Council to actively promote wellbeing and independence and intervene early to support adults and carers in order to prevent, delay or reduce needs. The new contract will support implementation. Therefore, the evidence to be considered is provided by the Care Act 2014 and Department of Health and Social Care.
- DHSC Adult Carers Survey.

A model of the new service has been developed, based on the take up of current carers support in 2023/24, and projected growth in demand for carer support. This is a new service, so the contract will be a block contract until the Council obtains data on demand and usage of services in the contract.

Engagement findings – see 3 below

Section 3.

Consultation

Extensive engagement activity has taken place with carers, and other stakeholders in Sandwell. These include both current service users of the carer support service, carers who have contacted the Council for support and those who are unidentified carers and unknown to current services – but are potential service users.

Other stakeholders included Care Management and Voluntary Organization staff who support carers, and wider partners in the NHS, Safeguarding Board, and Voluntary Sector. The Appendix - engagement report provides more information.

Sandwell Trends show that the local population is changing, with a growth in the Black and Asian communities. This service will support all communities to access provision and raise awareness of carers services. Most carers are White British and female, which supports our aim for the new service to run targeted campaigns and work with local community champions across Sandwell to reach all communities.

Some of the focus groups were held to give carers and other people who had protected characteristics the chance to have their say. These included women, young carers, African Caribbean carers.

Section 4.

Summary assessment of the analysis at section 4a and the likely impact on each of the protected characteristics (if any)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the report- Authority to Procure a new Carers Support Service. At this stage of the project, it is expected that there will be no adverse impact on stakeholders and their protected characteristics.

Because the service is new, data on take up and outcomes of the service has not yet been collected. Data from similar services in the voluntary sector and Council has been used, along with results of the engagement.

The Action Plan below details how monitoring will be collected, and the EIA will be revisited in September 2025 (6 months from start of contract) to update the impact on carers with protected characteristics, The contract

monitoring data will include information on protected characteristics as identified above.

There is more likely to be a positive impact due to the setting up of new services, and the new service model with additional services including promotion of the support service to carers, information and advice and co-ordination of support to carers, navigation and advocacy for carers, awareness raising and training for carers. 95% of respondents to the survey on the new service agreed that there was a need for it. The Focus groups all agreed with the need and focus groups of people with protected characteristics agreed with the need for the service. Their needs and views about the impact of the new Contract are listed in the table below.

Section 4a - What are the potential/actual impacts of the proposal on the protected characteristics?

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Age	P	<p>Many of the carers in Sandwell are older adults.</p> <p>The DHSC survey, the Carers Support Survey and the take up of current carers support services and council requests for support show that there is a high share of carers aged 60 or over.</p> <p>Focus group feedback and survey findings showed that the main needs were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not knowing they are a carer and can get support. - Loneliness - Need to know what available and next steps is in getting support and being passed around. 	<p>Monitoring of take up of services in the new contract to be specific by age group, with regular data collation.</p> <p>The new Contract will be specified to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - campaigns to promote the service to older and younger carers and raise awareness of who is a carer - the signposting to existing peer support groups for older carers and young/young adult carers, - referrals to more specialist carer support for young carers and older people's groups/services - information in short factsheets 	<p>BS</p> <p>New contract</p>

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about costs e.g., transport etc - Need for concise and accurate information. <p>There are also some young carers in Sandwell, but the focus group feedback stated that most are hidden due to stigma/fear of consequences to the family if they present children as carers. Joint Carers Strategy states that ---.</p> <p>The evidence has shown the need to promote awareness and improve access to carer support for younger people. Young carers often feel lonely and need awareness by schools of their needs, and clear, simple information. This will be addressed in the specification for the contract.</p>		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Disability	P	<p>Many carers, and the people they care for, have some form of disability, including learning disability, physical disability or sensory impairment. The 132 carers who responded to the survey – were caring for ----. They will benefit from the new Contract services and the increased promotion of Carer support which will be required in the new contract. The main needs of carers with disabilities (and the people they care for) were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about travelling time/costs and how easily accessible a building is – they prefer to access services close to home. - Carers of people with more complex and severe 	<p>Monitoring of take up of services in the new contract to be specific by disability, with regular data collation. The contractor will be reliant on referring professional or the individual carer to share and collate information on each protected characteristic. Commissioners are reliant on partners for data. The new Contract will include requirements to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an easily accessible building and bases in 6 towns so support is close to home. - clear information on what is a career, what services and support is available close to home, with contact details and opening hours, facilities. 	

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		<p>disabilities have more stress and are dealing with Health and Care services due to treatment and care packages, and greater need for respite.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some carers are caring for more than one person and this is frequently when one or more people has a disability. - Some carers have disability and are caring for someone with disability. In these cases, carers have less spare time, are lonely and need to know about services close to home that they can access at times and in ways that suit them (for example, opening times of therapy pools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to advocacy to resolve issues with the healthcare and support. - This information and advice may be delivered using a range of channels, including face to face, online, home visits etc which is more likely to meet their individual communication needs. - Links with SEND and parent carers, consider young carers and transition 	

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Gender Reassignment	Ne	The new services will not cover support specifically around this but may deliver this in response to any issues arising related to a gender reassignment of the carer, cared for or a health and social care professional working with the carer or cared for.	The Contract will include a requirement to provide information and advice to support all carers and an advocacy service which would address any issues related to gender reassignment.	
Marriage and civil partnership	Ne	The new services will not specifically cover support to personal relationships but may deliver this in response to related issues that are presented. For example, a carer is feeling isolated or experiencing abuse due to the nature of caring relationship with spouse or partner. Some carers are couples and both care for another person or each other. They are most likely to be parents both caring for a child with disabilities.	The new contract will include a requirement to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide peer support groups – including one for single parents if interest shown. - Raise safeguarding alerts if someone is experiencing abuse. - Provide information, advice for parent carers and signpost to specialist providers for parent carer support 	

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		Some parent carers are also single parents.		
Pregnancy and maternity	Ne	<p>It is unknown how many parent carers there are in Sandwell. However, there are over 200 parent carers already accessing support from a local parent carers organisation.</p> <p>12% of survey respondents were parent carers – these were mainly mothers. Their main needs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confusion over being passed around and need clear pathways to support. - Delays in getting diagnoses/support from professionals and feeling of “fighting for support” for children. - Loneliness 	<p>The new contract will include a requirement to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Navigation Provide advocacy to parent carers who are experiencing confusion, issues and delays - Provide information, advice for parent carers and signpost to specialist providers for parent carer support - Signpost to parent carer peer support groups – or set up group for single parent carers s if interest shown 	

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		The new services will not specially cover pregnancy and maternity, but they may deliver this in response to the changing needs that are presented. For example, a carer who becomes a parent may impact on the information and advice needed.		
Race	P	In 2023-24, of the requests for support and % of the take up of carers support was by carers from black and minority ethnic groups and communities, which is higher than their share of the Sandwell population, at 42.7%. Research has shown that BAME carers take up of services is lower and they wait longer and have low satisfaction levels for health and social care. They will benefit from the new model of services and the	In addition to the above services the contract will include a requirement to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the service to BAME organisations and seldom heard community groups. - Targeted campaign to raise awareness of caring amongst these groups. - Work in partnership with black led organisations and other organisations who represent minority ethnic groups to refer 	

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		increased promotion of carers support which will be required in the new specification. The focus group for African – Caribbean carers mentioned a need for a trusted black led organisation to provide bereavement and advocacy, and services that they trust, and which meet their cultural and spiritual needs	carers to the right support to meet their needs, and work together to ensure that these carers have a voice	
Religion or belief	P	Many people who may be eligible for services are from black and minority ethnic groups and communities, as outlined in the row above, and all groups hold various faiths, beliefs and none. The services do not cover support specifically around this but may provide support around related issues. For example, a direct payment user's religious or cultural		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		needs not being met by a care agency or PA and thus may need support to find a new PA or agency.		
Sex	P	Many carers are women. 87% of survey respondents were women, and women make up approximately 70-80% of carers who currently use carer support services. Both men and women will benefit from the new services and the increased engagement which will be required in the new specification.	The requirements of the contract outlined above will benefit men and women carers.	
Sexual Orientation	Ne	The services will not cover support specifically around this – but may deliver services in response to the issues that are presented. For example, a lesbian carer may decide local social activities or	The requirements of the contract outlined above will benefit carers of all sexual orientations.	

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		groups do not meet needs and need signposting to local LGBT groups.		
Could other socio-economic groups be affected?				
Carer Low-income groups Veterans/Armed Forces Community Other	P	<p>The Contract is aimed directly at unpaid carers and the requirements of the contract outlined above will benefit all carers in Sandwell. So, they will benefit directly from the new services.</p> <p>The new Service does not specifically cover low-income groups, nor Veterans/Armed forces Community, because the presenting need will always be carer related. However, they may deliver this in response to some of the issues that are contributing to the primary need. For example, issues around carers allowance, /debt, non- residential care</p>	<p>In addition to the services outlined above, the contractor will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide information and advice on benefits and refer to welfare rights as needed. Signpost to CAB and other debt advice agencies. - Provide grants to carers or other carer organisations to provide financial support to carers in need. - Provide information, advice and support to carers to get a job or stay in a job if needed. 	

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact. (Use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		<p>contributions, need for costly equipment. or need for a direct payment. Therefore, any carers who are on low incomes, or are part of the veterans/armed forces community will benefit from the services.</p> <p>Carers may have, or care for someone with, a physical or mental health condition. In the engagement, carers mentioned health and wellbeing as their main need, and carers of people with mental health</p>	<p>There will be requirements in the contract to increase take up of carer support and deliver or signpost to health and wellbeing activities. This will lessen stress and support carer health and wellbeing</p>	

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then please move to Sections 6. There are no adverse impacts or issues of concern.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

There are no adverse impacts of the new contract on carers with protected characteristics.

6. Section 6: Decision or actions proposed

Because there are no adverse impacts or issues of concern, it is proposed to approve the authority to procure the new contract.

7. Monitoring arrangements

The new contract will be monitored quarterly. The take up of the services will be monitored by all protected characteristics and any issues will be addressed as part of contract management.

Action 8 Action planning (if required) Not required currently

	Action required	Lead officer/ person responsible	Target date	Progress
1	Expand the contract monitoring information in line with the protected characteristics	BS Contractor	October 2024	
2	Undertake quarterly contract reviews with the Contractor to monitor take up and outcomes by carers	BS Contractor	July 2025	

3	Update EIA with evidence from contract review and determine whether the new contract has any adverse impacts on carers with protected characteristics	BS	September 2025	
----------	---	----	----------------	--

If you have any suggestions for improving this process, please contact EDI_Team@Sandwell.gov.uk