

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction

This EqIA is for:	County Horticulture (Brooke Farm) Employment and Skills Hub	
Details are set out:	ASCH330 ASCH Committee paper for 7 September 2015	
Officers undertaking the assessment:	Lorraine Mills, Service Manager, Day Services Ellie Davies, Project Manager, Programmes and Projects Team Wendy Lippmann, Strategic Review Manager Margaret Radford, Equalities Officer	
Assessment approved by:	Peter Davis, Service Director	Date: 27 August 2015

The Public Sector Equality Duty which is set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The purpose of carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment is to assess the impact of a change to services or policy on people with protected characteristics and to demonstrate that the Council has considered the aims of the Equality Duty.

Part A: Impact, consultation and proposed mitigation

1 What are the potential impacts of proposal? *Has any initial consultation informed the identification of impacts?*

The proposed new service would be aimed at adults with a disability or mental illness who need a more individualised approach and flexible timescales for their training to become ready for work.

People affected are :

- Existing work service users at Brooke Farm (currently 64), of which most have a learning disability:
 - The proposal to transform Brooke Farm would change the service to an employment and skills training hub. However, existing service users would only move out of Brooke Farm if it is their wish to seek paid employment.
- New service users:
 - Subject to availability of capacity within the service, new service users are expected to include people with a range of needs (including learning disability, physical disability, autistic spectrum disorders and mental illness).
 - There would be an expectation that new people starting the programme wish to secure employment and their programme will cease once this is achieved. It is expected that new service users of the employment hub will remain in the service for a period no longer than three years.
 - People will only be able to join when (or if) there is capacity to do so i.e. when current service users move on.

Both new and existing service users would benefit from an innovative training for work service available in central Nottinghamshire and ultimately the benefits that come from achieving paid work, including better financial security, and improved self-confidence, self-esteem, independence and choice. The service on offer to them would include:

- Skills development and work based experience in horticulture, retail and administration work.
- Support with obtaining vocational training qualifications.
- Support with making informed choices on areas of work of interest.
- Access to a range of agencies to help them into employment, including local employers, benefit agencies, the Department for Work and Pensions and college courses.
- Access to job clubs where they will learn job searching and interview skills, CV writing, time-keeping, dress code, and travel to work options. Groups from local colleges, Jobcentre Plus and day centres could also access the job clubs, thus helping with social integration. Client specific job-clubs, e.g. for those with learning disabilities, could also be possible.
- Individualised support to move into paid work.

The employment and training hub will provide a significant new resource that will increase the number of vulnerable and disabled people within the County who achieve paid employment.

The community of Linby and surrounding villages will benefit from the continuation of the Farm Shop.

The 110 regular private gardening customers will continue to have their gardening service provided by Golden Gardens.

The 28 County facilities and 9 external customers will continue to receive the NCC Grounds Maintenance Service.

A range of consultation activities took place from December 2014 until February 2015. These involved a wide range of stakeholders including staff, service users, families, carers, user forums and external organisations. Responses from this consultation have played an important role in the development of the proposal. A summary is provided in section 4 of this assessment.

In recognition of the fluidity of the potential changes, the Council will continue to monitor the impact of the proposal on people potentially affected by it, particularly those with a protected characteristic.

2 Protected Characteristics: Is there a potential positive or negative impact based on:

Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	X Neutral Impact
Disability	X Positive	X Negative	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	X Neutral Impact
Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	X Neutral Impact
Race <small>including origin, colour or nationality</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	X Neutral Impact
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	X Neutral Impact
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	X Neutral Impact
Sexual orientation <small>including gay, lesbian or bisexual</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	X Neutral Impact

3 Where there are potential negative impacts for protected characteristics these should be detailed including consideration of the equality duty, proposals for how they could be mitigated (where possible) and meaningfully consulted on:

How do the potential impacts affect people with protected characteristics <i>What is the scale of the impact?</i>	How might negative impact be mitigated or explain why it is not possible	How will we consult
<p>Disability:</p> <p>The proposal assists existing service users who wish to pursue employment by providing personalised support and guidance.</p> <p>Current service users who do not wish to pursue paid employment can still continue to access Brooke Farm.</p> <p>As capacity within the service opens up, new service users will benefit from an innovative employment and skills training programme.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that there will be a negative impact based on any other protected characteristic.</p>	<p>There will be dialogue with all current service users and their carers so that a clear picture of the needs and aspirations of each individual person can be established and outcomes for ongoing support and planning identified.</p> <p>This dialogue will be facilitated in a number of ways including face to face engagement; an 'Ask Brooke Farm' email facility; news bulletins and invitations to events to contribute to the vision for the new hub.</p>	<p>Full Statutory Consultation was undertaken, following approval of the consultation by ASCH Committee on 1.12.14.</p> <p>4 briefing meetings were held with service users and carers in December 2014.</p> <p>3 meetings with service users were held in February 2015, facilitated by an independent advocate.</p> <p>Questionnaires were distributed to service users and carers and people were also invited to express their views in writing, if they wanted to.</p> <p>22 external organisations and 4 User Forums were</p>

		<p>invited to submit views.</p> <p>In addition, Council staff working in assessment, commissioning and strategic roles were invited to submit views.</p>
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Part B: Feedback and further mitigation

4 Summary of consultation feedback and further amendments to proposal / mitigation

4.1 Responses to the consultation were as follows:

- a) 61 service users and carers attended the briefing meetings
- b) 34 service users attending the meetings with the independent advocate
- c) 3 meetings were requested by external organisations as part of the consultation.
- d) 17 questionnaires were returned by 1 group (representing 22 carers and service users)*, 14 individual carers*, 1 trainee, 1 group reply from the Service User Forum of the Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Board.
- e) 34 letters and emails were sent by 16 carers*, 8 responses from NCC staff and teams (Gedling Community Learning Disability team, Broxtowe Community Learning Disability Team, Newark Community Learning Disability Team, New Lifestyles team, Ashfield Young People's Service, Economic Development, EHC Commissioning Hub SEND Policy and Provision), 7 external organisations (Remploy, Portland College, Job Centre Plus, Reach Learning Disability, Futures, Reed in Partnership, Direct Payment Service Users Ltd), 1 member of the public who teaches horticulture at Brooke Farm and 1 member of the public who volunteers at Balderton.

Note: * some of these carers are the same people and one carer sent in 2 separate letters.

4.2 A summary of the consultation comments is as follows:

- a) The Service User Forum from the Learning Disability & Autism Partnership Board are supportive of the proposal. The majority of external organisations and staff working in strategic roles within the Council were positive about the overall vision, aims and ethos of the proposal and its potential to generate new income streams.
- b) Many respondents could see positive aspects to the proposal but were also worried about the implications on the current service users and their families. These included some carers, staff from the Younger Adults commissioning teams, Direct Payments Service Users Ltd (DiPSU Ltd) and Reach Learning Disability.
- c) Many helpful comments were given about how the proposal could be developed to ensure its future success and how to support the current service users and their families through any change.
- d) There is potential for new income via the Adult Community Learning Service (Skills Funding Agency), colleges, Job Centre Plus, European funding and possibly also Health and Education. The service would require capacity in order to enter into this type of partnership working.
- e) It was confirmed that other clients would benefit from access to the new service, including people with mental health issues, people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments, people with mild learning disability and clients from Job Centre Plus, the latter possibly on short-term placements.
- f) The following organisations and services would like to participate in further discussions to support the Council to develop the proposal further, should it be approved - Skills for Employment, Engage to Employ, Futures, Portland College, EHC Commissioning Hub, Reach Learning Disability, Job Centre Plus, Remploy.

4.3. Two other options for the future of Brooke Farm have been considered by the Council. These

are a) to deliver a therapeutic horticultural day service model alongside an employment hub and b) to maintain the existing service but establish it clearly as a long term day service. Reasons for rejecting these alternatives are explained in sections 26-38 of the ASCH Committee paper on this subject.

4.4 Final proposal and mitigation

- a) As a result of this consultation, the proposal to develop an employment and training hub at Brooke Farm remains the preferred option but it is proposed that current service users who do not wish / are unable to move on to employment will engage in horticultural activity at Brooke Farm. This means that without agreement these people will not progress to paid outcomes.
- b) The following actions are also proposed, to further mitigate against the objections raised by people who participated in the consultation.
 - To address uncertainties about other options and other questions raised during the consultation, written information will be produced using a “Questions and Answers” format. Further meetings will be arranged with carers and current service users as soon as possible following the Committee decision, to explain this information, as well as what has been agreed and what the implications are for people. Service users and carers will be invited to contribute to the vision for the new hub.
 - An on-going communications process will be designed so that people have many opportunities and ways to ask questions and receive information updates, over time. E.g. using the internet, newsletters, meetings and discussion groups. Ideas from current service users and carers will be welcomed.
 - Options for supporting people to maintain friendships and relationships beyond the service will be explored.
 - There will be opportunities for service users and carers to meet other people with learning disabilities who are engaged in successful paid employment. The aims will be to :
 - Enable service users and carers to understand how this has been achieved and what benefits those workers are achieving from working or volunteering.
 - Raise the aspirations and expectations of current service users and carers.
 - Help service users and carers understand how people are supported to manage risks.
 - Help service users to understand how their current experience at Brooke Farm is different to having paid employment.
 - There will be opportunities for service users and carers to receive benefits advice so that they understand the implications of engaging in paid work.
 - Apart from disability, the consultation feedback did not highlight a negative impact based on any other protected characteristic.

Completed EqlAs should be sent to equalities@nottsc.gov.uk and will be published on the Council's website.