



**Oxfordshire County Council**  
**Equalities Impact Assessment**

Proposal for the Joint Commission of Adult Advice Service

6 February 2024

## Contents

Section 1: Summary details .....	3
Section 2: Detail of proposal.....	4
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....	7
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts.....	11
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts.....	13
Section 4: Review .....	14

## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Adult Social Care and Public Health
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Proposal for the Joint Commission of an Adult Advice Service (Between Public Health and Adult Social Care) in Oxfordshire
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	Change to an existing function
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?  (following completion of the assessment).	<p>The Council is proposing to amend the way it commissions advice services by combining two pre-existing arrangements into a single commission. The new advice service will support people to live their lives as independently, successfully and as safely as possible within their communities, to enhance wellbeing and improve people's choices. The service will aim to maximise income addressing underlying issues and health inequalities and taking a prevention approach to increase the wellbeing of residents using the service.</p> <p>Data from the legacy services, as well as national data sets on the provision of advice show that people with protected characteristics are over represented in users of advice services. As such the focus of equalities work in this area is to ensure that the most appropriate access routes are in place for these groups.</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Paul Wilding (with further information from Kate Austin 9/2/24 and 10/2/24)
<b>Authorised By</b>	David Munday, Deputy Director of Public Health, 12th Feb 2024
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	February 6 <sup>th</sup> 2024

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b></p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Historically the council has commissioned two advice services. Adult Social Care commissions the Oxfordshire Specialist Advice Service (OSAS) via a contract and Public Health grant funds Benefits in Place (BiP). Combining resources will enable the Council to provide a longer term and more sustainable funding offer to the advice services sector through a procured contract which targets communities within the 10 most deprived wards in Oxfordshire and tackles health inequalities.</p> <p>This approach supports the council's transformative ambitions to deliver innovative services with the experience of the user at the centre. Commissioning advice services as a long-term contract also provides more stability for the sector, supporting our ambition to be a partner-of-choice for community organisations</p> <p>The target population of the current OSAS is primarily older people, adults with learning disabilities, adults with mental health concerns, adults with physical and sensory impairments, adult and young carers, young people aged 16+ and families with young children (particularly those with disabled children). Outreach is offered to people across the county who, because of health or disability issues, or the complexity of their situation, require this form of intervention and are unable to access a similar service such as in a local neighbourhood advice centre.</p> <p>The aim of the BiP programme is to provide an advice service which aims to reduce the health inequalities of individuals suffering financial hardship, by maximising service user's income and improving their wellbeing and health. It offers a county-wide digital connector and referral system for Health Professionals, foodbanks, pharmacies, social prescribers, and other place-based organisations. Another key aim of the programme is to address inequalities and improve the wellbeing of individuals by supporting people to maximise their income, with a particular focus on people with, or at risk of, poor mental health, and communities within the 10 most deprived wards in Oxfordshire as was outlined in the Director of Public Health's 2019/20 Annual Report.</p>
--	---

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Proposals</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The agreed proposal is for HESC and Public Health to jointly commission a revised, co-produced advice service with either one sole provider or one single lead provider, working in partnership with other organisations with the expertise in different areas of work.</p> <p>If in partnership, this leverages more of the council’s spending power through a collaborative approach. Partnerships rely on mature collaboration which is already in evidence in Oxfordshire and encourages innovation. Partnership sees the risk spread across the partnership group. Furthermore, participants at our stakeholder event cited partnership working as being key.</p> <p>If a sole provider, this allows potential streamlining of service provisions particularly back office.</p> <p>This approach allows the council to leverage supplier expertise in the design of the services. It is an opportunity to enhance partnership working within the advice sector while addressing inequalities.</p> <p>The approach also allows providers to work in partnership to maximise specialities to meet demand and avoid duplication across the sector to make best use of resources available.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Evidence / Intelligence</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>Data from existing commissioned services and the other main advice providers in the county was used to build the picture of need across the county.</p> <p>In October 2023, we held an Oxfordshire advice services stakeholder event to look at what the advice sector currently offers, what the aims and outcomes of a future service should be and how this service should be set up. An online survey was also devised, asking people who have used advice services in the last 12 months for their experiences and views on what the services did well and how they could be improved. We also completed benchmarking with other local authorities to see how they are providing advice services in Berkshire Oxfordshire Buckinghamshire (BOB) and also in Kent.</p> <p>We used these consultations described above to help us shape the business case and specification regarding the future requirements for the model of the new advice service.</p>

<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>The following options were also considered:</p> <p>Do nothing – This was rejected as threatening the ability to continue to deliver effective advice services in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Bring service in-house – This was rejected to a lack of in-house expertise, and because there is value in having this service provided independently.</p> <p>A number of configurations of a re-procured service were considered. The chosen option was deemed to provide the best value for money.</p>
--	---

**Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics**

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provision of good quality advice services can improve people's ability to remain independent in their own home as they get older, can reduce loneliness and give them more choice and control over their lives.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service. Services will be required to be accessible via multiple channels.	Project Team	Monitoring of equalities will form part of the monitoring approach for this contract.
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The new service is aimed to support people with care and support needs.  From the BiP programme in 2023-24: In Q1 12% of the people supported stated that they had a disability, this was 12% again in Q2 and then this rose to 18% in Q3.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service. Services will be required to be accessible via multiple channels.	As above	As above
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with this characteristic would be expected to access this service, but it is not expected that there would be a significant positive or negative impact.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service.	As above	As above

<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with this characteristic would be expected to access this service, but it is not expected that there would be a significant positive or negative impact.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service.	As above	As above
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some people will access this service as the birth of another child can create additional financial concerns due to the “2 child” benefits rule.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service.	As above	As above
<b>Race</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with this characteristic would be expected to access this service, but it is not expected that there would be a significant positive or negative impact.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service.	As above	As above
<b>Sex</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with this characteristic would be expected to access this service, but it is not expected that there would be a significant positive or negative impact.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service.	As above	As above

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with this characteristic would be expected to access this service, but it is not expected that there would be a significant positive or negative impact.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service.	As above	As above
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with this characteristic would be expected to access this service, but it is not expected that there would be a significant positive or negative impact.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will enable people with protected characteristics to access the service.	As above	As above

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Rural communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice services are available online and by phone. Outreach sessions are typically held in some locations, and if required a home visit can be undertaken.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will deliver a service which is accessible in all parts of the county.	Project team	Monitoring of equalities will form part of the monitoring approach for this contract.
<b>Armed Forces</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People from this group would be expected to access this service, but it is not expected that there would be a significant positive or negative impact.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will deliver a service which is accessible to this group.	As Above	As Above
<b>Carers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is expected that many carers will access the service either for themselves, or the person they care for. Carers Allowance is one of the most under claimed benefits. The new service will be expected to support the uptake of for people who are entitled to it.	The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will deliver support to people who are carers.	As Above	As Above

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For the current BiP programme 34 out of the 144 clients seen with new cases (23.6%) between Q1-Q3 in the 2023-24 programme lived within one of the 10 most deprived wards in Oxfordshire.	We would seek to ensure that the new service continued to support people living within our most deprived areas. The service specification will require prospective providers to show how they will provide support in our 10 most deprived wards.	As Above	As Above

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

<b>Additional Wider Impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Staff</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		N/A		
<b>Other Council Services</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If the procured service is delivered effectively there should be reduced demand on Adult social care teams.	Following procurement the contract will be monitored to ensuring it is delivering the envisaged benefits.	Project Team	Monitoring of equalities will form part of the monitoring approach for this contract.
<b>Providers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		N/A		
<b>Social Value <sup>1</sup></b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prospective providers will be required to demonstrate additional social value as part of the procurement exercise.	Following procurement the contract will be monitored to ensuring it is delivering the envisaged benefits.	Project Team	Monitoring of equalities will form part of the monitoring approach for this contract.

<sup>1</sup> If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

## Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

<b>Review Date</b>	This assessment relates to a procurement exercise, so is a one off. There will be ongoing monitoring of the contract once procured, which will be responsible for ensuring the mitigating actions identified above are happening.
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	Karina Russell (9/2/24)
<b>Authorised By</b>	David Munday, Deputy Director of Public Health, 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024