

Equality Impact Assessment



Name of project/proposal

Outcome of the consultation of the proposed closure of four residential care homes and one day centre

Contact name

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Department

Adult Services

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14 Nov 2013

Purpose for project/proposal

In October 2011, Cabinet approved Project Extra Care, a £45m programme of capital investment to deliver further Extra Care housing across the county over an 8 year period, with the aim that Extra Care will become a viable alternative to residential care for older people across Hampshire.

On 26 July 2013, the Executive Member for Adult Social Care granted permission to consult on the closure of 4 older persons' residential homes: Cranleigh Paddock (Lyndhurst), Bulmer House (Petersfield), Deeside (Basingstoke) and Nightingale Lodge (Romsey), as well as Cranleigh Paddock Day Centre. A twelve week public consultation started on 29 July 2013 and finished on 18 October 2013, however the consultation website was kept open until 22 October and responses received up until then were considered

Consultation

Has a consultation been carried out?

Yes

Following assessment of the results of the consultation, the Director for Adult Services is recommending that Cranleigh Paddock remain open, although its Day Centre close, whilst Bulmer House, Deeside and Nightingale Lodge residential care homes are closed, subject to suitable alternative accommodation for residents being found and their care needs being met.

The final decision on this will be taken by the Cabinet of Hampshire County Council on 9 December 2013.

Should the decision be taken to close the homes, the staff affected will be offered voluntary redundancy. A staff consultation ran alongside the public consultation about the proposed home closures. The staff consultation started on 29 July and finished on 25 October 2013, a total of 13 weeks. During this period approximately 160 one-to-one meetings took place with staff in the homes to provide them with every opportunity to discuss the proposals with representatives from HR to ensure that any pertinent issues could be addressed. Additionally, there were on-going meetings with the relevant trade union representatives throughout the consultation period. These meetings included formal Joint Consultation Committees plus other meetings arranged on a more informal basis to ensure the trade unions had regular access to discuss and consult with management about the proposals.

Statutory considerations

Impact

Age	Medium
Disability	Medium
Sexual orientation	Low
Race	Low
Religion and belief	Low
Gender reassignment	Low
Sex	Medium
Marriage and civil partnership	Low
Pregnancy and maternity	Low

Other policy considerations

Poverty	Low
Rurality	Low
Other factors	Nothing selected

Geographical impact

Basingstoke & Deane East Hampshire New Forest Test Valley

Have you identified any medium or high impact?*

Yes

No

Equality statement

Detailed Assessment

Age:*Specific Issues:*

At the outset of the consultation an age profile analysis was undertaken. The profile confirmed that the 15% of the staff were aged between 41 and 50 and a further 23% aged over 51.

Actions:

One of the key means of reducing the impact of the potential home closures and possible job losses is the offer of an enhanced voluntary redundancy scheme, applicable to all staff with more than 2 years service. During the staff consultation period a voluntary redundancy window was opened and staff invited to express an interest. It was noted at the outset the HCC's enhanced voluntary redundancy scheme could provide a potentially attractive alternative for staff who may find themselves without a job. It is notable that length of service would be recognised in the financial package offered (as with all redundancy schemes). Reviewing the VR requests received it is clear that an overall majority of the staff have asked to be considered for voluntary redundancy (the mean average being 70% of the staff have requested VR).

Disability:*Specific Issues:*

Only 1% of the overall cohort of potentially affected staff were recorded on the HR management information system as having a disability at the outset of the consultation.

Actions:

The proliferation of 1:1 meetings with HR representatives provided an opportunity for staff to highlight the impact of the proposed home closures. This was particularly pertinent if the individual member of staff had a disability (which may not have been recorded on the HR management information system). As a consequence specific issues were identified and addressed.

Gender:*Specific Issues:*

At the outset of the consultation a gender profile analysis was undertaken. The profile confirmed that the 85% of the staff are female and 15% male. It was acknowledged that this represents a clear gender bias, but one that is reflected in the Department's overall profile (the department figures in 2013 confirming a 81.15% female/18.15% male ratio).

Actions:

As part of the consultation process staff have requested consideration for redeployment or enhanced voluntary redundancy. The age distribution of the staff is represented fairly evenly across both the requests for redeployment and voluntary redundancy. As noted above the key action was to ensure that all staff had as much opportunity as possible to be actively involved in the staff consultation to ensure that any disproportionate effect could be addressed.

Marital Status / Relationships:*Specific Issues:*

There are a few married couples who work in the homes potentially affected. Clearly, if these homes close it will potentially affect the employment of both partners.

Actions:

One couple in particular are very keen to remain employed by HCC. Both are willing and able to travel (including relocation) so every effort will be made to find them suitable alternative employment if that proves necessary. The other couples affected have opted to be considered for enhanced voluntary redundancy should the home close, thus mitigating the effect of their potential job loss.

Ethnicity*Specific Issues:*

At the outset of the consultation, 92% of the staff potentially affected recorded their ethnic origin as "White". A further 5% of the workforce recorded their ethnic origin as "Mixed White/Caribbean/Asian and Black African". The

remaining 3% were recorded as either 'refused' or 'not obtained'.

Actions:

As noted above the on-going focus on regular communication and meetings with staff provided an opportunity for staff to raise any issues specific to their circumstances, and to ensure these issues were taken account of as part of the consultation process.

Conclusion

At the outset of the consultation a detailed analysis took place to identify any potential issues in relation to the staff affected by the potential home closures. A deliberate decision was taken to allow a longer time period than the statutory minimum to give all the staff affected as much opportunity as possible to talk to HR staff and managers about the potential impact of the proposals. In addition to the specific HR meetings, there were several management/staff meetings also.

Potential Mitigating Actions

Mitigating actions are found in the Equality Statement above.

Date to review actions

30 May 2014

Final decision date

Final decision date due

09 Dec 2013

Decision to be made by

Executive Member