

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

Advocacy Contract Re-procurement

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Department: Adults' Health and Care

Date of assessment: 02/09/2019

Description of current service/policy

The Advocacy contract provides statutory advocacy services under both adult and children's legislation as well as some non-statutory advocacy for older adults and people with mental health issues or a learning disability. The current contract expires on 31/03/20 and the procurement is timed to ensure that there is no break in service continuity with the new contract starting on 01/04/20.

Geographical impact: All
Hampshire

Description of proposed change

The existing contract is expanding to incorporate Independent Health Complaints Advocacy (which is currently an unconnected/distinct contract). The joining up of this service with the other commissioned advocacy services should assist in promoting all aspects of advocacy to eligible service users in Hampshire as they will all be undertaken by the same provider enabling service users to seamlessly move between different elements of advocacy as needed/appropriate.

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? Yes

A SNAP survey to gather views on the current service provision and how it can be improved (particularly in relation to meeting the needs of Black Minority Ethnic service users) ran from 11/07/19 to 04/08/19 inclusive. This was supported by the current advocacy service provider who supported individuals with completing the survey where needed. The survey has been distributed widely to service users (all client groups), Hampshire County Council's front line social care staff, NHS and other partner agency staff who work with/alongside advocates and was open to anyone with an interest in advocacy services who wished to comment. There were a total of 81 responses to the survey.

Statutory considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Age: Neutral		
Disability: Positive	<p>The various forms of statutory advocacy provided by the service support adults with disabilities or qualifying children under the Children Act 1989 to ensure that their views/opinions are heard and taken into consideration during care planning / safeguarding / or decisions made on their behalf under legislation (e.g. Mental Capacity Act, Mental Health Act, Children Act). Non-statutory advocacy is able to support service users with a wider range of issues e.g. supporting them with benefits tribunals or applications for housing or support for clients with a learning disability to participate in the Local Implementation Groups/Learning Disability Partnership Board.</p>	
Sexual orientation: Neutral		

<p>Race: Positive</p>	<p>The SNAP survey has highlighted that more could be done to improve the advocacy experience of those from a BME background. The EIA is felt to be neutral on the issue of race as race is not a characteristic that entitles an individual to advocacy and overall advocacy is felt to be positive for all service users who receive it irrespective of race, gender or type of disability. In re-procuring the contract however the service specification can certainly be improved in terms of ensuring that advocates have a better understanding of issues relating to race and culture and receive appropriate training in this respect and also for the provider to try and promote advocacy within BME communities and encourage BME staff to apply for advocacy jobs to improve the representation of BME staff in the advocacy workforce and allow appropriate matching of advocate to service user in respect of race, culture and religion.</p>	
<p>Religion and belief: Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender reassignment: Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender: Neutral</p>		
<p>Marriage and civil partnership: Neutral</p>		

Pregnancy and maternity: Neutral		
Other policy considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Poverty: Positive	Advocacy can be provided in a setting convenient to the service user e.g. their own home or a local venue. This ensures that those who may find travel difficult or impossible due to lacking the money to do so are not prevented from accessing advocacy services.	
Rurality: Positive	Advocacy can be provided in a setting convenient to the service user e.g. their own home or a local venue. This ensures that those living in rural areas where public transport may be difficult and/or very limited are not disadvantaged as the advocate will travel to them.	

Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

Any other information

Statutory advocacy is targeted at specific individuals (usually those with some form of disability eg mental health issue, learning disability, physical disability or frailty or other health issues arising from ageing or children with disabilities or those in the care of the local authority). There is no entitlement to statutory advocacy by virtue of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status or age alone. This issue is covered in section 8 of the exec member report.

Non-statutory advocacy is targeted primarily at service users with a learning disability, older adults and those with a physical disability, and those with mental health issues. There is no requirement to have met eligibility under any legislation to access this form of advocacy.