

Equality Impact Assessment

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) (“the Act”), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give ‘due regard’ to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- 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.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid ‘due regard’ to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
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Title:	Autism Information Advice and Guidance 2025-2028
Related EIAs:	EIA Number: 0122
EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	Autism Information, Advice & Guidance Service
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	We are about to procure the Autism Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) Service which is currently contracted until 31st March 2025. We are looking to publish in November 2024, with the hope we will award the contract in January 2024 and that the service will launch from the 1st April 2025. The Autism IAG service will provide a comprehensive Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service, including face-to-face signposting and guidance which helps people on the autism spectrum and their families to access the full range of community opportunities and services available. This service supports health and social care services by where possible preventing and intervening early to help manage demand on statutory services.
New/changed service/policy/project	The current contract is due to expire, and therefore requires re-procurement.

Engagement
<p>This service is carried out by a contracted provider, who then feeds anonymised data and statistics to us as commissioners. There is no direct relationship between the funding authority and the individuals accessing the service. Consideration given to client consultation, but the fluid nature of the client cohort this service is targeted at would make it difficult to engage, as we do not receive personal information. Consultation occurred with Autism Partnership Coordinator, co-author of the Autism Strategy and has lived experience with ASC. The Autism Partnership Coordinator helped formulate the specification and assisted in writing the Tender Questions.</p>

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact age, we expect the service to serve a range of people across all age groups. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including age, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire.</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals while avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Disability

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The vision of the programme is to create a better future for people on the autism spectrum and their families. To create opportunity, challenge perceptions, enhance choice and provide high quality services to meet the diverse needs of people on the autism spectrum.</p> <p>The service will look to be disability positive by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the wellbeing both physical and mental, of individuals and/ or their families through targeted advice and guidance and by providing support for individuals to access

	<p>appropriate mainstream services including navigating the diagnostic pathway for autism and statutory services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service will support service users to become more integrated with their communities. Promoting opportunities for volunteering, social participation and interaction with local groups. • The service will support users to access employment and education opportunities and to navigate these environments and overcome barriers via coaching, mentoring and guidance. • The service will promote active citizenship and help service users access resources and organisations such as, citizen's advice who can assist them. • The service will also support dissemination of knowledge from evidence based sources around being on the Autistic Spectrum to support families/ carers, local groups and communities and to embed better understanding and cultural awareness of autism. <p>The latest prevalence rates suggest there is an estimated 21,852 autistic people in Hampshire. The data from the current contract states that there have been a combined 3590 individuals accessing the service directly, with a further 10,500 people accessing the local autism directory, provided by the current provider. While we cannot be sure that individual have not been counted more than once, this is representative of what we would expect the service to deliver based on the demographics of the wider population. There is also a higher mortality gap (16yrs) of those with both Autism and a Learning Disability, as opposed to Autism and no LD (12 yrs). This service will aim to close that gap by ensuring individuals with both Autism and an LD are signposted and supported to access relevant and appropriate Social Care or Public Health services, thereby improving overall health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The service specification also requests that the provider involve autistic individuals in the design, running and improvement of the service, so it will be created and adapted by those who will be accessing the service.</p>
Mitigation	

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic. Over the previous two years of the contract, other than the Male/Female options, 9 individuals identified themselves as Transgender, 1 identified

	<p>as Bigender, 56 answered Prefer Not To Say, and a further 321 were Unknown.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact gender reassignment, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including gender reassignment, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact pregnancy and maternity, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including pregnancy & maternity, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact race, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure</p>

	<p>there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including race, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Throughout the current contract, the provider has collated information on the racial demographics of those accessing the service. Unfortunately, each quarterly report states that, other than a small number of people who identified as "white", nobody chose to disclose this information. The current provider has committed to ensuring this information is collated at each Tier 2 appointment to better support the narrative that the service is accessible regardless of any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact religion or belief, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including religion or belief, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p> <p>We do not have any current data on Autistic individuals supported by the contract, categorised by religion or belief.</p>
Mitigation	

Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
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Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Women and girls are traditionally harder to diagnose with autism and various studies have proposed different ratios of men to women with autism (always heavily weighted towards men who are more frequently diagnosed) but there is no clear indicator of female prevalence rates, women and girls often do not fit the International Classification Systems for autism and often remain undiagnosed and therefore under-represented in our statistics. What is known is, we are seeing increasing numbers of women and girls referred for autism assessment.</p> <p>The latest data collected from the current provider partially backs this proposal, as all bar 2 of the quarters have a higher access rate from men than women, and the rates of women accessing the service increased.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact sex, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including sex, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to, and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire. We expect to see growing numbers of females utilising the service, reflecting the growing numbers of women and girls being recognised and diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders.</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact sexual orientation, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including sexual orientation, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to, and the</p>

	<p>contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire.</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact marriage and civil partnership, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including marriage and civil partnership, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to, and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire.</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact poverty, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including poverty, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to, and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire.</p>

	<p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic. Whilst we do not have any data to support the demographics of this particular group when accessing the service, one of the main aims and objectives of the contract is to increase the opportunities and success rates of autistic people finding work and education opportunities, thereby increasing the overall prosperity of potentially poverty stricken areas. The service will also be free of charge to those accessing it, and so bears no impact.</p>
Mitigation	

Rurality

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The IAG Service will be available to all individuals and their families living in Hampshire who are on the diagnostic pathway or diagnosed with autism regardless of any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Whilst the service is not designed to directly impact rurality, we expect the service to serve a range of adults across Hampshire on a county wide basis. To ensure there is no discernible negative impact on any group or individual regardless of their protected characteristics, including rurality, the service will report on the demographics of the population they provide a service to, and the contract monitoring will ensure this is in line with expectations and representative of the autistic population in Hampshire.</p> <p>Data from the current contract suggests that there is even split of service access across all major districts. The Rushmoor area was slightly lower, but the Hart area was significantly higher, balancing it out. Besides this, there was a consistent spread across all areas. There are various ways of accessing the service - whether it be by phone, email, referral, GP - so those living in rural areas will find the service just as accessible.</p> <p>The service will be provided in line with a Human Rights Approach and will work to promote the rights of individuals avoiding practices that would infringe their freedoms or impact them based on any protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Geographical Impact: All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

None

Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

EIA reference number: 00707

Date of production of EIA for publication: 13/11/2024