

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

Procurement of Village Agents Scheme

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Department: Adults' Health and Care

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Description of current service/policy

The scheme is managed by Adults' Health and Care and has been delivered by Age Concern Hampshire. It currently supports approximately 49 volunteer Village Agents (VAs) in rural communities across the County. VAs are a source of information and support for vulnerable older people, helping them to remain self-reliant in their own communities for as long as possible. They mainly provide this support via home visits, drop-in advice clinics and by helping to develop community services. VAs help to bridge the gap between isolated, vulnerable older people and the statutory and voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to their needs.

Geographical impact: All Hampshire

Description of proposed change

The current grant funding for the VAs scheme ends in March 18. It is proposed that the delivery model is now brought in line with the wider Demand Management and Prevention programme, to ensure that future delivery is cost effective and sustainable.

This includes extending the scope of the scheme beyond older people, to support others identified as socially isolated and at risk of requiring social care intervention e.g. carers, young mothers, those in impoverished areas and adults with long-term conditions. The scheme also focuses on supporting individuals in rural areas, where the possibility of social isolation is comparatively higher.

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? Planned

Data will help to identify priority areas for engagement and scheme delivery. There will be engagement with parish and town councils to help those that wish to continue to support existing VAs or establish one in their area. Engagement with existing VAs will take place to inform them of changes and encourage continued involvement.

Statutory considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Age: Positive	<p>Age is of high relevance to the scheme, with vulnerable older people being main focus of the service. With the new service delivery model we plan to broaden the reach of the service to other targeted areas across Hampshire using indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) to identify the areas of highest priority. The IMD particularly focuses on age-related factors- e.g. aging index, older persons households etc.</p> <p>The Council is aware that there will be a break between the end of the current grant funding for the existing VAs scheme and the start of the new commissioned service. This means there is a potential risk of disruption in service delivery to those vulnerable older people currently being supported by the scheme. To mitigate this risk there will be continued engagement with the current provider to discuss any potential impacts of the current grant funding coming to an end. It is understood that the current provider plans to continue providing support to the existing VAs in place.</p>	

<p>Disability: Positive</p>	<p>With the new service delivery model we plan to broaden the reach of the service to other targeted areas across Hampshire using IMD to identify the areas of highest priority.</p> <p>The focus is on people with long term conditions over the age of 18 who are most likely to need social care support now or in the future. Increasing their local knowledge will enable them to live independent lives, address their care needs, help maintain their home and garden and connect them with local support to reduce loneliness and isolation.</p>	
<p>Sexual orientation: Neutral</p>		
<p>Race: Neutral</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	With the new service delivery model we plan to broaden the reach of the service to other targeted areas across Hampshire using IMD to identify the areas of highest priority. Through this we hope to focus on developing the service in areas with the highest levels of poverty.	
Rurality: Positive	The focus is on people living in rural areas (hamlets and isolated dwellings, rural villages and towns). The aim is to mitigate against some of the following consequences of living in rural communities: people are more likely to live alone? people are more likely to refuse care due to lack of access to transport? the high cost of services due to reduced economies of scale, lack of service availability, and increased loneliness and social isolation.	

Any other information

The new service delivery model proposes extend the scope of the scheme beyond just older people, to look at supporting others in the community identified to be socially isolated and therefore at risk of needing support and intervention from social care. This includes young mothers, carers, people from ethnic minorities and people from the LGBT community

Because of this, we believe there will be a positive impact on these people groups however further work needs to be under taken to ascertain and conclusively evidence these positive impacts.