



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
Sarah Jeffery	Strategic Commissioning Manager Adults' Health and Care	sarah.jeffery@hants.gov.uk Tel:03707 795184

Title:	Withdrawal of funding for Advocacy and Therapeutic Services for victims of sexual crime
Related EIAs:	EIA Number: HQ-25-B Contracts Review

EIA for Savings Programme:	Yes EIA - AHC-HQ-25-B Contracts Review September 2023
Service affected	<p>The Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy Service (ISVA) is an all-age service for children, young people and adults of any gender that provides practical and emotional support and advice to those who have experienced rape, sexual abuse, assault, violence or sexual exploitation at any point in their lives. The ISVA service provides support for individuals to report a crime if they wish to do so and can provide support throughout the criminal justice process. The Sexual Crime Therapeutic Service (formerly Rape and Sexual Assault Counselling Service (RASAC)) provides one-to-one counselling, other therapeutic support/activities and a telephone helpline to help adults, children and young people, of any age or gender who have experienced sexual abuse, assault, rape or violence at any time in their lives. Both services are pan Hampshire. The ISVA service is jointly funded by the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council. The Sexual Crime Therapeutic Service is jointly funded by the OPCC, NHS England and Improvement, NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board, NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board and Hampshire County Council. HCC currently contributes £16,800 to the ISVA service and £67,398 to the therapeutic service, 6% of the total contract value for the ISVA service and 10% of the total contract value for therapeutic service.</p>
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	<p>Hampshire County Council is proposing to withdraw funding from the ISVA service and Sexual Crime Therapeutic Service. These services are non-statutory for the Council and reducing services to a legal minimum is part of the financial strategy that was approved by the County Council in November 2023 to help meet an anticipated £132 million funding gap by April 2025.</p>
New/changed service/policy/project	<p>Withdrawal of funding by the Council would result in a reduction of 6% of the total contract value for the ISVA service and 10% of the total contract value for therapeutic service on 1 April 2025. This may result in increased waiting times for services.</p>

Engagement

Reductions in services were referenced in the wider Council's *Making the Most of your money* budget consultation. Feedback from this consultation was considered by Full County Council on 9 November 2023 when the Council's savings proposals and financial strategy for 2025/26 were approved. Engagement regarding the proposal to withdraw Council funding from ISVA and Sexual Crime Therapeutic services took place in December 2023. This took the form of emails to all funding partners and service providers requesting that they review the published EIA and provide any further information that needed to be considered. Meetings were held with commissioning managers from the OPCC, NHS England and Improvement, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council (funding partners for ISVA) and all service providers. All service providers and the OPCC provided written information regarding the potential impact of funding reductions in these services. The information provided has been used to update this EIA.

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Negative - Low
Rationale	<p>This proposal may have a disproportionate negative impact on children and young people. 57% of referrals to the ISVA service in 2022/23 were for young people aged between 11 and 25. 42% of referrals were for people aged between 26-64.</p> <p>50% of referrals for the RASAC service in 2022/23 were for people aged 30 and under (11% of referrals were for young people aged 16-17 years). The new Therapeutic Services that commenced in October 2023 are available to children and young people under 16.</p> <p>Providers of services report that a high proportion of clients supported are parents or carers and that services help them to develop healthy coping strategies and be in a strong position to meet their children's needs.</p>
Mitigation	

No reductions in funding would be made by HCC until April 2025 to enable funding partners and service providers to plan any changes to services required. If no alternative funding is identified, funding partners and service providers may wish to review current delivery models to mitigate impact. People waiting for local support services may wish to be signposted to nationally available online and telephone support services such as the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line managed by Rape Crisis (adults only), the Survivors Trust, Victim Support, Safeline and Survivors UK.

Should funding be made available to the County Council for support services for victims of sexual crime, the Council would work collaboratively with the OPCC and other partners to ensure that available funding is allocated in line with strategic priorities. Furthermore, the Council recognises that some victims of sexual crime are also victims/survivors of domestic abuse and will continue to consider the needs of this group through the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership and specialist domestic abuse services.

Disability

Impact on public	Negative - Medium
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Reduction in funding may result in longer waiting times for services which may have a disproportionate negative impact on people with mental health issues. In ISVA services 54% of people using services stated that they experienced mental health issues, 10% said they had a physical or sensory disability and 9% a learning disability. Figures are similar for therapeutic services with 42% of people stating that they experienced mental health issues, 7% a physical or sensory disability and 5% a learning disability.</p> <p>A reduction in funding may increase waiting times for both services which may result in increased anxiety and distress and a decline in mental health, particularly for those with an existing mental health diagnosis. This may mean that more people need to seek help for mental health issues through primary healthcare services and/or a requirement for support from other specialist services such as Mental Health and Children’s Services before an individual is able to respond positively to counselling.</p> <p>Reductions in funding may lead to more groupwork support and a reduction in 1:1 which may be less accessible to individuals with some disabilities such as mental health issues and those who are neurodiverse.</p>

Mitigation	<p>No reductions in funding would be made by HCC until April 2025 to enable funding partners and service providers to plan any changes to services required. If no alternative funding is identified, funding partners and service providers may wish to review current delivery models to mitigate impact. People waiting for local support services may wish to be signposted to nationally available online and telephone support services such as the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line managed by Rape Crisis (adults only), Survivors Trust, Victim Support, Safeline and Survivors UK.</p> <p>Should funding be made available to the County Council for support services for victims of sexual crime, the Council would work collaboratively with the OPCC and other partners to ensure that available funding is allocated in line with strategic priorities. Furthermore, the Council recognises that some victims of sexual crime are also victims/survivors of domestic abuse and will continue to consider the needs of this group through the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership and specialist domestic abuse services .</p>
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Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Whilst no quantitative data is available to assess this impact, there is no indication that there would be disproportionate impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p>
Mitigation	

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Negative - Low

Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Women may be disproportionately impacted by a reduction in services. This could include women who are pregnant or have young children.
Mitigation	<p>No reductions in funding would be made by HCC until April 2025 to enable funding partners and service providers to plan any changes to services required. If no alternative funding is identified, funding partners and service providers may wish to review current delivery models to mitigate impact. People waiting for local support services may wish to be signposted to nationally available online and telephone support services such as the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line managed by Rape Crisis (adults only), Survivors Trust, Victim Support, Safeline and Survivors UK.</p> <p>Should funding be made available to the County Council for support services for victims of sexual crime, the Council would work collaboratively with the OPCC and other partners to ensure that available funding is allocated in line with strategic priorities. Furthermore, the Council recognises that some victims of sexual crime are also victims/survivors of domestic abuse and will continue to consider the needs of this group through the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership and specialist domestic abuse services .</p>

Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There is no indication that there would be disproportionate impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>ISVA 2022/23 data on referrals 67% White British, 3% BME, 3% white other, 27% did not disclose.</p> <p>RASAC 2022/23 data on referrals: 82% White British, 3% mixed race, 3% white other, 2% Asian, 7% did not disclose.</p>

Mitigation	
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Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Whilst no quantitative data is available to assess this impact, there is no indication that there would be disproportionate impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic.
Mitigation	

Sex

Impact on public	Negative - Medium
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Women may be disproportionately impacted by a reduction in services. 85% of people using ISVA and therapeutic services are female.
Mitigation	No reductions in funding would be made by HCC until April 2025 to enable funding partners and service providers to plan any changes to services required. If no alternative funding is identified, funding partners and service providers may wish to review current delivery models to mitigate impact. People waiting for local support services may wish to be signposted to nationally available online and telephone support services such as the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line managed by Rape Crisis (adults only), Survivors Trust, Victim Support, Safeline and Survivors UK.

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Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The cross Governmental Rape Review published in 2021 identified that women who identify as LGBTQ+ are disproportionately more likely to be victims of sexual violence.</p> <p>Hampshire 2022/23 data for ISVA: 42% identified as heterosexual, 8% identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual and 50% did not state or identified as other. Hampshire 2022/23 data for RASAC: 61% identified as heterosexual, 4% as homosexual and 14% as bisexual, 4% preferred to self-describe and 15% did not disclose.</p>
Mitigation	<p>No reductions in funding would be made by HCC until April 2025 to enable funding partners and service providers to plan any changes to services required. If no alternative funding is identified, funding partners and service providers may wish to review current delivery models to mitigate impact. People waiting for local support services may wish to be signposted to nationally available online and telephone support services such as the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line managed by Rape Crisis (adults only), Survivors Trust, Victim Support, Safeline and Survivors UK.</p> <p>Should funding be made available to the County Council for support services for victims of sexual crime, the Council would work collaboratively with the OPCC and other partners to ensure that available funding is allocated in line with strategic priorities. Furthermore, the Council recognises that some victims of sexual crime are also victims/survivors of domestic abuse and will continue to consider the needs of this group through the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership and specialist domestic abuse services.</p>

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Whilst no quantitative data is available to assess this impact, there is no indication that there would be disproportionate impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic.
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	A reduction in funding for therapeutic services would have a greater impact on people who are unable to afford private counselling services. Reduction in funding may also mean that people have to pay to travel further to access in-person services resulting in services being less accessible for those on a budget. If waiting times increase, this may impact on an individual's ability to work and in turn result in an increase in poverty for themselves and their families. Many victims are parents or have caring responsibilities and patterns of trauma and the cycle of families with generations in care could be further embedded, potentially increasing economic and social deprivation.
Mitigation	No reductions in funding would be made by HCC until April 2025 to enable funding partners and service providers to plan any changes to services required. If no alternative funding is identified, funding partners and service providers may wish to

review current delivery models to mitigate impact. People waiting for local support services may wish to be signposted to nationally available online and telephone support services such as the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line managed by Rape Crisis (adults only), Survivors Trust, Victim Support, Safeline and Survivors UK.

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Rurality

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>A reduction in funding may lead to a reduction in available venues for 1:1 counselling. This may mean that people living in more rural areas may have to travel further to access the support they need. This may mean that some people in rural areas are only able to access counselling online.</p>
Mitigation	<p>No reductions in funding would be made by HCC until April 2025 to enable funding partners and service providers to plan any changes to services required. If no alternative funding is identified, funding partners and service providers may wish to review current delivery models to mitigate impact. People waiting for local support services may wish to be signposted to nationally available online and telephone support services such as the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line managed by Rape Crisis (adults only), Survivors Trust, Victim Support, Safeline and Survivors UK.</p> <p>Should funding be made available to the County Council for support services for victims of sexual crime, the Council would work collaboratively with the OPCC and other partners to ensure that available funding is allocated in line with strategic priorities. Furthermore, the Council recognises that some victims of sexual crime are also victims/survivors of domestic abuse and will continue to consider the needs of this group through the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership and specialist domestic abuse services.</p>

Geographical Impact:All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

Whilst Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council do not contribute funding to the pan Hampshire Sexual Crime Therapeutic Services, these two authorities do contribute funding to the ISVA service. Both authorities have expressed concern about the impact of the County Council's potential withdrawal of funding for this service and the potential impact that this may have on services for people in Southampton and Portsmouth as well as those in Hampshire Districts and Boroughs. The OPCC as the lead commissioner and main funding partner for the ISVA service has also highlighted this as a challenge that will need to be considered.

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: 00566

Date of production of EIA for publication: 07/02/2024