

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) SERVICE FORM 2012-2013

Background/ Scope

Name of service	Advice Services Review (A37)
Directorate	CS&DD
Head of EIA Team	June Morley (CCC)
Other members of the EIA team	June Jeffrey (CEN) , Elayne Hill (Coventry Law Centre), Jasvinder Gurm (CCC)

1. Is this EIA being carried out on:

- ☒ An existing service
☐ A new service, or significantly changed service

2. Who are the stakeholders? Are there any other services, directorates, organisations or groups involved in the delivery of this service? Please list below.

Stakeholders include:

- In scope – providers of advice: management, staff and trustee boards (Age UK Coventry, CAB, Coventry Law Centre, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, Coventry Irish Society, Holbrooks Community Care Association, Willenhall Advice Centre, Wood End Advice and Information Centre, Coventry Benefits Advice Line, Money Management Adviser (CCC) and Employment Adviser (CCC), Foleshill 396 (Midland Heart),
- Organisations that frequently refer customers to advice providers (Whitefriars, Coventry Carers Centre, Coventry & Warks Assoc for the Blind, Shine Charity, Coventry University Student Advice Centre, CSWP, in-house Council divisions – e.g Adult Social Care and CLYP,
- Elected members

3. Briefly describe the purpose of this service.

This service provides Coventry residents with "*information, advice and where necessary, representation on matters relating to social welfare law covering areas such as welfare benefits, debt, money matters and housing, community care, immigration and asylum, and employment*".
This phrase is the definition of advice for purposes of the Advice Service Review.

4. Who does this service affect or benefit, and in what way? e.g., school children, all Coventry residents etc.

The service aims to benefit any of Coventry's residents that have a need for accessing advice, but particularly those that are on low incomes. This includes (e.g.) : working age people, disabled people, lone parents, unemployed people, newly arrived communities / residents, people in varying life - transition stages (e.g. new birth, death, redundancy, reaching retirement, health condition diagnosis, new job, partner moving in / leaving etc)

5. What do you know about any equality issues for this type of service both in Coventry and nationally?

Currently: Ethnicity data from baseline report (Advice Review, Nov 2011) shows that there is a relatively high take up of advice from within BME communities.

Example: - % figures are rounded.

Ethnic Group	City average (ONS data)	Customer base at advice provider (averaged)
White British	74%	45%
White Irish	2%	11%
Mixed Ethnicity	2%	2%
Asian / Asian British	12%	17%
Black / Black British	3%	14%
Chinese	1.5%	0.7%

Some anomalies: e.g. Irish and Black /Black British are relatively high owing to specialist provision for people within these groups (e.g. Coventry Irish Society has 94% Irish customer base and CRMC has 50% Black/Black British customer base).

Majority of people accessing services are under 65 years old (just over 70%) – this would compare with national data (Causes of Action data – LSRC) relating to people mainly requiring advice during working/family raising years as most transitional points occur during this time. Also fits with Coventry's profile per ONS 2009 mid-year population estimates:

	Age			
	All	0-15	16-64/59*	65/60+**
All Groups	312,800	60,200	199,000	53,600
White: British	231,700	44,300	143,800	43,600
White: Irish	7,200	200	3,000	4,100
White: Other White	8,800	900	7,000	900
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	3,000	1,600	1,400	0
Mixed: White and Black African	700	300	400	0
Mixed: White and Asian	2,300	1,000	1,300	100
Mixed: Other Mixed	1,400	600	800	0
Asian or Asian British: Indian	24,200	4,700	16,500	2,900
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	9,100	2,500	6,100	500
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	2,400	700	1,600	100
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	2,900	500	2,200	200
Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	3,900	600	2,600	700
Black or Black British: Black African	5,100	900	4,100	100
Black or Black British: Other Black	700	200	500	0
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	4,600	600	3,900	100
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other	4,700	600	4,000	100
Black and minority ethnic groups	81,000	15,900	55,400	9,800

An average (across providers) of 45% of those that use advice services currently were classified as disabled, and also mainly reliant on benefit income, which demonstrates that services are being accessed by this group.

Future impacts:

Nationally, it is expected that the current and forthcoming welfare reforms will have a detrimental effect on people's abilities to cope financially and that this will increase numbers of people who require advice / debt support. This is already being experienced with increased demand within Coventry (CAB quoted in CT 15.5.2012). It is expected that these national reforms will also lead to more people losing their homes / needing to down-size and therefore an increase in the need to access housing advice is anticipated. This will have an adverse impact particularly on working age groups, lone parents, people with disabilities and [in the case of Housing Benefit changes] particularly single people aged under 35.

Changes to legal aid provision (as providers are more limited in whom they are able to support) will further impact on where people who are in need of advice turn to for help.

Austerity measures which will play a key part in increasing levels of demand.

Together, changes to legal aid alongside austerity measures will increase demand for voluntary agency support in many areas. This will impact those that need more specialist services and tribunal representation and could adversely affect disabled people who represent a high proportion of those appealing decisions for welfare benefits.

Consultation

This section on consultation should be completed if this EIA relates to a new or significantly changed service- please see the guidance note on how to carry out consultation

6. Please state who you have consulted with about this service, how you have consulted, whether consultation responses have been received, plus any other relevant information.

Consultation (some in the form of customer insight or focus groups) was carried out with:

- all staff within advice provision agencies
- elected members
- management committees of advice providers
- stakeholders (who refer into advice agencies)
- small sample of general public
- elected members

7. Please summarise the outcome of the consultation exercise.

Consultation showed that:

Advice in Coventry appears somewhat focussed generally to 9-5 Mon-Friday and **predominantly initial access is via "face to face" using a drop in (first come, first served) route. For those that need to attend work, or for parents who need to take children to school this can be limiting. Also, many services have an initial drop in, with customers then expected to attend a later appointment with a caseworker, further impacting on those that need to be in work, or who have certain disabilities or caring responsibilities.

(**some exceptions include: Benefits Advice Line [phone service], CAB [email response service and appointments] and Coventry Law Centre [appointment based]. Most agencies operate a system whereby emergency cases can be seen outside of usual access routes, although this is ad-hoc)

Most services are in the North, East and Central parts of the City with little or no provision based in the more southern and particularly western areas. Although service providers offer services from their key offices to a wider geographical area, statistics show that those who access are from within a half mile radius of the centre in the main. This has an adverse effect on priority neighbourhoods of (particularly) Canley and Tile Hill, and on those that are in more affluent areas (including those elderly persons described as "property rich, income poor").

There is very limited access to language support if English is not the spoken language. The main exception being the CRMC who utilise volunteers with a wide range of language skills, and Coventry Law Centre who can receive funding from LSC. Although noted as available, there is limited evidence of use of interpreters in other agencies. Primary factor limiting usage is financial.

Service provision is most used by those that are *vulnerable (whether this is a permanent state due to physical or mental disability or "transitional" e.g. following a significant health impact (loss of sight / limb / stroke etc) or a life event (birth, death, marriage, divorce, loss of job etc)

Data collection

8. What is your data telling you about your service with regard to equalities?

Please consider issues relating to race, gender (including transgender), disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, poverty, looked after children, and any other issues that you consider to be relevant- inequality is disadvantage in all forms.

Data tells us that:

A relatively high proportion of BME communities (compared to Coventry demographic data) access services. The Benefits Advice Line has an Asian Language line and delivers outreach to Asian support service organisations. Additionally, Age UK have a dedicated Asian speaking post.

Around 45% (from data provided by advice agencies) of those that access advice have described themselves as having a disability

Over 70% of people who accessed services were of working age

Local data shows that the majority of people accessing services are from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, often within a half mile radius of the advice provider's location.

There is little or no outreach service to cover wider disadvantaged areas.

Data is not currently collected to evidence sexual orientation, religion or belief, looked after child status or pregnancy related.

Some of the data collated by agencies is not comparable (e.g. differing age bands utilised and differing ethnic groups)

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9. Is there any way in which you think you need to improve your monitoring systems, so that you can collect better equalities data for this service?

Please refer to the Council's Equality Monitoring Guidance for further information (available on the intranet or from your Directorate Equality Officer)

The service providers need to collect and collate comparable data.

Data needs to include additional required equality strands – e.g. pregnancy related

With reference to the diverse nature of the City, an improved breakdown of nationality would highlight any under-represented groups. Current categories do not do this (e.g. "other white" includes a multitude of European persons and does not demonstrate those that are known to be more vulnerable –e.g. Roma)

Providers need to collate more data on the address of clients to ascertain how to address inequality in areas of disadvantage that are underrepresented.

Assessment

10. How does this service positively promote equality?

The service positively promotes equality by:

- Operating in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods
- Maximising income of those on benefits and low wages
- Assisting those that are ill or disabled to access advice to enable them to live independently in the community
- Offering telephone advice for those that cannot attend appointments (can also be an inequality for those that cannot utilise telephones or do not have access to them)
- Undertaking home visits (not all services)
- Undertaking hospital visits (not all services)
- Being non-judgemental
- Supporting people through life transition points (e.g. maternity related, age related, income related)
- Offering access to Asian language speakers
- Outreach to Asian support organisations
- Providing interpreters or signers where needed (not all services)
- Discrimination casework undertaken (not all services)

11. How does this service contribute towards improving relationships between different communities?

The service contributes towards improving relationships between different communities by

- Reducing inequalities created by poverty by supporting people to access incomes they are entitled to (social access via increased income)
- Reducing personal stress by supporting resolution of personal issues (e.g. issues relating to the definition of advice on section 3)
- Provision of assistance to new communities in resolving immigration issues and access to services – enables them to settle and integrate into the city

12. Are there any areas of low or high take-up by different groups of people?

Yes.

If yes, please give details.

Based on our current data we have:

- High comparative take up by people with disabilities.
- High take up of BME communities
- High take up by those in priority neighbourhoods with access to service within half mile of address

13. Does analysis by ward or area show that there are different parts of the city that are particularly disadvantaged or excluded?

Yes

If yes, please give details.

Majority of take up is within priority neighbourhoods. This demonstrates a positive impact on equalities.
Those in more affluent wards have lesser take up, but often lesser need. One exception to this is those that access Age UK Coventry's service as many older people reside in more affluent areas, but need access to age related services.

14. Are there any barriers to equal access?

Yes

If yes, please give details.

Working age group – often unable to attend weekday appointments (particularly if operated as a "drop in to get a later appointment" as this means 2 visits are required.)

Single / working parents – unable to attend early queues to gain appointment where it is a drop-in as they have children to get to school etc.

Disabled persons without carer support unable to stand in queues to access drop in at some agencies

Older people who live in priority neighbourhoods as they may not have access to vehicles and cannot walk to local centres, opting to attend services centrally based as they can access via bus routes.

Limited on-line self help for those that are not able to access phone services or drop-in appointments and would need home visits for face-to-face.

No consistency in availability of language access

No consistency in availability of, or criteria for, home visits

15. Are there any barriers to equality of outcomes for different service users?

Yes

No

If yes, please give details.

This has not been captured by current data and will need consideration for the new service delivery model.

16. Has there been any improvement?

New framework for delivery as part of the Advice Service Review will seek to ensure that there is a positive impact on equalities

Summary

17. Please indicate which of the following best describes the outcome of your EIA.
You may tick both the first two boxes if both are applicable.

- √ ☐ This service is having a positive equalities impact
- √ ☐ This service has identified a need to address some equalities issues
- ☐ There wasn't enough information to be able to draw any conclusions.
- ☐ This service is having no equalities impact

Developing equality actions

If this EIA has identified that this service needs to be improved in order to promote equality and diversity positively, please explain how you plan to do this.

You should develop equality actions and insert the key actions in the table below. Strategic equality actions should be embedded into operational plans.

Action	Timescales/ Milestones	Who will monitor this?	How/ where will this be embedded?
Gaps to be addressed in new delivery model once it is agreed and approved.	New model to be in place from April 2014. From April 2013, grant agreements will include a need to capture consistent data	Contract /grant aid agreement manager at City Council will oversee data capture requirements and undertake EIA's based on required cycle.	In future contract / grant aid agreement details

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Approval

This EIA has been completed by:

Signed (Head of EIA Team) _____

Name (please print) June Morley

Date June 2012

Countersigned: (Review Sponsor – Carl Pearson) _____

Date: _____

Please brief your Head of Service on the results of this EIA, as soon as possible.

It is essential that this EIA is also discussed by your Directorate Management Team, and remains readily available for inspection.

A copy of this signed review should then be forwarded to your Directorate Equality Officer.