

# **Cumulative Equalities Impact Assessment**

## **Voluntary Sector Spending Review**

### **Introduction and context**

Havering has a diverse community made up of many different groups and individuals. The Council values diversity and believes it essential to try to understand the different contributions, perspectives and experience that people from different backgrounds bring to our community.

### **The Public Sector Equality Duties and Financial Decisions**

The recent downturn in the economic climate has had a significant impact on public authorities. Financial constraints have already resulted in many authorities, including Havering, making important decisions about the services they provide. These decisions include efficiency drives, budget reductions, reorganisations, redundancies and service reductions.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is concerned that some decisions may have a disproportionate effect on certain groups of people, and may be contrary to the statutory equality obligations to which public authorities are subject. While acknowledging the difficult economic environment in which public authorities are now operating, the Commission is emphasising the mandatory nature of the equality duties, and the importance of public authorities meeting their duties when making significant decisions. The equality duties are legal obligations which should remain a priority, even in times of economic difficulty. The duties are a valuable tool to help ensure that decisions do not create or perpetuate inequality.

To ensure that its services and decisions do not discriminate against or adversely affect any equality group differently, the Council undertakes Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) of individual propositions and Cumulative Equality Impact Assessments of packages of proposals that are related to one another (e.g. as a result of the annual budget setting process). This analysis is currently being undertaken in respect of the voluntary sector spending review. The individual EIAs and this overarching, cumulative EIA of the entire package of proposals identify what effect, or likely effect, will follow from the implementation of the review for different groups in the community.

Each relevant service area has identified existing arrangements that can be reduced, reconfigured or decommissioned in order to achieve the required savings. Each individual proposal has been subject to an EIA which sets out how the Council will work with providers and service users to ensure the impact of the loss or reduction of service is minimised as far

as possible. For example, where services have been identified as being duplicated or delivered by more than one agency it is proposed that such duplication be removed. Similarly, where services can be reconfigured or are shown to be underused proposals have been put forward to make contributions to the required savings in these areas. Where possible, the Council's overarching approach to achieving the target savings necessary from the voluntary sector review has been to focus its limited resources on those with the greatest needs and bringing together existing disparate arrangements to allow as many services as possible to continue being delivered but in a manner that is more cost effective to the local authority.

As with most public sector organisations, the achievement of budget reductions in Havering is an ongoing process and as such the EIAs supporting the review, as well as this Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment, are living documents that will continue to be updated as the review progresses.

## **Findings of the Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment and Mitigating Actions**

Our analysis of the potential impacts of all of our spending review proposals has shown that there may be some cumulative impacts on the following groups of people:

- **Children and young people**

These specific proposals will impact directly on children and young people; on those services designed for and specifically targeted at certain age ranges and cohorts of children and young people (such as looked after children, children who go missing and children identified as being at risk of absconding) and those more generally available to these age groups. However, this must be seen in the context of the council's overall expenditure on children and young people rising subsequently to accommodate additional demands to safeguard young people through the council's statutory children's services and through continued investment in early help.

The number of children and young people (aged under 25) in the borough increased between 2012 and 2013 by 1,165. Havering has also experienced the largest net inflow of children across all London boroughs. Across the five year period from 2009 to 2013, a total of 5,134 children settled in the borough from another London Borough. The young people population of the borough is expected to continue growing over the next five years, by around 16% between 2015 and 2030, with the greatest percentage increase (31%) expected to be seen in those aged 11-17 years.

As a result of these proposals, services that support children and young people with specific needs will be reconfigured and there will be a different range of services for all children and young people to access. Some of the services and activities currently available within local communities will no longer be funded by the local authority.

To mitigate the impacts of this as far as possible, the Council has worked with providers to develop better and earlier types of help and services to support children, young people and families to prevent their needs from escalating. Where possible the Council has sought to protect or reconfigure services so that they are delivered in the most cost effective ways possible. By doing this the Council has sought to ensure that children and young people in the borough have access to the widest range of opportunities to achieve their potential within the financial envelope that is available. Increasingly, as resources reduce, we will be targeting our resources on the most vulnerable children and families.

- **Carers (including parents and families)**

A number of these specific proposals impact on parents, carers and families, with several impacting on young carers in particular. Young carers play a vital role in supporting siblings and parents with additional needs and disabilities. Council services, including those commissioned from the voluntary sector, in turn support many of them either directly or indirectly, and the proposed changes to these services as a result of the voluntary sector spending review will impact on young carers to some degree. However, this must be seen in the context of the council's overall expenditure on other children and young people and adult social care rising subsequently to accommodate additional demands to safeguard both young people and adults through the council's statutory children's and adults services and through continued investment in early help.

It has been identified that some of the services currently commissioned for this cohort are underutilised and that the eligibility criteria for accessing the services is not being fully met in some areas, so where possible it is intended to contribute savings from these contracts in order to minimise the impact. In some instances, services will be re-commissioned against a more limited financial envelope and a more robust service specification that is better matched to service users' current needs in order to address the quality and capacity issues identified through the review as well as to achieve savings. It is also intended to bring together several of the current varied and disparate contracts provisions into a single service specification for all young carers services so that, as far as possible, services will continue to be available to young carers but will be provided in a manner that is more cost effective for the local authority. During the tender process the Council will be seeking assurance from bidders that they are able to meet the needs of young carers from a variety of ages and backgrounds in order to ensure that services provided going forward continue to meet the needs of all young carers across the borough.

Some of the services currently delivered to young carers by the voluntary sector will be brought in-house and delivered by the Council's Early Help team. Through bringing these services in-house the Council aims to increase the capacity and also improve the communication between the provider and the referring social worker. The Early Help team will use the same case management system (CCM), minimising potential delays and information-sharing difficulties. The Early Help service is part of the same management team as Children's Social Care, meaning that monitoring of performance

can take place on a more frequent basis with rapid response to concerns. The proposal will also facilitate greater consistency of approach across age ranges and cohorts of children and young people to functions such as young carers assessments and give existing Council staff opportunities to develop new skill sets.

Some of the proposals are also expected to have positive impacts on carers and families – for example, the proposed strengthening of the family therapy service, which can now be achieved due to proposed reductions in other services commissioned from the voluntary and community sector.

- **People with Disabilities**

It has been identified that the proposed package of proposals will have cumulative impacts on people with disabilities, and particularly children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). There may be longer waiting times for services, or indeed a reduced level of services available for some service users. However, this must be seen in the context of the council's overall expenditure on other children and young people and adult social care rising subsequently to accommodate additional demands to safeguard both young people and adults through the council's statutory children's and adults services and through continued investment in early help.

According to the latest ONS Annual Population Survey (January 2014 – December 2014), 18% of working age people living in Havering have disclosed that they have a disability or long-term illness. This is similar to the national proportion (19%).

According to the School Census, in 2013 37,602 pupils in maintained primary and secondary schools and special schools had Special Education Needs (SEN). The most common categories of LDD are Moderate Learning Disabilities (30%), Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (19%) Speech, Language and Communication Needs (17%). The number of children in Havering with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is expected to increase, most significantly among primary school age children. Current projections suggest an overall increase of 7.5% across all categories of LDD by 2017.

To mitigate the impacts of the proposed changes impacting on these cohorts, the proposed savings have been split over two years where possible, in order to give both providers and service users more time to prepare for and manage the changes. Where possible, current multiple and disparate contracts will also be brought together and streamlined so that services remain available for these service users but are provided in a manner that is more cost effective to the local authority.

It has also been identified through the review that some of the services currently commissioned from the voluntary sector specifically for children and young people with certain additional needs (e.g. ADHD) are available within mainstream provision. Where this is the case, it is intended to redirect the recipients of these children towards

mainstream provision where this is appropriate. This fits with the Council's overall strategy to move children and young people with SEND into mainstream provision wherever this is possible and appropriate, to allow more expensive and specialist provision to be focused on those children and young people with the greatest needs.

Where it has been identified that there is currently duplication of service provision and some of these services are to be decommissioned, existing recipients of the services to be decommissioned will be signposted to other services available in the community that are able to meet their needs.

## **Other Mitigating Actions**

As well as the actions described above, all providers that are proposed to receive funding reductions as a result of the voluntary sector spending review will be offered support from the Council's Community Development team to identify and apply for alternative funding sources. As the Council is increasingly moving away from a grant giving to a commissioning approach, it is also planned to deliver procurement / tendering workshops for voluntary and community sector organisations in January / February 2016, to help maximise their potential to tender successfully to deliver commissioned services going forward.

Some of the organisations impacted by the proposals had already foreseen the probable impacts of reducing levels of funding being available from both the local authority and other sources and have already started taking active steps to secure alternative funding and to reduce their operating costs in line with the future level of resource that is likely to be available to them. Such organisations will be supported by the Council with their efforts in this regard should they wish.

During the various re-commissioning and retendering processes arising out of the review, bids for new services will also be welcomed on a consortium basis where appropriate. This means that smaller providers need not be disadvantaged as a result of the Council's intentions to bring together current disparate arrangements into larger and broader contracts and funding agreements.

A new Voluntary Sector Strategy and accompanying action plan was also adopted by the Council in June 2015, setting out how the Council will work to support the sector going forward, particularly in the context of being unable to provide as much financial support to the sector in future as has previously been the case. Progress in achieving the action plan is monitored by a cross-departmental steering group and reported regularly to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.