

City of York Council
Annex B Equalities Impact Assessment

Who is submitting the proposal?

Directorate:	Customer & Communities		
Service Area:	Customer & Communities		
Name of the proposal :	Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welfare Benefits Unit SLA - Community Involvement Officer (Food) 		
Lead officer:	Pauline Stuchfield		
Date assessment completed:	3/2/2022		
Names of those who contributed to the assessment :			
Name	Job title	Organisation	Area of expertise
Pauline Stuchfield	Director of Customer & Communities	CYC	Customers, Communities. Financial Inclusion

Step 1 – Aims and intended outcomes

1.1	<p>What is the purpose of the proposal? Please explain your proposal in Plain English avoiding acronyms and jargon.</p>
	<p>To extend the Welfare Benefits Unit Service Level Agreement for an additional 3 years at a cost of £22,700 per annum. The creation of an officer role to focus on community development work addressing food poverty and meeting the priorities as set down in the council motion on 'York Residents' Right to Food' especially supporting the establishment of a food network. There will be a cost of £39k for one year.</p>
1.2	<p>Are there any external considerations? (Legislation/government directive/codes of practice etc.)</p>
	<p>This is discretionary activity but all of which supports our local equalities protected characteristic around people experiencing financial difficulty.</p>
1.3	<p>Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?</p>
	<p>The key stake holders are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council in providing welfare support for its residents and capacity to address a full council motion on food poverty • The residents of the city who will benefit from any support provided – this could include people who represent all communities with protected characteristics

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third sector agencies who provide similar support and or advice and benefit either from the advice of the Welfare Benefit Unit or will contribute to coproducing food solutions in the city. |
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1.4	<p>What results/outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom? This section should explain what outcomes you want to achieve for service users, staff and/or the wider community. Demonstrate how the proposal links to the Council Plan (2019- 2023) and other corporate strategies and plans.</p>
	<p>The Welfare Benefits Unit (WBU) provides a specialist welfare benefits advice service to advisers and others who work with members of the public. The team of experienced advisers provide independent support through their advice line, publications, training and consultancy. WBU support is critical in supporting the council's response to welfare benefits changes. This ensures that all our benefits advisers across the city are up to date with their skills and have additional support on complex issues which all contributes to hopefully better opportunity to secure the right welfare support for York's residents.</p> <p>The Community Involvement Officer for Food will immediately create capacity to deliver on full Council's expectations in relation to addressing food poverty impacts. The outcomes hoped for from this work will be evident in terms of improved co-ordination of available resources, improved access to food where needed, improved health, reduced isolation and reduction in food waste. Related activities will be focussed in areas of need and communities currently feeling the greatest impact of food insufficiency. The person will work closely with residents and organisations working within communities to co-produce solutions.</p>

Step 2 – Gathering the information and feedback

2.1	What sources of data, evidence and consultation feedback do we have to help us understand the impact of the proposal on equality rights and human rights? Please consider a range of sources, including: consultation exercises, surveys, feedback from staff, stakeholders, participants, research reports, the views of equality groups, as well your own experience of working in this area etc.	
Source of data/supporting evidence	Reason for using	
<p>The Welfare Benefits Unit are a 2nd tier service and so residents do not see this service. Evidence is provided from advice providers ie direct users of the service.</p>	<p>Advice Line survey feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valuable service provided by knowledgeable people, who give an excellent service, even with on the spot questions. • It is amazing! I could not do my job without this service. It allows me to understand sometimes very complex benefits issues and then advise members of the public and help them to understand in turn. • Excellent service that I am relatively new to but I have every confidence in the knowledgeability of your staff when it comes to benefits. • An excellent service which provides a lifeline to me in my job • I really valued the speed of your response and the comprehensive answer that I received. Many thanks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always excellent comprehensive advice received • The support you provide is essential to my work, it means I can confidently advise the people I support and know that the information is accurate • Really useful and helpful service – I would find it hard to do my job without it • I was very impressed with the service, from the initial phone call and information I was given during this phone call, to the follow-up emails I received with further information that the person had sought themselves to give me a better understanding of the issue I was dealing with. Will definitely use the service again if needs be. Thank you. • It's brilliant and I couldn't manage without it! 	
<p>Food role - The evidence is the full Council Motion itself and key actions</p>	<p>The key actions for this role include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the setting up of a food partnership to bring together local stakeholders, including members of the community who have provided informal food banks, to develop a local food action plan to help address the causes of food poverty, which will report back to the Health Policy and Scrutiny Committee. • Building on work throughout the pandemic, makes the focus of the Community Hubs Strategy to facilitate the setting up of 'community kitchens' in buildings such as community centres, council-run centres and school kitchens that are out of use during school holidays, so they can be used by the community to provide good quality, nutritional food for residents in need. 	

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys informal food bank providers to get a clear picture of the amount of informal food bank use in York. |
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Step 3 – Gaps in data and knowledge

3.1	What are the main gaps in information and understanding of the impact of your proposal? Please indicate how any gaps will be dealt with.		
	Gaps in data or knowledge	Action to deal with this	
	Both of these proposals seek to put in place activities and resources to address in gaps in knowledge about complex welfare benefits issues and about food insufficiency and associated solutions	No further action. If the proposals are not supported then there is a risk that we will operate without detailed information and solutions which will then have a detrimental effect on some our residents who are suffering from the impacts of poverty and hunger.	

Step 4 – Analysing the impacts or effects.

4.1	Please consider what the evidence tells you about the likely impact (positive or negative) on people sharing a protected characteristic, i.e. how significant could the impacts be if we did not make any adjustments? Remember the duty is also positive – so please identify where the proposal offers opportunities to promote equality and/or foster good relations.			
	Equality Groups and Human Rights.	Key Findings/Impacts	Positive (+) Negative (-) Neutral (0)	Medium (M) Low (L)

Age	The recommendations in this report will bring positive support and outcomes for this group with added benefits of addressing social isolation in relation to food activity and provision.	Positive (+)	High (H) impacts if the decisions were not supported
Disability	The recommendations in this report will bring positive support and outcomes for this group who may have complex needs in relation to welfare benefits and food	Positive (+)	As above
Gender	n/a		
Gender Reassignment	n/a		
Marriage and civil partnership	n/a		
Pregnancy and maternity	n/a		
Race	The recommendations in this report will bring positive support and outcomes for this group who may have complex needs in relation to welfare benefits and food The pandemic is known to have greater impacts on BAME communities.	Positive (+)	High
Religion and belief	n/a		
Sexual orientation	n/a		
Other Socio-economic groups including :	Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?		

Carer	Yes if living in poverty and little access to support	Positive (+)	High
Low income groups	Yes	Positive (+)	High
Veterans, Armed Forces Community	Yes if living in poverty	Positive (+)	High
Other			
Impact on human rights:			
List any human rights impacted.	None		

Use the following guidance to inform your responses:

Indicate:

- Where you think that the proposal could have a **POSITIVE** impact on any of the equality groups like promoting equality and equal opportunities or improving relations within equality groups
- Where you think that the proposal could have a **NEGATIVE** impact on any of the equality groups, i.e. it could disadvantage them
- Where you think that this proposal has a **NEUTRAL** effect on any of the equality groups listed below i.e. it has no effect currently on equality groups.

It is important to remember that a proposal may be highly relevant to one aspect of equality and not relevant to another.

<p>High impact (The proposal or process is very equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is significant potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or public facing The proposal has consequences for or affects significant numbers of people The proposal has the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights.</p>
<p>Medium impact (The proposal or process is somewhat equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is some evidence to suggest potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or across services, but mainly internal The proposal has consequences for or affects some people The proposal has the potential to make a contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>
<p>Low impact (The proposal or process might be equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is little evidence to suggest that the proposal could result in adverse impact The proposal operates in a limited way The proposal has consequences for or affects few people The proposal may have the potential to contribute to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>

Step 5 - Mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts

5.1	<p>Based on your findings, explain ways you plan to mitigate any unlawful prohibited conduct or unwanted adverse impact. Where positive impacts have been identified, what is been done to optimise opportunities to advance equality or foster good relations?</p>
<p>The recommendations will have positive impacts as the purpose is to provide support both financial and food support and solutions for some of our most vulnerable residents. Community development activities and co-production activities will ensure residents and partners are involved in generating solutions.</p>	

Step 6 – Recommendations and conclusions of the assessment

6.1	<p>Having considered the potential or actual impacts you should be in a position to make an informed judgement on what should be done. In all cases, document your reasoning that justifies your decision. There are four main options you can take:</p>
<p>- No major change to the proposal – the EIA demonstrates the proposal is robust. There is no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact and you have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitor and review.</p>	

- **Adjust the proposal** – the EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance quality or to foster good relations.
- **Continue with the proposal** (despite the potential for adverse impact) – you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and how you believe the decision is compatible with our obligations under the duty
- **Stop and remove the proposal** – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should consider stopping the proposal altogether. If a proposal leads to unlawful discrimination it should be removed or changed.

Important: If there are any adverse impacts you cannot mitigate, please provide a compelling reason in the justification column.

Option selected	Conclusions/justification
No major change to the proposal.	<p>The proposal on the Welfare Benefits Unit will continue to supply support needed at this critical time.</p> <p>The Community Involvement Officer will enhance involvement of communities in the solutions to meet the priorities outlined in the report.</p>

Step 7 – Summary of agreed actions resulting from the assessment

7.1 What action, by whom, will be undertaken as a result of the impact assessment.			
Impact/issue	Action to be taken	Person responsible	Timescale
N/a			

Step 8 - Monitor, review and improve

8. 1	How will the impact of your proposal be monitored and improved upon going forward? Consider how will you identify the impact of activities on protected characteristics and other marginalised groups going forward? How will any learning and enhancements be capitalised on and embedded?
	All related activity will reported through the Financial Inclusion Steering Group and mid-year and outturn financial inclusion report to the Executive Portfolio Holders