

Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: Finance and Resources	
Service: Finance	
Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Laretta Vitalis	
Date of Assessment: 20.02.2020	
Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Local Welfare Provision Scheme 2020-21	
1.	<p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>The <u>changes</u> to the Local Welfare Provision Scheme 2020-21.</p>
2.	<p>Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function? State if this is undertaken by more than one team, service, and department including any external partners.</p> <p>The policy is delivered by the Local Welfare Provision Team (Customer Service), whose role it is to accept all applications, analyse them, request such supporting information as they see fit and assess how much Local Welfare Provision Payment a person will be entitled to within the bounds of the scheme. If the Customer disagrees with the assessment they have the right to ask SBC to review the decision and if the decision stands the Customer has a right to appeal to the ombudsman as the next stage as this is a discretionary scheme and does not have another independent review body.</p>
3.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc. Please consider all of the Protected Characteristics listed (more information is available in the background information). Bear in mind that people affected by the proposals may well have more than one protected characteristic.</p> <p>All those who live in the borough and are experiencing hardship can apply for Local Welfare Provision.</p> <p>The scheme is a discretionary scheme set up to assist those people who are facing hardship for any number of reasons including those affected by the Welfare Reform changes, those who would in the past have been given a crisis loan from the DWP those who may have been given a budgeting loan from the DWP also those suffering financial hardship where additional help can be given – the budget is cash limited.</p> <p>The policy is generic to help all groups, to provide support to all parts of the community affected and to assist them when they are</p>

experiencing hardship, though some groups are highlighted in the policy it does not preclude any one group.

o Age – the policy provides assistance to young adults leaving care children aged 16 and 17 and young adults by helping them purchase white goods and furniture to set up a home of their own, it also assists people experiencing domestic violence to set up a new home as well as those leaving prison.

o Disability - Under the previous national scheme disabled people were a significant beneficiary population of social fund provision. They accounted for 32.4% of Community Care Grants expenditure and 18.5% of Crisis Loans in 2012-13. People with disabilities, long term health and mental health conditions remain over-represented amongst local welfare provision applicants.

o Pregnancy and maternity – while the policy is generic priority for assistance will be given to pregnant mothers and those with young children to assist them in keeping their homes warm and to provide food.

o Race - While no data appears to be available on the ethnicity of local welfare provision recipients as a whole it is logical to assume that minority groups are over-represented in the beneficiary profile. Local welfare provision is designed to help those on very low incomes, and black and minority ethnic-headed households are at a higher risk of poverty than non- black and minority ethnic -headed households. The latest data shows, for example that the poverty risk for minority-headed households ranges from 25-44 percent compared to 15 percent for non- black and minority ethnic -headed households.

o Other - Applications from women and especially women fleeing domestic violence is a critical group which allows them to set up a new home.

With regard to the following there is no specific impact though as the policy is open to all

o Religion and Belief

o Sex

o Sexual orientation

o Gender Reassignment

o Marriage and Civil Partnership

This policy aims to assist some of the most vulnerable people in the community and needs to be simple and easily implemented and understood. This is why each claim is considered individually and customers are given all of the support they need to access the scheme. Officers in Benefits, Revenues, Customers Service, and Housing are fully aware of Local Welfare Provision and the process of claiming.

	<p>Whilst the scheme for 2019-20 was changed to incorporate priority applications from those who are in food poverty in the first instance, ongoing requests with regards to food, cookers and fridges have meant that policy for 2020-21 will continue to prioritise these over all other requests.</p>
4.	<p>What are any likely positive impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? You may wish to refer to the Equalities Duties detailed in the background information.</p> <p>None from the changes to the scheme for 2020-21</p>
5.	<p>What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? If so then are any particular groups affected more than others and why?</p> <p>The LWP scheme provides assistance in the main for people who have the need to purchase food, and for essential utilities. In addition the next priority is for fridges and cookers, thereby making the first overall priority of the LWP to ensure that customers have food and can cook and store it.</p> <p>As the spend on food has increased we have prioritised food across all the group/s identified above.</p> <p>In addition where possible, and the budget allows LWP will assist people to move to cheaper alternative accommodation by helping with removal costs as this has a long term aim of assisting with making more disposable income. The next priority identified is Travel to and from interviews to support people into work again this assists in households having more disposable income in the longer term.</p> <p>The final priority is provision of beds and bedding, this will assist people moving from temporary accommodation into more affordable accommodation as some households in temporary accommodation have no goods to help them move to their new accommodation, however as this is lower on the priority list it will depend on the budget available and may preclude people from moving. There are budgeting advances available from the DWP but they are not usually immediate and are only for a limited amount of money.</p>
6.	<p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Please state evidence sources and conclusions drawn (e.g. survey results, customer complaints, monitoring data etc).</p> <p>This is based on an evaluation of the payments made over the last four years and the reason for the payments. It has also taken into consideration a survey carried out by the DWP and a further survey by the Centre for Responsible Credit (CfRC) the outcomes of those survey's.</p>

7.	<p>Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results, e.g. have the staff forums/unions/ community groups been involved?</p> <p>Housing Department representative</p>
8.	<p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations?</p> <p>Yes</p>
9.	<p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? For example what plans, if any, will be put in place to reduce the impact?</p> <p>There are none within our gift that can reduce the impact.</p>
10.	<p>What plans do you have in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? (The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented). Please see action plan below.</p> <p>The current spend is monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that the spend remains within budget, the details of the customers that receive LWP are available to the Head of Customer Centric Services who regularly monitors the payments made, and ensures that the payments made are in line with the policy. They also monitor the refusals made.</p>

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply	✓
Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	✓
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified? (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 3: Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You will need to ensure that the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact (see questions below). (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (Complete action plan).	

Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

At this stage a timetabled Action Plan should be developed to address any concerns/issues related to equality in the existing or proposed policy/service or function. This plan will need to be integrated into the appropriate Service/Business Plan.

Action	Target Groups	Lead Responsibility	Outcomes/Success Criteria	Monitoring & Evaluation	Target Date	Progress to Date

Name: Signed:Lauretta Vitalis(Person completing the EIA)
Name:Neil Wilcox Signed:(Policy Lead if not same as above)
Date: 20 February 2020