

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00277 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Social Work Adult Services Community Care	Lead Officer Name:	Andrew Strickland
		Team:	Policy, Performance and Planning
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Proposal:	<p>Establishment of the Living Well Advice Hub.</p> <p>Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership plan to adopt the Near Me system (originally developed by the NHS as Attend Anywhere) as a means of accessing Community Led Support. Near Me is essentially a web-based video conferencing system with a waiting room that allows people to drop-in and speak with the individual that happens to be on-call. Near Me will be supported by the use of a new app to record a summary of any discussions facilitated via the Near Me system, including any onward signposting to other organisations. This will be known as the Living Well Advice Hub (Hub) and will initially be undertaken as a 3 month pilot.</p> <p>The Hub will be based on 'The Well' model that has been adopted by Fife HSCP. The Well is described as 'places where you can go to be listened to and have a conversation about what's important to you regarding your health and wellbeing. Here you are directed to support that best meet your needs. Our friendly, well-informed staff will support you to access a wide range of information that promotes your health and wellbeing. The Well brings together those who know all about health and social care in your local community such as Local Area Coordinators, Housing Officers, Social Work, Social Security Benefits and a range of other community, health and social care staff. At the Well you will have a good conversation about what matters to you, whether this is about living a healthier lifestyle, having meaningful activities or living independently in your own home.'</p>	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
		No	No	No

Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	No	No
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

23/07/2021	People are able to access community led support via the Near Me video consultation system.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:		Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average	
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:		
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:		
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:		
	End Date (if any):		

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

As a new service, the Living Well Advice Hub does not yet have any data on the uptake of the service.

The Scottish Government conducted their own evaluation of Near Me. The evaluation included a survey that found the main benefits included saving travel (stated by 72% of the sample), convenience (62%), saving time (57%) and saving money (39%). Relatively few negatives were reported by service users. The main negative was not being able to hear the responder properly (7% of respondents) and not being able to see the responder properly (4%), with some saying that a face to face appointment would have been better (3%).

B - Qualitative Evidence This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

The Scottish Government evaluation of Near Me found that:

'There were a number of social and clinical circumstances in which video was considered preferable over face to face, and enhanced access for hard to reach groups. In particular, it improved equity of access for patients experiencing travel and/or mobility problems due to frailty and multi-morbidity and patients with fear or anxiety engaging with clinical services. But whilst the technology may help engage these groups, the digital medium also risks excluding those with low digital literacy and confidence, and/or limited access to the technology.'

We will gather further evidence during the period of the pilot that will help us to evaluate the impact of our use of Near Me on various equality groups. When a service user has finished a call they have the option to complete a survey regarding their experience of using Near Me. The survey includes equality monitoring information, which will assist us to identify any adverse impacts upon people with protected characteristics.

Best Judgement:	
Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	No
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	Yes
If NO, please state why.	

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	No	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.		
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.	Engagement has been conducted as part of the national Equality Impact Assessment on the Near Me system. The implications will be the same for our use of Near Me in regard to the Living Well Advice Hub.	
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	No	
Survey	No	
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify		
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	No	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes / No	
Is further engagement recommended?	No	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age		✓		<p>Near Me reduces travel time, inconvenience and risk of infection from Covid 19 with benefits for all age cohorts.</p> <p>Digital exclusion and lack of confidential or suitable space may be barriers for some older people.</p>
Disability		✓		<p>Near Me reduces travel time, inconvenience and risk of infection from Covid 19. Not having to travel has the potential to reduce distress (e.g. for people with chronic pain, anxiety and mobility issues).</p> <p>Being able to access the services via video calls will make services more accessible to people with mobility problems.</p>
Sex		✓		<p>There may be differences in benefits and barriers for lone parent households, the majority of which are headed by women.</p> <p>Confidentiality and domestic violence within a household may be barriers to using the video consultation system within the home.</p>

Ethnicity		✓		<p>Interpreters will be able to join virtual appointments to ensure effective support but without either having to travel. Where desirable it will also facilitate extended family member to join consultations, including from overseas.</p> <p>It may support some BAME communities (i.e. those people working for small commercial businesses, who work anti-social hours or who have irregular working hours) attend appointments.</p> <p>Near Me reduces travel time, inconvenience, and risk of infection. The research has shown that people with BAME background are more likely to be impacted by Covid-19.</p> <p>Digital exclusion and inclusive guidance and information on Near Me for people who do not speak English is a barrier to using Near Me.</p>
Religion / Belief / non-Belief			✓	<p>Religion, belief or non-belief may be a factor in citizens stating they are only willing to meet with either males staff or female staff (for example, to talk about their toileting or personal care needs). During the pilot, the service will operate on a drop-in basis, therefore the choice of a male / female responder cannot be guaranteed.</p> <p>It may also be the case that citizens' religion, belief or non-belief requires them to be accompanied to their appointment. Near Me is able to accommodate any such requests.</p>
Sexual Orientation		✓		<p>Near Me may assist the LGBT community by removing barriers based on traditional service delivery model and enabling a safe space to hold an appointment.</p> <p>Potential barriers around consent and perceived lack of confidentiality.</p>
Transgender		✓		<p>Near Me may assist people who are considering or have undergone gender reassignment by removing barriers based on traditional service delivery model and enabling a safe space to hold an appointment.</p>
Pregnancy / Maternity		✓		<p>Near Me reduces travel time, inconvenience and risk of infection from Covid 19.</p>
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			<p>There is no evidence to suggest Near Me has any impact upon marriage or civil partnership.</p>

Poverty			✓	Near Me reduces travel time, inconvenience and risk of infection from Covid 19. Digital exclusion may be a barrier for people living in poverty to access Near Me.
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.		✓		Carers - Near Me reduces travel time, inconvenience and risk of infection from Covid 19.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)				

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	Near Me does not create unlawful discrimination.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	The introduction of Near Me provides an additional means of accessing services, which will help to advance equality of opportunity for people that have been unable to access services by alternative methods.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	Not applicable.

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	No	
Councils	Yes	The Social Work Service will potentially receive referrals from the Living Well Advice Hub and might also be able to refer individuals to the Hub.
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	Yes	NHS services are not directly involved in the project at the moment, but there is the potential to link with them in future.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	The Living Well Advice Hub has been created to encourage people to access Community Led Support, which is in line with the aims of the IJB.
Police	No	
Third Sector	Yes	The Living Well Advice Hub has been created to encourage people to access Community Led Support from the third sector.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.		

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
Lack of a safe and confidential space to conduct a video appointment.	Particularly carers or those with disabilities and situations where domestic violence is occurring.	Continue to maintain choice and appropriate deployment of consultation type including face to face appointments. Consider the need for local hubs / rooms to access Near Me.	Policy & Research Officer		The project supports our outcome that 'Individuals, their carers and families can plan and manage their own health, care and well-being. Where supports are required, people have control and choice over what and how care is provided'.
Lack of inclusive communication of Near Me information limits use.	People where English is not their first language, have a learning disability or low literacy skills.	Develop inclusive communication and guidance materials for using Near Me, including easy read, languages other than English and bespoke to groups as required. Establish processes to enable interpreters to join Near Me appointments where appropriate.	Communications Officer		The project supports our outcome that 'Individuals, their carers and families can plan and manage their own health, care and well-being. Where supports are required, people have control and choice over what and how care is provided'.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
People who are digitally excluded for whatever reason.	Particularly for younger and older people, minority ethnic populations including gypsy travellers, homeless people, rural and remote communities, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds.	Continue to maintain choice and appropriate deployment of consultation type including face to face appointments.	Policy & Research Officer		The project supports our outcome that 'Individuals, their carers and families can plan and manage their own health, care and well-being. Where supports are required, people have control and choice over what and how care is provided'.

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

Are actions being reported to Members?	No
If yes when and how ?	

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	Yes	On balance the proposal is beneficial to all equality groups. Services can also be accessed by alternative methods (e.g. telephone, face-to-face) if Near Me is not suitable.
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Andrew Strickland</i>	Date:	23/08/2021
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:	Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes
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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS	This model is closely based on "The Well" Project which has been successful across Fife HSCP. We have looked at lessons learned from their approach and the benefits this would bring to all Protected Characteristic Groups.	
If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA		
If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA		

Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes	If YES, please describe: As outlined in section 7 - any communication issues relating to those service users who do not speak English as their first language would be provided by interpreters. Some people with religious beliefs can request to speak with a male or female staff member, and although it has been noted that some people experiencing severe poverty and who may be digitally excluded still have the option to access the same services in person through the Living Well Hub, however by accessing "Near Me" from their home this would reduce travel and time costs.
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LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes	Age/Disability/Religion/Ethnicity
MEDIUM	Yes	Sex/Sexual Orientation/Transgender/Pregnancy/Marriage/Other Health Professionals & Carers
LOW	No	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	<i>Martin David Thom</i>	Date:	21/09/2021