

TITLE <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	Social isolation strategy
DATE <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	6/10/14
LEAD OFFICER <i>Name of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Colin Thompson

1 Summary description of the proposed change

- *What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed?*
- *How does it compare with the current situation?*

Social isolation has been identified as a priority within the Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Board has identified the development of a strategy to address social isolation within its priorities for 2014/15.

Accordingly, a strategy has been developed with the overarching aim of preventing and reducing the complex range of harms associated with being socially isolated. In order to achieve this aim, three key strategic themes have been identified;

- Raising awareness
- Action for individuals
- Community Action

For each strategic theme, there are a range of targeted actions. For each theme, there will be an aspiration to work in partnership to ensure there is a joined approach in tackling social isolation.

2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- *Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.*
- *Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

The strategy has been informed by taking account of evidence, the outcomes of the focus groups and data estimates.

Social isolation can affect anyone, although certain groups in the population are at increased vulnerability to social isolation. Older people are significantly more likely to suffer from social isolation with contributing factors being 'loss of friends and family, loss of mobility or loss of income'. Other population groups at risk include; carers, refugees and those with mental health problems.

Evidence shows that reducing social isolation can decrease the demand for health and social care interventions and there are a number of interventions that can have a positive impact on reducing social isolation. The quality of the relationships in the interventions is a vital component. Interventions that tackle social isolation include befriending schemes, community navigator schemes, supportive group sessions and volunteering.

There are limited data available that robustly measure social isolation. To address the limited availability of data, a composite 'isolation index for Medway' from consumer data has been developed using a range of factors which can lead to social isolation. This index estimates the areas of Medway that has the highest proportion of isolated households.

A total of seven focus groups have also been undertaken to inform this strategy with; older people, carers, mental health service users, black and minority ethnic communities, residents from Peninsula ward and a men's health support group. A number of key themes emerged from the focus groups that influenced how people accessed services and activities and isolation levels. These key themes included cost, transport accessibility, involvement of communities in designing activities that they will use.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age			✓
Disability			✓
Gender reassignment			
Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Race			✓
Religion/belief			✓
Sex			

Sexual orientation

Other (eg low income groups)

4 Summary of the likely impacts

- *Who will be affected?*
- *How will they be affected?*

There are a number of components in in the strategy which aim to have a positive impact on protected characteristic groups.

The strategy aims to ensure that the Medway population have an increased awareness of social isolation and improve the availability of information and advice on existing services and activities that reduce loneliness and isolation.

The strategy aims to encourage individuals within local communities to take responsibility for identifying, 'reaching out' and supporting potentially isolated people within their own area.

The strategy aims to work with communities to facilitate local social activities; encourage intergenerational contact and ensure local people have a voice in local decision making

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- *Are there alternative providers?*
- *What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?*
- *Can demand for services be managed differently?*

No adverse effects on protected characteristic groups are likely from the strategy. None of the actions highlighted in each of the strategic themes are detrimental to any protected characteristic groups.

6 Action plan

- *Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence*

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- *to proceed with the change implementing action plan if appropriate*
- *consider alternatives*
- *gather further evidence*

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

To proceed with the change with no actions necessary to mitigate likely adverse impact. The reason for this is due to the strategy not having actions that have negative effects on any of the protected characteristic groups.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- *the recommendation can be implemented*
- *sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned*
- *the Action Plan will be incorporated into service plan and monitored*

Assistant Director	
Date	

assessment Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this

RCC: phone 2443 email: annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk

C&A: phone 1031 email: paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk

BSD: phone 2472 or 1490 email: corpipi@medway.gov.uk

PH: phone 2636 email: david.whiting@medway.gov.uk

Send completed assessment to the Corporate Performance & Intelligence Hub (CPI) for web publication