

Diversity impact assessment

TITLE Name / description of the issue being assessed	Macmillan Service Expansion
DATE Date the DIA is completed	1 December 2023
LEAD OFFICER Name, title and dept of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.	Gemma Gilley, Head of Benefits and Financial Welfare
1 Summary description of the proposed change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? • How does it compare with the current situation? 	
<p>Expanding the current Macmillan Welfare Benefits Service to cover Medway, North and West Kent</p>	
2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc. • Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medway's Public Health Team's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2021) concluded that Medway is one of the worst areas for survival rates for patients with cancer, particularly lung cancer. In 2021, the rate of premature mortality rate from cancer in Medway was higher than England • The ONS rates Medway as having a Health Index Score of 92.4 and is ranked in the bottom 20% of authorities in England for health. • Medway has many areas of significant deprivation with 13.4% of the population being income deprived. Of the 163 neighbourhoods in Medway, 30 are amongst the most income deprived in England. • Local people affected by cancer consistently report that money worries are second only to the anxiety caused by their diagnosis. • The benefits system is extremely complicated particularly in light of the recent changes in respect of Welfare Reform and where people are unsure or unaware of what benefits are available. This is problematic, especially when coupled with a lack of confidence, energy or the skills among clients to apply for the benefits to which they are entitled. • NICE guidance states that, "<i>patients and carers should be offered assistance to obtain benefits for which they are potentially eligible by professionals who are informed and knowledgeable about the benefits system</i>". • Medway has a strong Cost of Living strategy which in turn will support Macmillan's plan for 2023 and onwards, • 1266 people live in the Dartford and Gravesham area with cancer. Of this, around two thirds of the cohort may not require or choose not to access support leaving approximately 435 cancer patients 	

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needing support. As each officer can see 250 people per year, 2 FTE would be needed at a minimum to satisfy this requirement.

- Medway currently provides a service to patients within Medway and those receiving treatment at Medway Oncology Centre. Within Gravesham and Dartford, there are no provisions for this type of support for those living with cancer.
- The provision given to those in West Kent is light touch and does not provide a full service causing geographical gaps in provision across Kent. Using internal modelling, it is estimated that across Maidstone, Medway, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells around 4,900 are living with cancer (based upon estimates at a time of need for Local Authorities with an uplift to 2021 levels). Of this, we would expect roughly two-thirds of this group to already be supported or to not access support. This would leave around 1,600 people who need support from a Local Macmillan Benefits Service split between 850 in Medway and Maidstone and 770 in West Kent.
- Medway's Team is currently resourced by 1.8 FTE Welfare Benefit Advisors and 1 FTE Macmillan Support Officer. During July to September 2023, the service supported 190 people, with an ongoing caseload of 251. There are 31 people on the waiting list because the service does not have enough resources to support more people currently.
- Medway's service has seen an increase in those requiring help under special rules since the legislation changed. The impact of referrals and those referrals that are SR1 is detailed here:

Month	Medway	Maidstone	Total
Jan	44	18	62
SR1	14	11	25
Feb	44	16	60
SR1	18	8	26
Mar	46	13	59
SR1	20	10	30
Apr	43	10	53
SR1	12	8	20
May	50	17	67
SR1	11	13	24
Jun	46	24	70
SR1	16	14	30
Jul	49	22	71
SR1	24	17	41
AUG	34	32	66
SR1	12	27	39
SEPT	43	27	70
SR1	17	23	40

This has caused additional work for the Support Officer who makes applications for clients within this group.

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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?

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	No	No	No
Disability	No	Yes	Yes
Gender reassignment	No	No	No
Marriage/civil partnership	No	No	No
Pregnancy/maternity	No	No	No
Race	No	No	No
Religion/belief	No	No	No
Sex	No	No	No
Sexual orientation	No	No	No
Other (eg low income groups) Low Income	No	Yes	Yes

4 Summary of the likely impacts

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

The law considers cancer to be a disability and therefore a protected characteristic. The likely effects of this service will be to advance equality and foster good relations with those affected by cancer and those who are within a low-income group.

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

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

By partnering with Macmillan, the Council is improving equality not only in our area but in the wider Kent region. Having a significant strategic partnership with Macmillan helps us to foster good relations. It is unlikely that any alternative providers would be in the position to support Medway like Macmillan are.

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 the 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.

The recommendation is to proceed with the change because expanding the service is being done with a leading cancer charity, who are fully funding and supporting the service. It will benefit the people of Medway and surrounding areas providing equality and fostering good relations with those who have protected characteristics.

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 the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Date