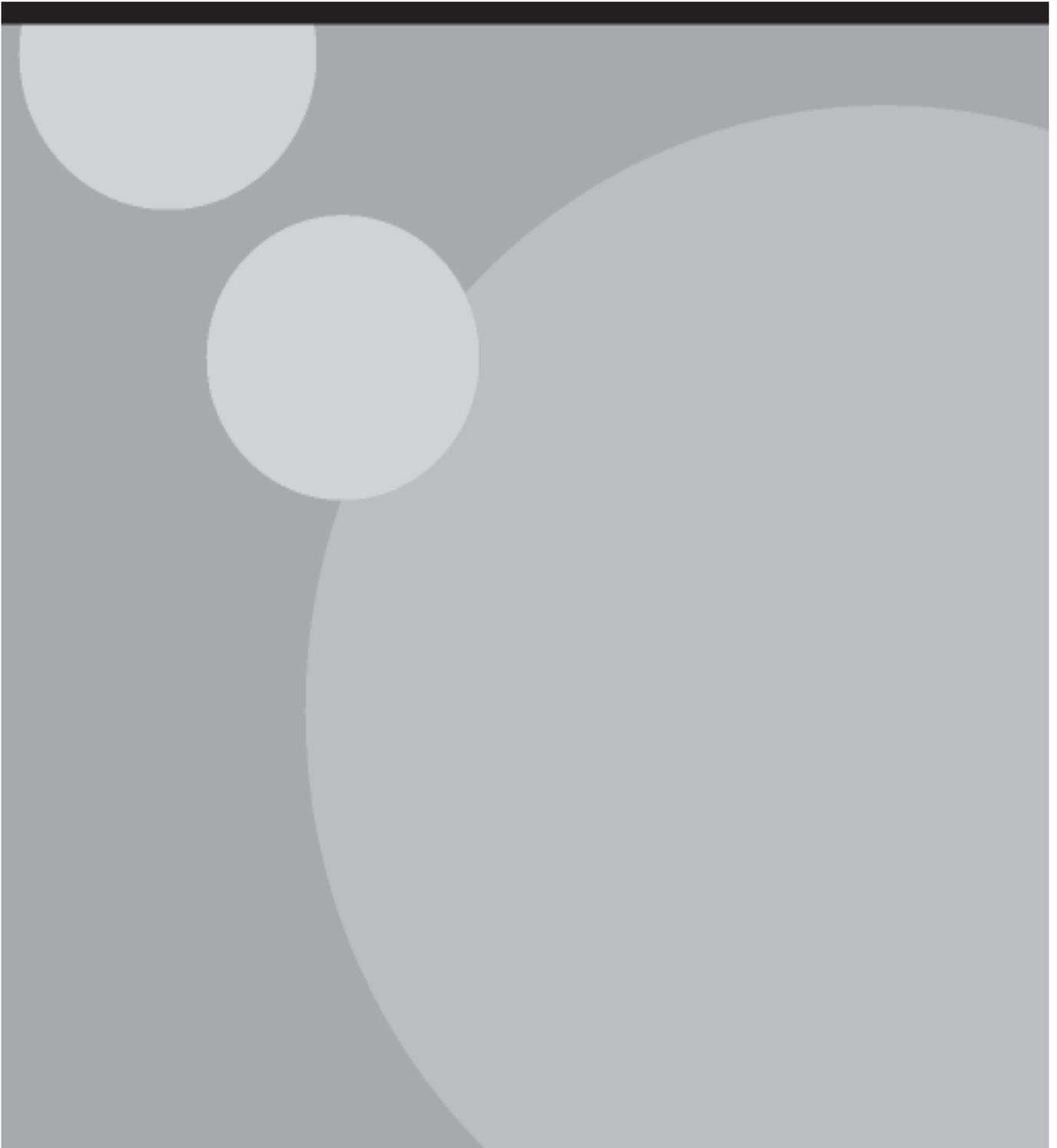




Spending Review 2010: Equality Impact Assessment

Funding for the Supporting People Programme



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December 2010

ISBN: 978-1-4098-2710-8

DCLG Equality Impact Assessment - Initial Screening Form

1. Name of the current or proposed new or changed, policy, strategy, procedure, project or service being assessed:

Following the Spending Review in 2010, Supporting People national funding levels will change from £1,636m in 2010/11 to £1,590m in 2014/15

2. Person and team responsible for completing the Equality Impact Assessment:

Nick O'Shea and Sarah Guy, Housing Care and Support Team, Communities and Local Government

3. What is the main aim or purpose of the current or proposed new or changed, policy, strategy, procedure, project or service and what are the intended outcomes?

Tackling Britain's record deficit is the Coalition Government's top priority - the consequences of not acting could be serious. The scale of the deficit has required tough choices to be made about how taxpayers' money is allocated.

The Spending Review sets out how the Coalition Government will carry out Britain's unavoidable deficit reduction plan. This is an urgent priority to secure economic stability, at a time of continuing uncertainty in the global economy, and put Britain's public services and welfare system on a sustainable long term footing. As international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development have noted, reducing the deficit is a necessary precondition for sustained economic growth. Failure to take action now would put the recovery at risk and place an unfair burden on future generations.

In order to tackle the budget deficit all Government departments are being required to work within a very tight fiscal settlement. Within this context, DCLG has sought to protect, as far as possible, funding for programmes which directly support vulnerable groups. The small change in funding is significantly less than changes to other areas of Departmental spending, and attempts to minimise the impact of changes in spending on services for vulnerable people. We also expect that some of this funding change may be met through efficiency savings, as councils and providers strive to achieve greater value for money in providing support services.

Supporting People funds frontline support services to disadvantaged and vulnerable people. It is already un-ringfenced, and so spending decisions are made by individual councils. However, the increased freedoms and flexibilities being given to councils as part of the Spending Review mean that a change in funding will not necessarily result in less money being spent on these services. Councils will have greater freedom to prioritise and allocate budgets to support public services in ways which meet the needs of local people and communities.

4. What existing sources of evidence will you use to help you identify the likely impacts on different groups of people?

Data that is currently published on Supporting People which can help to identify impacts on equalities groups includes:

- Supporting People Local Systems data provides data on the supply, performance and spend on Supporting People services broken down by client group and service type.
- Supporting People Client Record data provides information about the client characteristics of the 21 client groups as they enter Supporting People services.

Client Record data can be broken down by race, gender, disability, religion and age.

5. Are there gaps in evidence that make it difficult or impossible to form an opinion on how the existing or proposed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service does or might affect different groups of people? If so what are the gaps in the information and how and when do you plan to collect additional information?

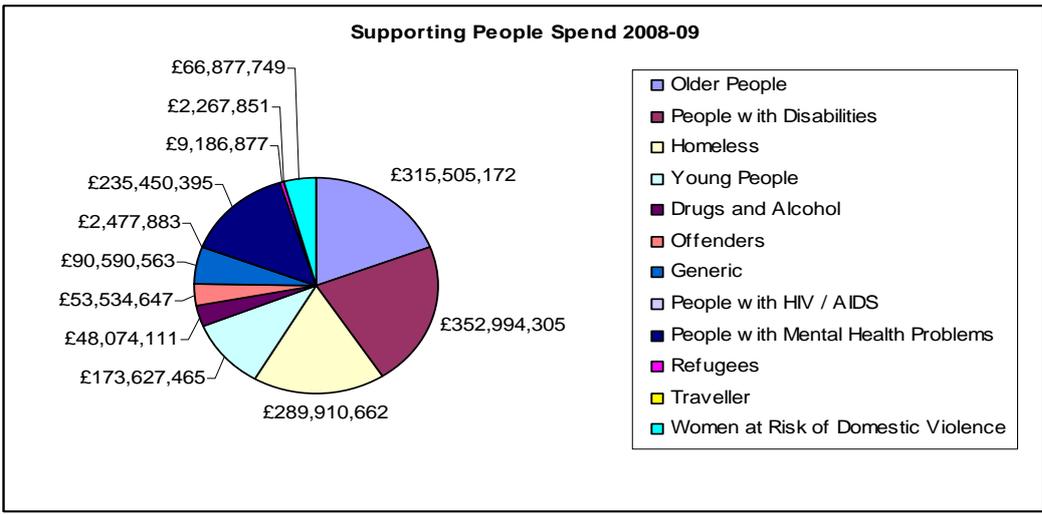
The published information does not include data on client's sexuality, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships.

Councils will need to assess their own gaps in evidence on the effectiveness and coverage of their Supporting People funded services and to determine likely impacts on different groups of people, in line with their legal duties.

6. Having analysed the initial and additional sources of information including feedback from any consultation, is there any evidence that the policy, strategy, procedure, project or service has or is likely to have an adverse equality impact on, and/or that there are known or anticipated different needs or requirements, for any of these different groups of people?

If any changes to the Supporting People programme national budget cannot be met through councils making efficiencies and/or pooling resources, services for vulnerable people may have to be decommissioned, re-modelled or scaled back. This would impact on those who currently receive a Supporting People service.

A breakdown of spend by top-tier councils in England (2008-09 data) is set out below and illustrates the groups of people supported:



At the national level if spend on all client groups were changed equally then this would have the same potential impact on all client groups. However, the exact impact at the local level will depend on local authority decision making and how local authority services are currently configured.

7. Is a full Equality Impact Assessment Required?
(If no, please explain why not)

Yes

DCLG Full Equality Impact Assessment

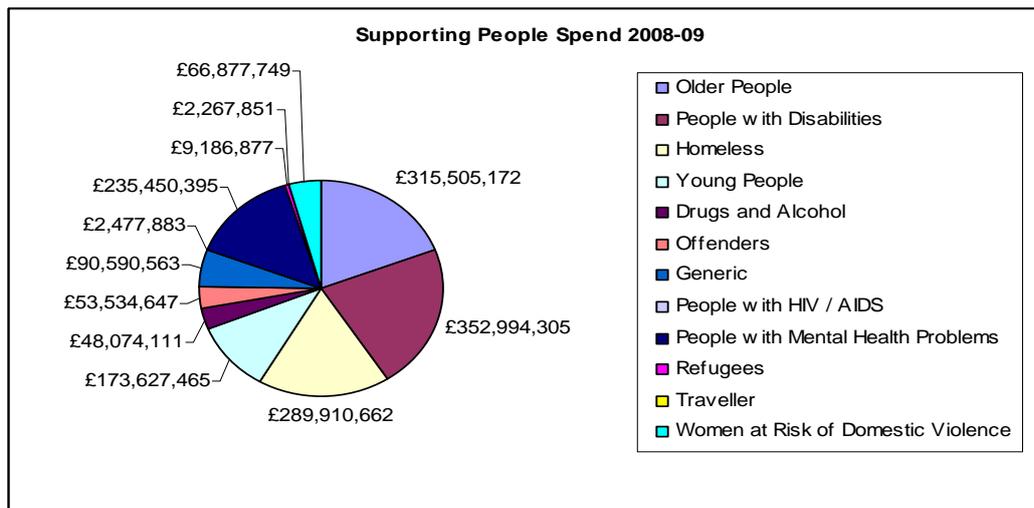
1. Which group(s) of people has been identified as being disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

Supporting People funds frontline support services to disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Investment into Supporting People services enables vulnerable individuals to live more independently, avoiding crises, leading to better outcomes and reduced costs for the state.

If any changes to the Supporting People programme national budget cannot be met through councils making efficiencies and/or pooling resources, services for vulnerable people may have to be decommissioned, re-modelled or scaled back. This would impact on those who currently receive a Supporting People service.

At the national level if spend on all client groups were changed equally then this would have the same potential impact on all client groups. However, the exact impact at the local level will depend on local authority decision making and how local authority services are currently configured.

A breakdown of spend by top-tier local authorities in England (2008-09 data) is set out below:



The composition of the client group means that changes in the Supporting People budget which result in changes in frontline support services will impact on a variety of vulnerable people. The exact impact will be **determined** by the commissioning decisions of each council, which will have a number of options to mitigate the impact at their disposal.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

There are two current considerations:

1) Who makes Supporting People spending decisions? No new equality impact

At a central Government policy level, Supporting People will continue to be completely decentralised and under total control of councils.

2) Spending levels. New equalities impact:

The total Supporting People budget will change as part of the Spending Review and associated fiscal consolidation. At the **national level**, the Spending Review settlement for the Supporting People programme is a change from £1,636m in 2010/11 to £1,590m by 2014/15. As a proportion this is a significantly smaller change than other areas of the Department's spending, and attempts to minimise the impact of spending changes on services for vulnerable people.

There are two main potential scenarios of how spending changes will play out at a local level, where actual Supporting People spending decisions will be determined:

(i) Councils identify efficiency savings within Supporting People services allowing them to continue to provide the same level of services but with less money. Efficiency savings should not impact unfairly on any client groups supported.

(ii) Beyond efficiency savings, spending changes can only be met through decommissioning, pooling in other resources, re-modelling or scaling back on the provision of front-line support services. This would impact on vulnerable people; specific client groups could lose services depending on the decisions of commissioning councils.

However, in reality there are multiple scenarios for how changes in spending could translate to a local level and we cannot predict the individual commissioning decisions of councils. For example, as part of the Spending Review, councils will have greater freedom and flexibility to make local spending decisions according to local priorities – some councils may decide to spend more funding on Supporting People services.

It is our clear belief that by devolving power to councils, neighbourhoods and individuals, we can secure better services for less, and refocus services around the priorities of people and places.

We will give greater freedom, by streamlining grant funding and removing burdens so councils can prioritise and allocate budgets to support public services in ways which meet the needs of local people and communities.

We will increase fairness by devolving control over budgets to councils so they can move towards more personalized and effective provision of services for vulnerable groups.

We will give more responsibility by freeing up funding and reducing bureaucratic controls so councils and their partners can focus on their priorities, helping to manage demand on services and reduce costs to society.

Furthermore, in making funding decisions, councils will need to carry out their own equality impact assessment. There is already a legal requirement for councils, as "public bodies" within the meaning of the equality legislation, to carry out equality impact assessments of the effect their policies and practices will have on equality in relation to race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age. The Equality Act 2010 will, when the relevant provisions are in force (expected to be in April 2011), extend this requirement to the additional "protected characteristics" of gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership.

Councils will need to assess the most likely targets for changes in funding, and to seek ways to mitigate any unfair impact on particular vulnerable groups. Councils will need to be transparent to communities about where changes have been made, so that people can see how the money has been spent and on what. It will be important therefore that their Equality Impact Assessment demonstrates where the crucial assessments have been made.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

It is not for DCLG to consult on detailed Supporting People allocation decision as, in line with the Government's policy of decentralisation, it will be for councils to consult as appropriate at the local level.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service? Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments.

As set out in the initial screening, tackling Britain's record deficit is the Coalition Government's top priority - the consequences of not acting could be serious. The scale of the deficit has required tough choices to be made about how taxpayers' money is allocated.

The Spending Review sets out how the Coalition Government will carry out Britain's unavoidable deficit reduction plan. This is an urgent priority to secure economic stability, at a time of continuing uncertainty in the global economy, and put Britain's public services and welfare system on a sustainable long term footing. The Coalition Government inherited one of the most challenging fiscal positions in the world. Last year, Britain's deficit was the largest in its peacetime history – the state borrowed one pound for every four it spent. The UK currently spends £43 billion on debt interest, which is more than it spends on schools in England. As international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development have noted, reducing the deficit is a necessary precondition for sustained economic growth. Failure to take action now would put the recovery at risk and place an unfair burden on future generations.

In order to tackle the budget deficit all Government departments are being required to work within a very tight fiscal settlement. Within this context, DCLG has sought to protect, as far as possible, funding for programmes which directly support vulnerable groups. The change in funding of Supporting People from £1,636m in 2010/11 to £1,590m by 2014/15 is a significantly smaller change than other areas of Departmental spending, in percentage terms, and attempts to minimise the impact of spending changes on services for vulnerable people.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place.

This will be reviewed as part of future spending decisions made by the Government.

Individual funding decisions will be made by councils. DCLG's role is to set the overall framework for local government funding. By encouraging greater transparency about how public money is used, local communities will be enabled to hold their authorities to account for how the available funding is used. As such, this will also make available the information needed for central Government to assess adverse impacts on equalities groups, without having to ask councils to produce additional information.

6. Sign off

Name of Person Signing Off the Full Equality Impact Assessment: Neil McDonald

Role: Director

Date: 12 November 2010

An action plan has not been compiled for this Equality Impact Assessment as Councils will be the sole determinant of how any spending changes are made at the local level. It will therefore fall to Councils to comply with their duties to conduct Equality Impact Assessments and develop their own action plan to mitigate the impact of any potential spending changes on vulnerable groups.