

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of our proposals as we ensure we are meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Our obligation to assess the equality impacts of our proposals is an ongoing one. Therefore, after the consultation, we will update this EqIA to reflect any new information that has come to light during the consultation process and inform our assessment of the anticipated equality impacts of the proposals. This updated analysis and the revised EqIA will then be used during the decision-making process.

The public consultation is a vital part of the equality analysis process and our EqIAs will be updated following a thorough review of the responses we receive. We are particularly keen to hear from residents that have any concerns about the impact the proposals set out in this document may have on the protected characteristics. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Our EqIAs also consider the impact of the proposals on children in care and care leavers.

Section one

No.	Question	Response
1.1	Name of policy/decision/service/project/programme being assessed	<p>We are consulting on the future of the Homeline Service. The Homeline service provides reassurance and practical assistance to residents who may require help or support. Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the service enables people, particularly older residents and those with care and support needs, to remain safe and independent in their own homes. The Homeline service has two service levels 'Homeline' and 'Homeline plus.' The consultation covers the whole Homeline service.</p> <p>As of July 2024, the Homeline Service supports over 4,000 people including council tenants, private subscribers, and those with Adult Social Care plans.</p> <p>The Council has concluded that the current model is no longer viable for the reasons set out in the Cabinet Member Decision Note.</p>

		<p>The consultation will examine alternative ways the Homeline Service could be delivered in the future; it proposes four options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing a council-run telephone support only service i.e. no in-person response. • continuing to provide both telephone and in-person response services, but with either some (e.g. just the physical response element) elements managed by an external provider with greater expertise and/or connection to health services. • continuing to provide both telephone and in-person response services, but with the whole service being managed by an external provider with greater expertise and/or connection to health services; and • stopping the service.
1.2	<p>Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/decision/service/project/programme</p>	<p>The key reasons for exploring these options (alternative service models) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant feedback that the service should be ‘opt in’ rather than a mandatory part (and therefore cost) in tenancy agreements which. The consultation will help us understand the views of tenants. • Tackling weaknesses with the existing service. • Understanding if and how the service can be financially sustainable; the consultation will help us understand demand/interest in each of the proposed options and how much people are willing to pay. <p>More detail on the drivers for the consultation can be found in the Cabinet Member Decision Note.</p>
1.3	<p>Who is affected by the policy/decision/service/project/programme? (For example, employees/service users/supplier/contractor)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Homeline users; includes Tenants, people supported by Adult Social Care and private customers. • Potential new users • Unpaid Carers of current, or potential new, Homeline users • Colleagues who deliver the service <p>Demographic data on the people impacted.</p> <p>The Council does not currently hold sufficient equality information about people who use the Homeline Service to complete a full and robust equality impact assessment at this</p>

		<p>stage. Gathering this information will therefore be a key part of the consultation process.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that those who currently use the Homeline service, particularly those in sheltered or supported accommodation, may have characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, including their age and disability status. In making any decisions on how to proceed with the Homeline service, the Council will also have regard to any equality's implications of each of the options being considered, including in particular the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate discrimination between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. • Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and • Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. <p>Current data on protected characteristics</p> <p>Currently, the Homeline Service holds very limited data on the protected characteristics of the people supported by the service. For people with Adult Social Care Support Plans who use the Homeline service, some data on protected characteristics is available, however this cohort only represents an estimated 3% of the total Homeline customer base. This data shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The age of people known to Adult Social Care and using Homeline varies from age 21 to 104, with 62% of people aged over 65. • The gender of people known to Adult Social Care and using Homeline. 62% of users are female, 38% male. • The race of people known to Adult Social Care and using Homeline. 67% are White British, and 24% have no ethnicity recorded. <p>The data on the marital status of people known to Adult Social Care and using Homeline is limited, with only 13% of people having a recorded status, of those with a marital</p>
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1.4	<p>What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this proposal? (For example, with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<p>This EqIA has been drafted prior to formal consultation which will take place 1st January 2026 to 27th February 2026. To maximise the opportunity for people who may be affected by the proposals to give their views as part of the consultation process, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send letters directly to people who currently pay for (includes tenants) the Homeline service, as well as to their families or carers where we have family or carer details recorded on our IT system that supports the service. • Provide the survey online, with options to complete the survey over the telephone and on paper. We will also provide the public consultation information pack in the top 5 spoken languages in Swindon. We will also provide the survey and consultation pack in easy read, any additional languages, large text print, and braille format on request.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the consultation document will be made available at the Council's Civic offices. • Attend a Tenants Association for Sheltered Housing (TASH) meeting in January 2026 to make them aware of the consultation and the ways to take part. • Notify all colleagues in the council in the Homeline Service, in Adult Social Care and in Housing, so that they can signpost people to the consultation if they are asked about the Homeline Service.
1.5	What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	The arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact have not yet been designed or agreed. These arrangements will be planned once the consultation feedback has been analysed and a decision about the future of the service has been made at the Council's Cabinet, the aim is to make this decision at Cabinet in June 2026 .

Section two – protected characteristics

Protected characteristic group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact? Is the impact neutral?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (for example, adjustment to the proposal)
Disability	Mixed. Depending on the service model progressed, the impact could range from positive (improved service run by an external organisation) to neutral (same service scope and performance but run by external organisation) to negative (no service being provided) or a reduced (telephone only) service being provided).	<p>Changes to the service may have a higher impact on people with a disability. For example, if the service were to stop completely some people may be unable to continue to live at home independently as a result.</p> <p>Whilst there is limited data available on the number of people supported by the service who have a disability, it is assumed that a significant proportion of people supported by Homeline will have a disability. The proportion of people who use the service with a disability, and the</p>	Mitigations will be available if required, for example Care Act Support Plans can be reviewed, people can be signposted to other services, family or friends may also be able to provide some support in lieu of a formal service.

		impact of the options on them, will be better understood once EqIA data is collected as part of the consultation.	
Gender reassignment	Neutral. We have not identified any negative impacts based on gender reassignment; however, we do not currently hold data on this characteristic for services users.	Future access to the service and the level of service offered will not be influenced by, or impact differently on, people who have had a gender reassignment.	No negative impacts identified.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral. We have not identified any negative impacts based on marriage or civil partnership; however, we hold limited data on this characteristic for services users.	<p>Future access to the service and the level of service offered will not be influenced by, or impact differently on, people with different marital/civil partnership statuses.</p> <p>The small sample of data on Homeline customers known to Adult Social Care suggests a low proportion of people using the service are married or in a civil partnership (most are widowed). Once EqIA data is collected as part of the consultation we will be able to confirm if this is reflective of the wider customer base using Homeline.</p>	No negative impacts identified.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral. We have not identified any negative impacts based on pregnancy or maternity; however, we do not currently hold data on this characteristic for services users.	Future access to the service and the level of service offered will not be influenced by, or impact differently on, pregnancy or maternity.	No negative impacts identified.

Race	Neutral. We have not identified any negative impacts based on race; however, we hold limited data on this characteristic for services users.	<p>To ensure the accessibility of the consultation, information will be provided in plain language with translation options available on request.</p> <p>The small sample of data on Homeline customers known to Adult Social Care suggests a higher proportion of people identifying as White British may be using the service. Once EqlA data is collected as part of the consultation we will be able to confirm if this is reflective of the wider customer base using Homeline and if there are any disproportionate impacts on people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds.</p>	No negative impacts identified.
Religion or belief	Neutral. We have not identified any negative impacts based on religion or belief; however, we do not currently hold data on this characteristic for services users.	Future access to the service and the level of service offered will not be influenced by, or impact differently on, people with certain religions or beliefs.	No negative impacts identified.
Sexual orientation	Neutral. We have not identified any negative impacts based on sexual orientation; however, we do not currently hold data on this characteristic for services users.	Future access to the service and the level of service offered will not be influenced by, or impact differently on, sexual orientation.	No negative impacts identified.
Sex (gender)	Mixed. Depending on the service model progressed, the impact could range from positive (improved service run by an external organisation) to neutral (same service scope and	The small sample of data on Homeline customers known to Adult Social Care suggests a higher proportion of women than men might be using the service. The usage of the service based on	Mitigations will be available if required, for example Care Act Support Plans can be reviewed, people can be signposted to other

	performance but run by external organisation) to negative (no service being provided or a reduced (telephone only) service being provided).	gender and the potential impacts on different genders will be better understood once EqIA data is collected as part of the consultation.	services, family or friends may also be able to provide some support in lieu of a formal service.
Age	Mixed. Depending on the service model progressed, the impact could range from positive (improved service run by an external organisation) to neutral (same service scope and performance but run by external organisation) to negative (no service being provided or a reduced (telephone only) service being provided).	<p>Changes to the service may have a higher impact on people over the age of 65. For example, if the service were to stop completely some older people may feel more isolated and become worried or anxious about how safe they are at home.</p> <p>Whilst there is limited data available on the age of people supported by the service, it is assumed that a significant proportion of people supported by Homeline are over 65 years old. This will be better understood once EqIA data is collected as part of the consultation.</p>	Mitigations will be available if required, for example Care Act Support Plans can be reviewed, people can be signposted to other services, family or friends may also be able to provide some support in lieu of a formal service.
Children in care and care leavers	Neutral. We have not identified any negative impacts based on people being in care or care experienced; however, we do not currently hold data on this characteristic for services users.	Future access to the service and the level of service offered will not be influenced by, or impact differently on, a person being in care or care experienced.	No negative impacts identified.

Section three – evaluation

No.	Question	Explanation/justification
3.1	Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	<p>Yes, the proposed changes could disadvantage groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Whilst data is limited, it is assumed the Homeline Service is predominantly used by older adults and people with disabilities, therefore any changes will predominantly impact people with these protected characteristics. These assumptions will be tested through the collection of data on protected characteristics in the consultation.</p> <p>It has also been identified that some of the options being proposed would have a positive impact, others a neutral impact and some a negative impact, on groups with a protected characteristic. However, it has also been identified that there are opportunities to mitigate those impacts for example signposting to other service options and completing Reviews of Care Act (Adult Social Care) Support Plans.</p>

No.	Final Decision	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1	No barriers identified; therefore, activity will proceed	X	<p>We will proceed with the consultation. The Council does not currently hold sufficient equality information about people who use the Homeline Service to complete a full and robust equality impact assessment at this stage. Gathering this information will therefore be a key part of the consultation process.</p>
2	Stop at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		

3	Adapt or change the event in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4	Barriers and impact have been identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (for example, in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, proceed with caution with this knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision		

Section four – record keeping.

Question	Response
Will this EqIA be published* (*EqIA's should be published alongside relevant event paperwork including cabinet papers):	Yes, a working draft will be published alongside the consultation. A final version will be published alongside any future decisions.
Date completed	December 2025
Review date (if applicable)	Will be reviewed after the consultation window closes on 27 th February 2025.

Change log.

Name	Date	Version	Change made
Tonya Bozzuto	18.12.2025	1	First draft
Grace Lynch	28.12.2025	2	Updated working draft, ready for publication alongside consultation papers.

Responsibilities

Question	Response	Date completed
Name of person leading this EqIA	Tonya Bozzuto	This is a working draft

Question	Response
Names and roles of people involved in the consideration of impact	<p>This working draft was informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonya Bozzuto – Head of Service • Grace Lynch – Director of Commissioning <p>This EqIA will be updated after the consultation is complete so that it is informed by the views of people who are directly impacted by the proposals.</p>

Question	Response	Date signed
Name of Director signing EqIA	Grace Lynch – Director of Commissioning	This is a working draft, authorised for publication on 28/12/25