

# Swindon Borough Council Diversity Impact Assessment

## Re-commissioning VCS Support

### 1 What's it about?

Refer to equality duties

**What is the proposal? What outcomes/benefits are you hoping to achieve?** The proposal is to award a new 12 month contract to Voluntary Action Swindon at a reduced price and with a reduced specification. The primary outcome will be to increase the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to allow more growth and a bigger role for the sector in supporting individuals especially vulnerable individuals. The scope of the sector is wide. It ranges from national charities to small informal groups and everything in between. The range of activity is huge catering for all interests and needs including sports clubs, lunch clubs, PTA s, choirs, rambblers and on and on. All activity includes social contact acknowledged to be very important in people's overall health. The re-focusing of the contract is mainly for financial reasons and to a smaller degree a result of poor performance over the last twelve to eighteen months.

The specification reduce the leadership and representative role for the wider sector and generic support for volunteering. The risk in the changes are that SBC and partner organisations have relied on VAS as a voice for the wider VCS and have attracted external funding partly because of the role of VAS on behalf of the sector. The risk can be mitigated by sharing the role across organisations but they will be reluctant given the amount of time that may be involved

The second area of risk is the reduction in support for volunteering. This is partly mitigated by the increased role undertaken by the locality team in promoting public sector volunteering but some groups may lose out from the loss of the support in recruiting volunteers e.g. Harbour project who work with asylum seekers and refugees.

The focus of the new contract will be on support for smaller and new organisations helping with advice about funding and governance. A role in promoting networks of small organisations e.g. lunch clubs, sports clubs and the development of the equality coalition. The reason for focusing on smaller organisations is that they don't have employees or other resources available for advice.

**Who's it for?** The work will be with small and new voluntary and community organisations rather than individuals. Although organisations are categorised e.g. sport, BME, social etc these are wide characterisations and don't address the protected characteristics. Where individuals are supported then some demographic data is reported. For the new contract it is proposed to capture as much information as possible about individuals involved in the equality coalition and to provide some more information about characterisation of the groups who are supported. In future we will look to increase integration between the different elements of the service. One of the advantages of this approach will be to ensure that equality duties are considered across the board and not just 'in their box' i.e. equality coalition.

**How will this proposal meet the equality duties?** The new contract will meet the equality duties by monitoring service delivery and reporting quarterly against the work they have carried out and how it has met the equality duty. For the future we expect a more proactive approach going out to work with areas of activity that will support gaps in reaching the equality duty. It is also a requirement of the contract that they carry out an annual survey of the state of the sector and we will expect the survey to include feedback on the degree to which the sector is representative of the wider community..

### **What are the barriers to meeting this potential?**

There are no insurmountable barriers achieving the potential. If the reasons for collecting a reasonable extra amount of data are properly understood. While the independence of voluntary organisations should be respected equally most if not all want to work with commissioners to improve their service and ensuring activities fits within the equality duty is a vital element in

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providing a good service..

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## 2 Who's using it?

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We have limited data about usage of the services mainly because most of the contact is around working with organisations rather than individuals. However, the last quarter, which is typical shows the following organisations were supported

The organisations that we have supported through these services during the quarter can be roughly categorised as providing support to the following beneficiary groups:

Children & Young People:	11
Disability:	12
BME	7
Disadvantaged areas	5
Older People	4
Bereaved	4
Mental Health	2
Environmental	2
Homeless	1
Other (wide beneficiary group or other disadvantage)	9

In addition funding advice was given to organisations characterised as follows

Disadvantaged areas:	13
Disability	8
Children and Young People	5
BME	3
Older People	3
Bereaved	2
Mental Health	1

The membership of the equality coalition working group is improving in respect of covering the protected characteristics but there are still gaps in gay, lesbian and transgender people and the age range is reported as being between 45 and 82.

The volunteering support will not be a part of the new contract but the data about individuals being placed through the brokerage service show of 29 being placed in the quarter

17% described themselves as having a disability

Just over half were women

The majority were under 40

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The data above is for those people who were placed rather than everyone who contacts VAS for information about volunteering may include disproportionately people wanting to become involved in volunteering to build self-confidence and employability.

There will still be an option to provide some supported volunteering using the public sector platform but this will be reduced following the changes. However, the situation regarding placement of volunteers will be monitored through other contractors

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### How can you involve your customers in developing the proposal?

The proposal has not included a formal consultation nor have VAS provided any feedback from customers partly because of dislocation to their service over the past year.. However, one of the contract deliverables is an annual state of the survey sector and the conclusions of the survey have been taken into account in re-specifying the contract

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### Who is missing?

The new contract will need to improve data collection in all of the protected characteristics including a characterisation of organisations and the individuals involved in them which allows a more proactive service to be developed. However limited evidence shows under representation among lesbian gay and transgender residents.

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## 3 Impact

**age**, the data shows under representation among younger people in the equality coalition but greater representation among younger people in those placed in volunteering opportunities. The public sector volunteering element in the localities team will address these issues in their service

**disability**, current reporting is that 17% of people placed in volunteering have a disability but this is a small sub set. It may be that better monitoring gives the opportunity to address specific areas of work..

**sex**, the gender balance is slightly more female in areas that are measured but for example there hasn't been any impetus to address women's sporting opportunities through the sports forum. The situation will be kept under review.

**transgender**, there is very little data around transgender and this is an area to be addressed through the equality coalition in the first instance..

**marriage/civil partnership**, very little information, monitoring will continue

**maternity/pregnancy**, there is no monitoring on this issue as collecting data is difficult. However, the scope of health and social care includes many issues that will have direct impact on pre and post natal services and this element of opportunities will remain as a possible area of work.

**race**, the figures show a high proportion of contacts in areas that are measured are from white British backgrounds which is high for the present Swindon demographic. There needs to be more contact around ways in which what are currently designated BME organisations are encouraged to play a wider role in the sector, e.g. leadership through One Swindon and as sources of skill sharing for other organisations.

**religion/belief**, very limited data available but this can be a sensitive subject and a successful provider will need to work to increase data in this area..

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**sexual orientation** as above limited data and difficulty in collecting the data because of some people's reluctance to ask and to answer questions. Addressing this is important and will be the subject of on-going discussion. However, it is not just a matter of collecting gay organisations it is also encouraging a discussion in the sector making sure that all shapes and sizes of organisations are not discriminating.

**and if appropriate: financial economic status, homelessness, political view**

there has been no monitoring of this information and although the health needs of people who are homeless are an important area of work

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**a) Does the proposal create an adverse impact which may affect some groups or individuals?**

The proposal will impact in two areas. The first is 'leadership of the sector' role for which VAS has been paid in the past. However, it may be more representative to encourage a wider representation using people who are volunteers rather than paid employees of the sector. The second significant change is the loss of generic support for volunteering for the wider voluntary sector. However, the development within the Localities team of strategies to support public service volunteering, and the development of a web platform and brokering service will enable a much more targeted recruitment and "matching" of volunteers to support Swindon's Vision, Priorities and Pledges, with priority given to people who need individual support.

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**What can be done to change this impact?**

As stated above the impact will be relatively small given the switch in emphasis to working with organisations and people involved in social care. However, there will be some impact and commissioners will monitor where this has had an adverse impact on equality and the representativeness and opportunities for all residents.

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**b) Does the proposal create benefit for a particular group? Is it clear what this is? Can you maximise the benefits for other groups?**

The proposal gives priority for new and smaller organisations above larger ones. There is no evidence or assumption this will favour any residents with protected characteristics. In the same spirit there is no evidence the loss of the representative role or the volunteering support will adversely affect any existing groups. In fact it could be that spreading the representative role more widely will improve the general representativeness. It does not of itself provide benefit for a particular group other than the provider will be co-located with other Council funded voluntary bodies and expected to work closely with them by supporting their engagement. However, the aim of this approach is to improve access to Council funded services for the public.

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**Does further consultation need to be done? How will assumptions made in this assessment be tested?**

Consultation will be on-going and the voluntary sector survey due to report in the next month will contain important feedback.

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**4 So what?**

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**What changes have you made in the course of this DIA?**

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The DIA process has forced a look at the quality of the data provided, and the need to ensure The data we do have questions the extent of involvement of the lesbian, gay and transgender population in Swindon. However, better feedback is necessary. The process has reinforced the need to VAS to retain a representative role .e.g. contributing to One Swindon and partnership initiatives

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**What will you do now and what will be included in future planning?**

The specification will be offered to Voluntary Action Swindon -and there will be discussion about what equality data can be collected and used to assess performance against the equality duty for which SBC is ultimately responsible.

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**When will this be reviewed?**

quarterly

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**How will success be measured?**

Success will be measured by

Improvement in the quality of the data allowing judgement of the impact of the work against the Council's responsibility under the Equality Duty

Better measurement will make us more confident that the contract is contributing to the overall aim of improving the scope of the voluntary and community sector

<b>For the record</b>	
Name of person leading this DIA <u>Mark Feeny</u>	Date completed <u>27/11/2015</u>
Names of people involved in consideration of impact <u>Lyn McDermott, Nick Stephenson</u>	
Name of manager signing DIA <u>Sue Wald</u>	Date signed <u>27/11/2015</u>

# Diversity Impact Assessment – an inclusive business planning tool

## 1. What's it about? refer to equality duties

- What is the proposal? What outcomes/benefits are you hoping to achieve
- Who's it for?
- How will this proposal meet the equality duties?
- What are the barriers to meeting this potential?

## 2. Who's using it? consider all equality groups

- What data/evidence do you have about who is or could be affected? (e.g. equality monitoring, customer feedback, current service use, national/regional/local trends)?
- How can you involve your customers in developing the proposal?
- Who is missing? Do you need to fill any gaps in your data?

## 3. Impact consider dimensions and equality groups

Using information in parts 1 & 2:

- a) Does the proposal create an adverse impact which may affect some groups or individuals? How can this be mitigated or justified?  
> What can be done to change this impact?
- b) Does the proposal create benefit for particular groups or individuals. Is it clear what this is? Can you maximise the benefits for other groups?
  - Does further consultation need to be done? How will assumptions made in this assessment be tested?

## 4. So what?

- What changes have made in the course of this DIA?
- What will you do now and what will be included in future planning?
- When will this be reviewed?
- How will success be measured?

## Considerations

### Our equality duties

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity
3. Foster good relations

### Equality groups

For the following equality groups: age, disability, sex, transgender, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

Extended by SBC policy to include: financial economic status, homelessness, political view.

## Dimensions of equality

How will the proposal affect Human Rights and life chances of different groups? Consider how the proposal affects

1. Longevity.
2. Physical security.
3. Health.
4. Education.
5. Standard of living.
6. Productive and valued activities.
7. Individual, family and social life.
8. Participation, influence and voice.
9. Identity, expression and self-respect.
10. Legal security.