

Disability Equality Impact Assessment Questionnaire

Policy/Service/Change being assessed: 27 Shopmobility	Department: Services for Place
Person Responsible for Assessment: Simon Houldsworth	Date of assessment: January 2012

Brief description of service and to whom provided/available:

The council currently provides a subsidy to Shopmobility of £32,000 per annum. It is proposed to cease this funding in 2012 when the current contract expires.

Reducing budgets may cause DAD to consider increasing charges or seek support from elsewhere. Exploration of voluntary sector/private sector support would be explored in a Darlington Together context.

Service users, their carers, family & friends will be affected by the proposal since DAD, have indicated that the service will cease without this financial support.

Introduction

This template should be used with the Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009. Completing this template without following the rest of the disability equality impact assessment process outlined in the Scheme does not comprise a disability equality impact assessment.

If, after reading the guidance, you require further information on how to implement the assessment, please contact Peter Roberts, Social Enterprise Development Manager on 01325 388713

Q.1 Is your service/policy/change accessible to all disabled people? Bear in mind any economic, social, environmental, physical, intellectual, cultural, linguistic, technological or other barriers.

Issue	Yes	No	If yes, what evidence do you have to demonstrate this?	If no, what do you plan to do to remove barriers to access?
Physical or mobility impairment	√		An extensive engagement process has been undertaken concerning this proposal in 2011/12.	
Sensory impairment	√		This process comprised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self administered impact assessment questionnaire sent to all registered Shopmobility users (1,050 people) • Three “drop in” sessions in the Dolphin Centre for users and their carers • Talking Together events, including one specifically targeted at disabled people • Meetings with protected characteristic groups • Feedback received by letter, email, comments box & telephone. 	
Learning disability or mental impairment	√			
Other disabilities and health conditions covered by the Equality Act 2010 (eg. diabetes, HIV, multiple sclerosis, depression and cancer)	√			
Any other disability issue (e.g. frail/vulnerable people, people with mild impairments who do not perceive themselves as disabled, people with multiple impairment)	√			

Q.2 (a) For whatever reason, does your service treat any group of disabled people differently from its other service users?

Yes
No

✓

If you have answered 'yes', please specify those individuals or groups affected and whether the impact has the potential to be adverse.

Whilst the service does not treat any group of disabled people differently from others with the exception of the visually impaired, the proposal to remove funding is highly likely to result in closure of the Shopmobility service.

This would have adverse impacts on users, their carers, friends and family. [See appended impact assessment.](#)

(b) What needs to be done to prevent any potentially adverse impact?

Retain the functionality of the service, either with Council funding, with funding from other sources or a mixture of both.

Q.3 (a) Do you promote disability equality within your service? (e.g. through departmental equalities group, innovative marketing or community engagement techniques)

Yes
No

✓

If you have answered 'yes', please give examples of how equality is promoted.

The Shopmobility service is provided by Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) under contract to the Council. DAD is led by disabled people promoting independence and choice. Shopmobility forms part of a range of supportive services for both disabled people and carers through the social model of disability. Users can access information and help on other services at the Shopmobility Office.

(b) Do you promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? (e.g. through customer care training, cultural issues awareness training, the use of images of disabled people in your publicity material)

Yes
No

✓

If you have answered 'yes', please give examples.

See description above.

Q.4 Are there any plans in place within your Service to promote disability equality more effectively?

Yes
No

√

If yes, please outline what you intend to do (including details, if known, of timescales and areas to be covered, etc.)

Summary of recorded impacts - Shopmobility

An extensive engagement process has been undertaken concerning this proposal in 2011/12.

This process comprised

- Self administered impact assessment questionnaire sent to all registered Shopmobility users (1,050 people)
- Three “drop in” sessions in the Dolphin Centre for users and their carers
- Talking Together events, including one specifically targeted at disabled people
- Meetings with protected characteristic groups
- Feedback received by letter, email, comments box & telephone.

A recent survey by DAD of 190 users showed that over half used Shopmobility as their means of accessing facilities in the town centre independently without the need of assistance from a carer or other individual. Uses include shopping, banking and meeting friends. The loss of the service would cause impacts of low self-esteem, social isolation, greater dependence, poorer health and giving the activity up.

A letter from Age UK points out the economic contribution made by older people spending their money in traditional High Streets.

Recorded impacts are set out in full in the attachment. In summary they include

- social isolation & loss of social contact. Feeling excluded from society & unable to meet friends or family
- going to a different destination to undertake the activity
- loss of independence, being housebound & having to rely on others to choose items for you. It (Shopmobility) is a lifeline for me”. Also being forced to ask someone to push or assist you around the town centre. “My freedom and choice will be gone”.
- being unable to seek advice or help from people about issues.
- depression
- poorer physical well being
- unable to continue caring role for parents.
- unable to continue the activity.
- reduce the frequency of undertaking the activity
- more expense, due to the need to transport personal wheelchair in a taxi to the town centre.
- would reduce the effectiveness of having time allocated for a carer to help with shopping and other out of home activities – carers also not always allowed to assist user in their personal wheelchairs due to insurance.

Comments were received about the low cost of the Service. Some users were prepared to pay more if this helped to retain the service, although there was concern that people with low incomes still need to be able to access the service.

Some users do have access to electric scooters, but a typical domestic specification scooter does not have the range of those provided by Shopmobility and is too large/heavy to fit on local service buses or a private car. It does not therefore have the ability to transport the user to and from their home to the town centre, as well as around the town centre. The type of scooter provided by Shopmobility is expensive and beyond the ability of those interviewed to purchase. A commercial provider, Able World, has stated that they feel that commercial providers would potentially not be interested in hiring scooters due to the insurance implications.

The closure of the Shopmobility service would mean a loss of the “signposting” role that DAD play in helping disabled people find out about the services available to them and opportunities that they have.

Some users of Shopmobility may be multiply impacted by the Council’s budget proposals.