

Equality Analysis Screening Stage

Department: Partnership & Engagement

Person Responsible: Genevieve George

Created: 16/01/2018

Last Review: November 2017

Status: Open

Next Review (if applicable):

Stage 1 Screening Data

1. What are the objectives and expected outcomes of your proposal? Why is it needed? Make sure you highlight any proposed changes.

The provision of advice and guidance to local residents is a critical public service. Access to high quality legal and generalist advice is vital to enabling early resolution of potential problems that without intervention can lead to complex and distressing circumstances for residents which could have been prevented. The council currently funds a number of local organisations to provide independent general and legal advice. Changes in technology and the ways in which people wish to access advice and information have created greater opportunities to engage and support the advice needs of local residents.

In considering how local public services should evolve and in supporting resilience building across the borough, a new model for advice and guidance services has been developed, which aims to provide support in the right place, at the right time, through a range of channels to meet the needs of different individuals and groups.

A two-year VSIF grant totalling £320K for CVS Brent was approved in 2016. £160K is awarded annually based on a conditional grant agreement to provide infrastructure support including capacity building, training, business development and fundraising plans, accessing external funding and developing partnerships and networks for Brent's voluntary and community sector. The grant provides essential funding to enable the council's ongoing engagement with the voluntary and community sector.

In February 2016, Cabinet approved the award of the BAP contract to Brent's Citizen's Advice Bureau. In order to ensure efficient administration of the Brent Advice Fund grants programme, previous reports detailed that the grants applications would be assessed by a BAF panel and any grants up to £10k would be awarded pursuant to officer delegated powers of authority. In exceptional circumstances, the grant value may exceed £10k, however this requires officer sign-off and approval by Cabinet.

The BAF is currently in its second year and a review was undertaken in November 2017 which created a number of recommendations. One of which was to increase the maximum grant from £10K-£20K under officer delegated powers of authority. The aim is to increase the number of applications as organisations may not have to 'match' fund which has restricted the number of applications.

This Equality Analysis will assess the impact of an extension of the existing funding to CVS Brent for 2018-19 and the impact of an increase in the award of grants under the Brent Advice Fund to a maximum grant of £20k per annum.

2. Who is affected by the proposal? Consider residents, staff and external stakeholders.

The current proposal will have a positive impact on residents, staff and external stakeholders by providing a continued service and increased funding for all voluntary sector organisations equally, therefore benefitting all their service users, alleviating pressure on council services and resources, and building stronger partnerships with external stakeholders.

3.1 Could the proposal impact on people in different ways because of their equality characteristics?

No. While the proposal will not have a disparate impact on people with protected characteristics, we anticipate better outcomes for all protected groups and those who are not protected by developing a stronger voluntary and community sector support network.

3.2 Could the proposal have a disproportionate impact on some equality groups? If you answered 'Yes' please indicate which equality characteristic(s) are impacted

No. Same considerations as above.

3.3 Would the proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?

No. It will increase the provision for free advice, capacity building and funding and it will reduce the processing times for BAF funding applications.

3.4 Does the proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?

No. The proposal will benefit all wards equally.

3.5 Is the proposal likely to be sensitive or important for some people because of their equality characteristics?

No.

3.6 Does the proposal relate to one of Brent's equality objectives?

Yes.

EO2: To involve our communities effectively

EO4: To ensure that local public services are responsive to different needs and treat users with dignity and respect

Recommend this EA for Full Analysis? No.