

# Equality Impact Assessment

Name of project/proposal T19 Channel Shift - Hantsdirect  
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Department Corporate Services  
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## **Description of Service / Policy**

Hantsdirect manages around 600,000 contacts from the public each year. The primary method of communication is by telephone. Increasing numbers of Hantsdirect residents have access to the internet and many already access information, or complete service applications, online. Encouraging more Hampshire residents to use digital services will reduce costs by enabling the County Council to run Hantsdirect with fewer staff. The primary aim of channel shift is to enable residents to access the services and information they need more easily online in order to reduce the need for them to contact the County Council by telephone.

Geographical impact\* All Hampshire

## **Description of proposed change**

Existing contact information will be analysed to identify where improvements could be made. If, for example, call data suggests that people are calling because there is insufficient information on the County Council's website, additional information will be provided,. Until this analysis is complete, it is difficult to pinpoint specific changes. In general, however, although customers will be encouraged to self-serve online wherever possible, existing methods of contact (such as telephone and text-phone) and support to access services (such as translation services) will remain available.

## **Engagement and consultation**

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? Planned

No specific consultation has been carried out on this proposal - however, the County Council carried out a public consultation exercise over the Summer 2017 which sought views on a range of options for finding further budget savings, including increasing Council Tax, using reserves and making changes to the way in which services are delivered, which may mean reducing or withdrawing certain services. The outcome of this consultation will be presented to Cabinet in autumn 2017.

Once decisions are made on the options for balancing the budget, further consultation will be carried out on any proposed service-specific changes, where required.

## **Impacts of the proposed change**

This impact assessment covers Service users

### **Statutory considerations**

### **Impact**

Age Impact Low  
People over the age of 65, especially if they live alone, are less likely to have the internet (Office of National Statistics – Internet Access, Households and Individuals 2016, figure 14). This will be mitigated by ensuring that traditional contact methods, such as telephone and text-phone, will continue to

be available.

Disability  
Impact

Low

There will be no change in access methods for people with disabilities, and the Accessible Information Standards will be adhered to in all communications. This will continue to ensure that people who have a disability of any kind get information that they can access and understand – for example, by providing information in plain English, or in different formats (such as large print, braille easy read or via email) and providing support to help individuals communicate (for example, support from a British Sign Language Interpreter, deafblind manual interpreter or an advocate).

Sexual Orientation

Neutral

Race

Neutral

Religion and Belief

Neutral

Gender Reassignment

Neutral

Gender

Neutral

Marriage and civil  
partnership

Neutral

Pregnancy and  
Maternity

Neutral

### **Other policy considerations**

Poverty  
Impact

Low

Although poverty can be a factor in restricting digital access, as there is no plan to remove existing methods of contact such as telephone and text-phone, residents from all socio-economic backgrounds will continue to be able to access services as they do now.

Rurality  
Impact

Low

Recognising that broadband speeds can be a factor in accessing digital services., the design and development of web information ensures that access to services and information online is quick to find and does not require sizeable bandwidth to function effectively.

Mitigation

### **Additional Information**

There may also be positive impacts for some protected groups through the provision of improved information relevant to their specific characteristics.

The channel shift project has also been informed by engagement sessions with c.100 older people, which took place last year.