

EQIA Submission Draft Working Template

Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):

Proposed Changes to Wellbeing Services in the Community
Updated post consultation 05/08/25

2. Directorate

Adult Social Care and Health

3. Responsible Service/Division

Adults and Integrated Commissioning

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA

Georgina Walton, Digital and Innovation Lead

5. Head of Service

Simon Mitchell

6. Director of Service

Helen Gillivan

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?

Service Change – *operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.* Answer Yes/No

Yes

Service Redesign – *restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working.* Answer Yes/No

No

Project/Programme – *includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.* Answer Yes/No

No

Commissioning/Procurement – *means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.*

Answer Yes/No

Yes

Strategy /Policy – *includes review, refresh or creating a new document.* Answer Yes/No

No

Other – Please add details of any other activity type here.

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations

Overview

The proposal is this to reduce funding and redesign the Wellbeing Services in the Community for older people (55+) delivered by Social Enterprise Kent (SEK), Involve Kent and Imago Community. The service redesign will incorporate elements of the Community Navigation activity and consequently the separate Community Navigation contract will be ended. The redesigned Wellbeing Service would focus on people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support. The proposals also included ceasing to fund the

Innovation Fund and back-office support and removing unallocated spend in the Shaw Trust in the Mental Health Community and Wellbeing Service.

In total these services supported a total of 33,011 people in 2024/25.

If the proposal were agreed, it would save approximately £3.45million (full year) from the amount spent on these services. However, there are potential costs to social care outlined in the cabinet report, which could reduce anticipated savings by between £17,000 to £166,000 (full year costs).

The Equality Impact Assessment

Kent County Council (KCC) is committed to having "due regard" to the three equality needs identified in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. These needs are: eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between different protected groups. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been conducted with these three equality needs in mind.

1. **Eliminating Discrimination:** The EqIA examines whether the proposals would place any protected groups at a particular disadvantage and identifies where this is likely to be the case. However, KCC considers that the proposals would be objectively justified, so as not to give rise to discrimination. This is because the proposals are pursuing the legitimate aims explained in the Consultation Document and Cabinet Report, namely: removing elements of duplication within the prevention approach and provision; ensuring prevention services are more efficient, targeted and making best use of limited resources; focusing on the areas of greatest need; and contributing towards savings that deliver a balanced budget.

KCC considers that the adverse impacts on particular groups are objectively justified in light of their contribution to achieving these aims. KCC has designed its proposals in a targeted way so as to minimise impacts on particular groups, as well as considering mitigating measures. KCC does not consider that it could minimise adverse impacts further without unacceptably compromising its ability to achieve the proposals' objectives. Balancing the aims of the proposals overall with the adverse impacts on particular groups, KCC considers those impacts to be objectively justified.

2. **Promoting Equality of Opportunity:** The proposals may have a negative impact on equality of opportunity if fewer services are made available to protected groups (as outlined below). However, there are a range of services available that would remain if the proposal was implemented which would contribute to promoting equality of opportunity and enhance physical and mental wellbeing. These services are designed to help to address participation in activities that can contribute to individuals' health and wellbeing. Social participation is crucial for health benefits including improved quality of life, increased longevity and reduced risk of disability, depression, anxiety, or dementia. The proposal takes into account the intersection of age, disability, health conditions, and deprivation. For instance, Census data from 2021 indicates that 33% of adults in east Kent are over 55, 22% have a disability, and 55% of households experience at least one dimension of deprivation. Additionally, 14% of individuals over 65 in Thanet live in poverty. We will monitor the extent to which the broad range of services continue to promote equality of opportunity.
3. **Fostering Good Relations:** the proposals may have a negative impact on fostering good relations if the range of activities available in the community is reduced. However, the broad range of services

and functions offered outside of these contracts means that a wide range of activities to promote good relations within the community will continue. The council enables fostering good relations through commissioning and service development strategies that consider the voices of individuals and the presenting issues of different groups with protected characteristics.

Public Consultation

A public consultation ([Proposed changes to wellbeing services in the community | Let's talk Kent](#)) took place on 26 November 2024 to 27 January 2025 and allowed consultees and other stakeholders the opportunity to give their views on the proposal and enabled KCC to gain a better understanding of the impact that the proposals may have on people. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. This EQIA has been updated following feedback from the consultation.

The EqIA will accompany the Consultation Report which will be submitted to the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee in September 2025.

The consultation questionnaire asked “Do you or the person you are responding on behalf of access any of the following services, as described in the consultation document”?

- 54% of consultees answering use Community Wellbeing Services.
- 44% of consultees answering use Community Navigation services.
- 11% of consultees answering use Mental Health and Wellbeing services in the community.
- 8 % of consultees answering didn't know if they accessed any of the services listed.
- Consultees were asked if they agree or disagree with the proposed changes set out below:

1.For the Mental Health Community and Wellbeing Service (Live Well Kent), the proposal is to stop the innovation fund, stop back-office support and remove the Shaw Trust unallocated spend.

Only 6% of consultees indicated they agree with the proposal to stop the innovation fund, back-office support and remove the Shaw Trust unallocated spend. The majority disagree with the proposal (80%).

80%	Disagree
8%	Neither agree or disagree
6%	Don't Know
6%	Agree

KCC Prevention Services consultation - closed data summary

2.For the Community Navigation Service (which is for people aged 55+), the proposal is to stop funding this service

Only 4% of consultees indicated they agree with the proposal to stop funding the Community Navigation Service for people aged 55 & over. The majority disagree with the proposal (92%).

92%	Disagree
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3%	Don't Know
2%	Neither agree or disagree
4%	Agree

KCC Prevention Services consultation - closed data summary

3. For the Wellbeing Services in the Community (for those aged 55+), the proposal is to redesign the service to focus on people needing a medium to higher level of support which promotes independence and helps people do as much as they can for themselves. And include elements of Community Navigation

17% of consultees indicated they agree with the proposal to redesign the Wellbeing Services in the Community to focus on people needing a medium to higher level of support. The majority disagree with the proposal (77%).

The consultation questionnaire asked people to tell us to what extent the proposal would affect you or the person, group or community that you or your organisation represents?

- The majority of consultees believe the proposal would have a large effect on them or the person / group / community they represent (81%). 12% believe it will have a moderate effect and 3% believe it will have a minor effect. Only 2% believe it would have no effect
- When asked to consider the alternatives possible if services were stopped, 25% of consultees commented that there wouldn't be any alternative ways they could get support / they wouldn't be able to get support. An additional 27% commented that they were not sure / they don't know where they or other people would go. Of the services referenced by consultees, social services (17%) and GPs (14%) are the most commonly referenced.

81%	Large effect
12%	Moderate effect
3%	Minor effect
2%	No effect
2%	Don't Know

KCC Prevention Services consultation - closed data summary

Consultees were asked to provide their views on KCC's equality analysis, only 17% of consultees provided a response to this question. 20% of consultees commenting made reference to ensuring everyone is treated as individuals / equally. 18% made comments to the effect that the proposals discriminate against the elderly as they will be the most impacted. Small proportions highlighted concerns about the potential for digitally excluding potential users, the importance of considering any cultural / faith preferences and values and proposals impacting the most vulnerable demographic groups. Answers to this question did not involve comments on specific elements of KCC's pre-consultation EqIA. Instead, these answers provided general comments and concerns about the proposals.

%	Number of responses	Percentage
Everyone treated as an individual / equality and diversity should therefore be irrelevant / just provide a service	46	20%

The elderly are being discriminated against as they will be the most impacted	41	18%
Nothing	20	9%
Concerns about potential for digital exclusion amongst older age groups / more vulnerable	18	7%
Comments around proposals wasting money as other effects will occur / savings not worth impact	14	6%
Cultural / faith preferences and values need to be considered	13	6%
Comments about the impact on the most vulnerable demographic groups	13	6%
Those with disabilities need more consideration / equality has a way to go for anyone with a disability	12	5%
Concerns about impact on carers	11	5%
Concerns for those living in deprived areas / discrimination against low socio-economic groups	10	4%
Concerns about those struggling with their mental health	9	4%
Not just for adults aged 55 & over / should be for all adults	6	3%
Make it easier to understand / the document is unclear and confusing	6	3%
Increase awareness so everyone knows what's available	5	2%
Concerns for those with autism / neurodivergent	5	2%
Concerns about impact on women	5	2%
%	Number of responses	Percentage
Concerns for those who fall into multiple protected or marginalised groups / those with protected characteristics	4	2%
Comments not answering question	18	8%
Other	23	10%

Section B – Evidence

9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? Answer: Yes/No

No

12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders? Answer: Yes/No

Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.

Yes

13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Formal meetings and updates were conducted with boards, committees and the working group to ensure input into the development of the proposals and the consultation planning by appropriate professionals.

Ahead of the consultation launch, feedback was gathered from KCC Adult Social Care's People's Panel, which includes members who have links to organisations such as older people's, mental health, and physical disability forums as well as Healthwatch Kent volunteers, to gather feedback on the proposal, discuss the options considered and review the consultation material.

Stakeholders engaged with prior to consultation:

- VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) providers within scope of the proposal have reviewed the proposal and worked with the council to develop an alternative option
- NHS with verbal updates provided in meetings
- KCC Public Health
- KCC Adult Social Care and Health directorate
- KCC Legal team
- KCC Growth, Environment and Transport directorate
- KCC Corporate Management team
- KCC Consultation and Engagement team
- KCC Adult Social Care People's Panel
- Adult Social Care Senior Management team
- VCS Strategic Board
- Kent and Medway VCSE Steering Group
- KCC Cabinet Members
- District Council Chiefs.

The consultation was hosted on KCC's engagement website Let's talk Kent. To help make sure the consultation was accessible the following activities were undertaken:

- The webpage and all documents met digital accessibility requirements.
- Mapping completed to ensure that engagement sessions during the consultation would reach as many people as possible that could potentially be affected by the proposals. Thinking about protected characteristics and where there are gaps in data and therefore more engagement with certain groups/communities in Kent, for example ethnicity and religion. Engagement sessions held across the county. There were 14 face-to-face drop-in sessions during December 2024 and January 2025 across the county. In addition, Officers attended 9 groups and activities across the county to promote the consultation and help people complete the questionnaire.
- Discussions held with VCSE providers on how to best engage people and utilise existing forums to engage people.
- The Consultation Document provided examples to help illustrate how the proposed change could impact people and included a glossary explaining unfamiliar terms.
- All consultation material included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or alternative format.

- Information about the consultation was sent to partners, care providers and KCC.
- A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the consultation webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version. Responses made by letter / email / telephone were also be accepted.
- Easy Read and Large print versions of the consultation material were available from the consultation webpage and on request.
- The webpage was translated into British Sign Language.
- The consultation material contained a telephone number and email address to contact with any queries relating to the consultation.
- For people who do not speak English, the consultation document could be translated on request.
- For people that are digitally excluded, hard copies of the consultation document can be mailed to people on request. Hard copies were sent to the providers in scope of the proposal share with people. Hard copies were made available during community engagement sessions and attending activities/groups/events.
- The consultation and drop-in sessions were promoted through local community networks by involvement officers working in different areas of Kent. Working with the providers in scope of the proposal to share information with people currently supported by the services. Providers displayed posters, postcards and have hard copies of the Consultation Document. Providers invited KCC to events and forums to engage with people supported by the services.
- During the consultation, KCC monitored the activity on a weekly basis to ensure people from across Kent are engaging and taking targeted action where required.
- Posters were displayed in libraries and gateways.

Emails were sent to stakeholders including contacts from health organisations, care sector, voluntary sector and community organisations, registered users of KCC's engagement website Let's talk Kent who have requested to be kept informed of Adult Social Care activity, and Adult Social Care Your Voice network members. Consultation promotional activities also included social media, newsletters, websites, posters.

14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? Answer: Yes/No

No

15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Answer: Yes/No

Yes (Contract equalities monitoring data)

Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App

An analysis of the data from the services outlined in the table below, between April 2024 - March 2025. This data has been provided by the providers.

Involve Kent – Community Navigation
Social Enterprise Kent (SEK) - Community Navigation
Imago Community – Community Navigation
Involve Kent – Wellbeing
Imago – Wellbeing
SEK – Wellbeing
Live Well Kent

In 2024/25, a total of 26,525 people by Community Navigation and Wellbeing service, of these, 12,150 were supported by Community Navigation services and 14,375 Wellbeing Services.

To note that there are inconsistencies in how data is captured and reported. The total number of people supported by the services does not match the total EQIA data. Using this data has helped us understand the potential impact of proposals, using assumptions provided by the providers on the potential numbers of people that could be supported if proposals were implemented.

Providers were asked to consider the potential impact of the proposals, thinking about the number of people that could be supported by the redesigned Wellbeing service (for people needing medium to higher levels of support) which would be 7,721 therefore 18,804 could potentially be impacted by the proposals.

Providers do not capture protected characteristics in each category – lower, medium and high level. Therefore, to understand the protected characteristics of the people supported by wellbeing services, the full data has been used which relates to all people supported.

Although there has been analysis for each protected group, many individuals have multiple protected characteristics that need to be considered holistically.

It is important to note that capturing and reporting on the protected characteristics of carers responsibilities have not been part of the contract with providers. While Carers Responsibilities are not a protected characteristic according to the Public Sector Equality Duty, it is included by KCC here as it is deemed important.

The Live Well Proposal – Innovation Fund

As the Innovation Fund is used to test new ideas which could be short term support or events, there is limited data on the number of people supported and breakdown of protected characteristics. However, we do have information from the Live Well service as a whole and have used this to assess the potential impact of the proposal. In 2024/25 6,486 people were supported by the service. In 2024/25, 83 people accessed services that were funded by the Innovation Fund.

Armed Forces and Veteran Community

Through the consultation feedback it has been noted that the EQIA did not include any impacts on military families/veterans.

There is limited data on Armed Forces and the Veteran Community in Kent as it has not been a requirement for the Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community to collect this data.

The Kent Public Health Observatory published the Armed Forces and Veteran Community in Kent Needs Assessment in June 2024:

In Kent, there are:

- 410 serving UK armed forces personnel in the County along with 900 Gurkha soldiers.
- There are 340 reservists (including Rochester) as well as the cadet community
- It describes the Kent veteran population of over 52,000 by location and demographic characteristics including their numbers by local authority and Health Care Partnerships
- A substantial number (58%) are over 65 years of age and reside in the eastern coastal fringes of Kent.

- Apart from Ashford (28.8%) all other Kent Districts have veterans with a disability percentage of between 30% and 37%. The disability status may well pose a particular issue for both health and social care sectors but given the lack of integrated data relating to health and social care status of veterans it is difficult to clarify potential need.

Therefore, due to the age of the Veteran Community, proposals could have a negative if they or a person they care for has reduced access to the support and services affected by the proposal. Veterans could be support by the services to get information and connect with others. Some of the groups and activities provided by the Wellbeing Services are designed for Veterans to connect with others, therefore stopping or reducing the groups could have a negative impact.

Mitigating action for military families/veterans

- Blind Veterans UK are the leading organisation supporting vision impaired Ex-Service men and women, regardless of when or for how long they served [Blind Veterans UK, Rebuilding lives after sight loss - Blind Veterans UK](#)
- The DWP AFCs offer help to all veterans of working age including advice, guidance and signposting on employment, benefits, housing and mental health. Assistance also includes attending Breakfast Clubs. The DWP AFCs cite complex cases often involving barriers to accessing services and facilities across multiple sectors. Those over 50 years of age pose particular problems having served for many years, had stable employment post service and then to find that they are made redundant with barriers to then secure permanent employment. <https://afvbc.com/armed-forces-veterans-breakfast-clubs-information>
- Op COURAGE is an NHS mental health service, created to be there for those who have served in the UK armed forces. Whether you're currently serving and due to leave the military, a reservist or a veteran, this service is to give you the information and guidance you need to navigate civilian life. <https://www.opcourage-southeast.nhs.uk/about>
- The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), along with many other supporting organisations are openly ready to assist families of serving personnel in dealing with bereavement. The JCCC is the lead organisation for managing all the practical requirements following bereavement and is also a source of advice and guidance through The Purple Pack bereavement guide for service families of service personnel [Armed Forces Compensation Scheme \(AFCS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Veterans UK is the Ministry of Defence's service that helps veterans on many issues, including benefits and welfare. They also offer information on a range of compensation schemes available for veterans and their dependants. [Finance Advice | Job Support | Royal British Legion Veterans Welfare Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) is part of Veterans UK and offers veterans professional advice in relation to welfare and compensation claims. They will support veterans throughout their transition from service and through life. To use this service, veterans should contact the VWS centre in their region which is Centurion (London, SE and SW England) Tel 02392 702232 Email: Veterans-UK-VWS-South@mod.gov.uk
- The Royal British Legion offers benefits advice, information and support to members of the Armed Forces community on how to access benefits and tax credits to maximize their income.

- The Veterans Gateway is a first point of contact for veterans seeking support. They put veterans and their families in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support they need including healthcare and housing, employability, finances, personal relationships and more.
- Employment and the resettlement programme (Career Transition Partnership - CTP). The CTP provides comprehensive resettlement support services for personnel leaving the Armed Forces, as they transition from their military career into employment, further education or retirement and for up to two years after leaving in the form of employment support. [Career Transition Partnership - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/career-transition-partnership)
- This includes having an armed forces champion in every Jobcentre Plus district who ensures that the DWP provide support that meets veteran's needs. The role of the Armed Forces Champion is outlined in the Technical Report.
- There are groups and activities available for Veterans provided outside of this contract, these include East Kent Mind has an East Kent Mind Armed Forces Connector supporting Veterans in Thanet and Canterbury, with mental health support, health and lifestyle, trips that help with social isolation.

In Kent and Medway there are two Armed Forces Champions (AFCs) working across seven Hubs comprising 13 Centres.

- Channel – Ashford and Folkestone.
- Chatham – Chatham.
- Coastal – Margate and Ramsgate.
- Heritage – Canterbury and Dover.
- Swale – Sheerness and Sittingbourne.
- Thames Gateway – Gravesend and Dartford
- Weald – Maidstone and Tonbridge

Forces Connect is the app which has been produced based on the pathways produced by the Armed Forces Network. The app started with only information for Hampshire, Kent & Medway, Sussex and Surrey. However, more counties are joining the app, making it one of the easiest ways to access information and support for the Armed Forces community. <https://sussexarmedforcesnetwork.nhs.uk/service-champions/kent-and-medway/kent-and-medway-pathways/>

Section C – Impact

16. Who may be impacted by the activity? Select all that apply.

Service users/clients - Answer: Yes/No

Yes

Residents/Communities/Citizens - Answer: Yes/No

Yes

Staff/Volunteers - Answer: Yes/No

Yes

17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? Answer: Yes/No

KCC anticipates that this proposal will contribute to our 'Securing Kent's Future' objective of providing prevention services in a sustainable way, protecting frontline services, continuing to provide the level of

care and support needed by people in Kent who have a physical or mental impairment, disability or illness that meets the eligibility criteria under the Care Act 2014. The savings made will assist KCC in setting a balanced budget.

And the proposals will help reduce duplication and confusion for people over where they get information, advice and guidance, making it clearer and easier for people to get the right information at the right time. Proposals will ensure a more targeted approach, supporting people and communities most in need.

18. Please give details of Positive Impacts

N/A

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

a) Are there negative impacts for Age? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Age

For the Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community Proposal

All Services	Total		Services	Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Age	Number	%	Age	Number	%	Number	%
Under 18	19	0.07	Under 18	0	0	19	0.13
18-24	165	0.63	18-24	57	0.49	108	0.74
25-59	4179	16.01	25-59	1741	15.01	2438	16.81
60-79	12749	48.85	60-79	5145	44.36	7604	52.43
80-89	6974	26.72	80-89	3858	33.27	3116	21.48
90+	1838	7.04	90+	1140	9.83	698	4.81
Unknown	194	0.74	Unknown	15	0.12	179	1.23
No Data	340	1.3	No Data	0	0	340	2.34

The data shows that 87.46% of people supported by Community Navigation are aged 60+ and 78.72% supported by Wellbeing Services in the Community are aged 60+, in total 82.61% of the people supported by these services are aged 60+. Therefore, the proposals could impact older people as compared to individuals under 60.

Kent has a greater proportion of people aged 50+ years and above compared to the national average in England. Just over a fifth of Kent's population is aged 65 and over (20.5%). The population of Kent is projected to increase by 18.2% between 2022 and 2040, with a significant ageing trend. Forecasts show that the number of 65+ year olds is forecast to increase by 40.7% between 2022 and 2040, yet the proportion of population aged under 65 is only forecast to increase by 12.3%.

Community wellbeing and the impact of social isolation

Community wellbeing promotes and supports individuals to continue participating in activities they enjoy and maintain or establish new networks and support systems, helping people to connect. Therefore, reducing the Wellbeing Services in the Community to support people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support could have a negative impact on people that are experiencing social isolation and assessed as needing lower-level support. The total number of people supported in 2024/25 by the Wellbeing Services that were assessed at needing lower levels of support was 8,338 (around 58% of people supported by the services are assessed as low level) and of these 78.72% were 60+.

Social isolation is a significant risk factor for not receiving timely help. Loneliness can lead to depression and social isolation, which in turn can result in poorer physical and mental health outcomes and increased risk of a range of physical and mental health conditions.

In 2018, work was undertaken to identify which groups of older people in Kent are at greater risk [Social-isolation-and-loneliness-in-Kent.pdf \(kpho.org.uk\)](https://www.kpho.org.uk/social-isolation-and-loneliness-in-Kent.pdf). This risk profiling estimated that 29,500 Kent residents over 65 are at risk. In comparison with all Kent residents aged 65+, the people identified as being at higher risk of social isolation or loneliness were:

- Older.
- More likely to be female.
- Much more likely to be living in a deprived neighbourhood.
- More likely to have multiple health conditions.
- More likely to have attended A&E, have been admitted to hospital, have had contact with community health services and received social care services – although the relationship is complex and social isolation and loneliness may not be the principal cause.
- More likely to be assessed as being in a high-risk score group.
- More likely to have characteristics recorded by their GP that place them in the 'severe' or 'moderate' frailty groups of the Electronic Frailty Index.

Community wellbeing and the impact on physical wellbeing

Community wellbeing can help people improve their physical wellbeing by accessing activity classes, support groups and encourage them to remain active.

As people get older, they are more likely to experience mobility issues and are at risk of deterioration in their physical health and increased frailty. According to the Kent and Medway Care Record, more than one in six (18%) of people aged 65 years and over living in Kent are classed as moderately or severely frail. This can lead to increased risk of falls. The main contributing conditions are high blood pressure, arthritis, urinary conditions, respiratory and heart disease and visual impairment.

Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community and the impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health of older people

Community Wellbeing promotes and supports individuals to continue participating in activities they enjoy and maintain or establish new networks and support systems. This can help with emotional wellbeing and mental health. Providers were asked to consider the capacity available to support people with medium to

higher levels of need if proposals were implemented, providers could support 3,987 therefore 10,388 could have a negative impact.

Reducing access to services that provide mental stimulation for older people could have a negative impact on emotional wellbeing.

Community Navigators signpost people to information and guidance, emotional and practical support, or help people to access a range of community, health and social care services. Navigation helps people accessing financial and benefits information, and support with maintaining a safe and warm home which can be a concern for older people due to increased cost of living as households across the country have struggled to keep up with growing inflation due to unprecedented rises in everyday basics such as food and heating. This can have a negative impact on emotional wellbeing. Providers have shared that many older adults find it challenging to navigate their way through digital or complex information when accessing health, social, financial and housing support. This can result in heightened feelings of isolation, missed medical appointments, or a lack of awareness about their rights. Based on the data provided by providers on the numbers of people that would no longer be supported if proposals were implemented, stopping Community Navigation could have a negative impact on up to 8,415 people.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

In 2024/25 a total of 6,486 people were supported by Live Well (Kent). 83 people were supported by the Innovation fund in 2024/25.

- 12.01% were aged 20-25
- 60.31% were aged 26-55
- 23.95% were aged 56+

From this data, the negative impact would be on greater numbers of people aged 25-55 than those in other age groups. Examples of some of the sessions that have been tested through the Innovation Fund that relate to age are:

- Young people aged 17 to 25 and who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community - structured programmes of support to develop resilience, learn new skills and to enhance physical wellbeing.
- Menopause support groups

Consultation summary

Within the consultation the majority of responses were received were from people aged 56+ (78% responses) which is broadly consistent with the data set out above and our pre-consultation assessment that older people are likely to be negatively impacted by the proposals. The overall responses are relevant to impacts on older people, as the services are specifically for older people. There were comments that these proposals are discriminating against older people. And with an ageing population that there needs to be the right services and support to ensure that older people maintain their independence and live in their own homes. Consultation responses set out the value of Community Wellbeing and Navigation in keeping older people connected and reducing social isolation, maintaining wellbeing and health and that the potential impact of the proposals is not really understood. There were concerns over potential barriers to getting the right support, such as living in rural areas, transport and digital.

The consultation questionnaire asked - Which of these age groups applies to you?

18-20	0.1%	61-65	10%
21-25	0.2%	66-70	13%
26-30	0.5%	71-75	16%
31-35	0.4%	76-80	16%
36-40	1%	81-85	9%
41-45	2%	86-90	5%
46-50	3%	91-95	2%
51-55	5%	Over 95	0.4%
56-60	7%	Prefer not to say/Left blank	11%

c) Mitigating Actions for Age

It is assessed that through the in person, telephone and online support there is capacity to provide information, advice and guidance to people that could be impacted by the proposals.

Officers have undertaken further analysis of the level of duplication in the system following the consultation. It was estimated by providers that 1,662 people could be supported by alternative information, advice and guidance this includes digital platforms and the initial contact points with each provider. Providers estimated that 6,753 people that would have been supported by Community Navigation could come to social care. It is assessed that the following services have capacity for in person support:

- Social Care Connect has capacity to support 1,920 (face to face via clinics) this is assessed as new capacity as the current utilisation levels are very low.
- Kent Enablement Services helpdesk has capacity to support 763 (face to face) people a year. Based on current activity it is estimated that the service is supporting 547 people, therefore the additional capacity available to support people impacted by these proposals is 215.)

It is estimated that between Social Care Connect clinics and Kent Enablement Service helpdesk there is additional capacity to support 2,135 people. These are for in person support and will be closely monitored and could increase capacity with demand.

Therefore, of the total number of people that could need to make contact with social care (6,753) there is an estimated capacity for 2,135 people to access in person support (this can increase if there is demand), the remaining 4,618 people potentially impacted could be supported by:

- Adult Social Care Connect telephone support, however, to deal with all the demand the service may need to use a waiting list.
- There is unlimited support available via digital platforms.

During 2024/25 the Wellbeing Services supported 14,375 people, providers were asked to consider the capacity available to support people with medium to higher levels of need if proposals were implemented. Providers estimated that 6,504 people could be supported by alternative groups and activities provided outside of these services and that 3,885 people could contact social care via the initial contact point – Adult Social Care Connect, of these 20% may require an assessment and of that between 1-10% of may require formal care and support from KCC. For those make contact with social care and not eligible for social care will be connected with alternative groups and activities.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of alternative groups and activities, and to assess whether in every case an alternative group or activity will be available to every individual. However, officers have

carefully considered which groups and activities could potentially stop under these proposals across Kent and what alternatives are available that are relevant to older people. The alternative groups and activities considered physical wellbeing and connection through social groups such as reading groups. From this assessment it has been identified that there is a broad range of activities available outside of the contract across Kent. However, in a small number of specific localities within districts there are fewer alternative groups and activities or individuals may need travel to access a suitable alternative. However, the proposal is not to end particular groups and activities; it is that the lead partners would receive less funding and therefore focus on supporting people with medium to higher levels of support. When Officers were engaging people as part of the consultation, some suggestions were that groups and activities could review the funding model, looking at potentially increasing costs to individuals in order to maintain some groups and activities for people with lower levels of need. It is therefore considered likely that some of the groups and activities which are potentially affected could continue.

Accessing Information, Advice and Guidance

The proposals have been designed so that in future, services are targeted at those who have the greatest needs (people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support).

The Wellbeing Service provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point either by telephone or website. People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed as needing lower levels of support, they would be signposted and connected with a range of services that remain available. The services maintain directories of services. The Wellbeing Services in the Community would be redesigned to reduce the negative impact in proposing to end Community Navigation as it will be incorporated into Wellbeing Services in the Community and support people aged 55+ needing medium to higher levels of support.

There is an opportunity to develop the partnership working between SEK, Imago and Involve and the Adult Social Care Connect service, to share information about the support available in communities and review capacity across the services. This can help mitigate the impacts of these proposals on older people by ensuring that there is consistent information, advice and guidance across all organisations. Digital platforms such as Connect to Support provide information, advice and guidance. To enhance this further there is work underway on Joy, which is a digital social prescribing platform, with a variety of aspects that can be used by both professionals and Kent Residents to help navigate the complex health and social care system, and the support available to both individuals and communities.

Reviewing the feedback from the consultation there is a theme that has emerged that people are confused over where to go for information, advice and guidance. An action as a result of the consultation is that we are planning a campaign to set out where people can go for support. This will further mitigate the negative impact of these proposals on older people's physical health and wellbeing there are a range of services that will be better promoted/publicised, such as Social Prescribing. Further details about Social Prescribing and the prevention campaign can be found in Appendix 1.

Non-Digital Services

Some of the consultation responses made reference to older residents not being able to access digital services or platforms and not having the comprehension or ability to use digital devices. As part of the mitigating actions there is consideration to in person contact and support by a range of different services.

Kent Enablement Services: They provide face to face for support to have help with accessing information and advice, help with letters, bills, finding groups and activities, college and education courses, paid and voluntary employment, information about keeping safe, housing, wellbeing, benefits and help with making phone calls. Further details about the service can also be found in Appendix 1.

Adult Social Care Connect Community Clinics: The purpose of these clinics is to establish effective community interfaces between ASC Connect and wider community services, and to provide alternative settings in which to undertake initial face to face conversations with people referred to ASCH for information and support. Further details about the service and its capacity are set out above and can also be found in Appendix 1.

To help older people build confidence with digital ways of accessing support which may help reduce the impact of social isolation there is a scheme called Digital Kent. Further information can be found under Appendix 1.

Social Isolation and Connecting People

To help older people with social isolation, and improving physical and emotional wellbeing, there is Positive Wellbeing, delivered by a delivered by Community Connectors from across a range of services and community organisations. Further information about this service can be found under Appendix 1.

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools (connect to support and Joy platform) to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified. Officers has also reviewed the activities and groups provided by the services in scope of the proposals and looked at what alternatives are available within the area.

There are three Market Development Officers within Kent Adult Social Care Commissioning. The postholders work with communities to understand the local needs profile and to identify, encourage and support those interested in identifying, nurturing and setting up compliant micro enterprises that support and deliver the care needs of Kent residents and support KCC's Commissioning Intentions for Adult Social Care. This can include groups and activities.

There are various befriending and helplines for older people, these include:

The Silver Line Helpline

The Careline - Let's beat loneliness

Transport

To access alternative groups and activities, this may require people to have access to transport, where with current service offer, they may not need to travel. This was raised as a concern during the consultation. The concerns around transport have been considered following the consultation, if transport is identified as a barrier, social care teams use the KCC transport scheme, which provides information on locally run and managed transport schemes across Kent. Through the scheme there is encouragement and grants for parishes, charities, and community groups can to set up community transport schemes. Social Care teams

also have a list of transport providers for health-related travel, such as appointments, hospital discharge. There is also the Kent Karrier, which is a dial-a-ride service operating across Kent. Drivers can collect people from home and take them to a location, such as a supermarket, town centre or hospital, for a small fee. To access this service, people must have one or more of the following:

- Have a medical condition that makes travelling on public transport difficult, or
- Live in a rural area more than 500 metres from a bus route or railway station, or
- Aged 85 or over.

Focused support for older people

We acknowledge that the over 55 population is significant in Kent and rising rapidly and will that keeping people well for longer will reduce need for adult social care in the future. We understand that older people want opportunities to be social as well as to improve physical and mental health and to better connect older people to each other and local things to do in their neighbourhoods. And need to mobilise communities to do more for each other. We need to create age friendly environments which facilitate healthy ageing. Therefore, there will be a dedicated worker to initiate age friendly communities with partners across Kent, including parish councils, to support the creation of age friendly communities. Appendix 1 sets out more information about the role.

Public Health currently fund Fall prevention courses which help people keep moving, strong and balanced. The Public Health team at Kent County Council (KCC) have proposed changes to this Postural Stability Service in Kent. Proposals do not entail making any savings. The proposal is to change the service so it can be used by more people, more locally to them, and earlier in life so they are able to get the most use out of the help on offer to stay well, fit, mobile and independent for longer. KCC Public Health are proposing these changes because of feedback and what we know about the way the population in Kent is changing which suggests that we need to update the current offer. Following a consultation a paper went to Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee in July 2025.

To mitigate the impacts on physical wellbeing for people there are also other existing services, which include an innovative digital Technology Enhanced Lives service (social and health care apps and wearable technology) that empowers a person and supports them to maintain or improve their independence, safety and wellbeing with greater choice and control. The service is tailored to the person and makes use of technology a person may already own such as a phone or smart speaker and/or technology provided through the Technology Enhanced Lives service, for example wrist-worn falls monitors so that carers can be alerted if falls occur. This can help build confidence in older people, helping them to remain independent for longer. Further information about the service can be found under Appendix 1.

Self-Funders

During the consultation a concern was raised about support for self-funders, self-funders arrange their own care and support for different reasons; some may pay the full costs and others may be council supported but still pay a charge. If you're paying the full cost of your care, you are known as a 'self-funder'. There is support available such as Who we can help | Autumna - Autumna which provides a free & impartial service. They are able to provide advice and signpost people.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue and these include a range of support, activities and groups for people of all ages.

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data for age, for example a downward trend in young people accessing the service, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The EqiA has identified that the proposal will have an adverse impact on older people. Comments received through the consultation stated proposals were discriminating against older people. However, it is assessed that any particular adverse impact on older people is justified, as it is pursuing the legitimate aims set out above, and is proportionate due to the mitigations, that have been identified that can support older people to maintain independence and connect with others. Services will continue to support people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support. For older people assessed as needing lower levels of support there is a range digital and non-digital ways of continuing to support older people.

The proposal may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity in respect of people in the age categories that will be more affected. However, as above, a range of mitigations have been identified. The proposals ensure a targeted approach, supporting people with medium to higher levels of need. The range of mitigations will still support people needing lower levels of support, signposting and connecting them with alternative services that are provided outside of these contracts. The additional mitigation identified following consultation – prevention campaign will help older people (in a digital and non-digital way) find out about what support is available to them. Mitigations have also considered barriers for older people getting the right support such as living in rural areas where transport can be an issue.

The proposals may have an adverse on fostering good relations between those in the age categories that will be more affected. However, the mitigations identified and KCC’s approach to prevention overall will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts which will continue. The council also ensures the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals helping to improve and shape services. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Simon Mitchell

20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

a) Are there negative impacts for Disability? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

For the Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community Proposal

The following data from April 2024 to March 2025 shows the identified range of recorded disabilities and /or health condition:

All Services	Total		Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Disability	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%

Physical/Mobility impairment	3415	13.33	1550	13.31	1865	13.36
Sensory	5	0.01	0	0	5	0.03
Sensory Impairment (visual impairment)	626	2.44	158	1.35	468	3.35
Sensory Impairment (dual - hearing and visual impairment)	112	0.43	29	0.24	83	0.59
Sensory Impairment (Hearing impairment)	541	2.11	144	1.23	397	2.84
Mental Health need/condition	2270	8.86	957	8.21	1313	9.4
Learning Disability	396	1.54	153	1.31	243	1.74
Dementia	1757	6.86	1282	11	475	3.4
Substance Misuse	86	0.33	42	0.36	44	0.31
Frailty	1161	4.53	704	6.04	457	3.27
End of Life	28	0.1	25	0.21	3	0.02
Autism	159	0.62	63	0.54	96	0.68
Long Standing Health Condition or Illness	11482	44.84	6537	56.14	4945	35.42
Cancer	108	0.42	0	0	108	0.77
None	1407	5.49	0	0	1407	10.07
Complex Needs	327	1.27	0	0	327	2.43
Memory & Cognition (not Dementia)	40	0.15	0	0	40	0.28
Unknown	986	3.85	0	0	986	7.06
No Data	697	2.72	0	0	697	4.99

Community Navigation

The data from those supported by the services during 2024/25 identifies that the proposals would have the greatest impact on people with:

- Long-term conditions 56.14% - a long-term condition is a condition that cannot be cured but can be controlled by medication and/or other treatments and therapies. Depression, asthma and diabetes are examples of long-term conditions and people can have more than one long-term condition. People with long-term conditions tend to use health and care services more and the physical and/or mental health condition may have a significant impact on a person’s ability to live well. Prevalence of long-term conditions in people aged over 55 in Kent is very high, therefore it would be expected that there would be a high number of people supported who would have a long- term condition.
- Physical disabilities 13.31%
- Dementia 11%
- Frailty 6.04%
- Mental Health 8.21%

Community Wellbeing (Wellbeing Services in the Community)

The data from those supported by the services during 2024/25 identifies that the proposals would have the greatest impact on people with:

- Long-term conditions 35.42%
- Physical disability 13.36%
- Mental Health 9.4%

- There is also 7.06% of data unknown/not captured

Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community and impact on people with long-term health conditions

Providers estimate that around 3,735 of people supported by Community Navigation could be supported by the redesigned services, of the people potentially affected (8,415), 53.02% have a long-term condition.

The potential negative impact on people with a long-term health condition:

- People with a long-term condition may struggle to access information on how to manage their condition, and advice on obtaining benefits and equipment.
- People with a long-term condition may struggle to access information about accessible social groups and activities, therefore reducing the opportunities to connect with others which could impact on mental wellbeing.
- Could lead to fewer people with a long-term condition accessing the benefits they are entitled to which could increase poverty and inequality.
- Could increase the number of people who fall into debt because they have not claimed the right benefits.
- People with long-term conditions may struggle with managing GP and hospital appointments and with no support to help navigate these there may be an impact on the person's health.

Wellbeing Services in the Community help people with long-term conditions with social isolation through groups and transport. The redesigned service would not be able to support around 10,388 people assessed as needing lower-level support. Therefore, there could be increased social exclusion through reduced support groups and transport to connect people with shopping, communities and other people.

Disability

Providers estimate that 3,735 of people supported by Community Navigation could be supported by the redesigned services, 8,415 would not be supported and therefore affected and it is estimated 15.06% of those affected could have a physical disability.

The potential negative impact of these proposals on people with a physical disability, include:

- People with a physical disability may struggle to access information on independent living, and advice on obtaining benefits and equipment.
- People with a physical disability may struggle to access information about accessible social groups and activities, therefore reducing the opportunities to connect with others which could impact on mental wellbeing.
- Could lead to less disabled people with a physical disability accessing the benefits they are entitled to which could increase poverty and inequality.
- Increase in requests to the council for assistance with Personal Independence Payment and other benefits.
- Increase in the number of people with a physical disability who do not find their way into work.
- Increase in the number of people who fall into debt because they have not claimed the right benefits.

Providers have shared that many individuals with physical disabilities often need assistance to navigate complex health systems, access disability-related benefits, or find specialised care and services. Without

community navigation services, they face increased barriers to independent living, worsening health outcomes and possible financial hardship.

Wellbeing Services in the Community help people with physical disabilities with social isolation through groups and transport. The redesigned service would not be able to support around 10,388 people assessed as needing lower-level support. Of these, 9.7% could have a physical disability. Therefore, there could be increased social exclusion through reduced support groups and transport to connect people with shopping, communities and with other people.

Frailty

According to the Kent and Medway Care Record, more than one in six (18%) of people aged 65 years and over living in Kent are classed as moderately or severely frail. The main contributing conditions are high blood pressure, arthritis, urinary conditions, respiratory and heart disease and visual impairment.

Community Navigation supports people with frailty. Providers estimate that around 3,735 people supported by Community Navigation could be supported by the redesigned services, therefore 8,415 people could be affected by the proposal of which 9.18% people have frailty. People with frailty are supported by Community Navigation for a range of reasons including being able to access a trusted assessor for small pieces of equipment to help people with frailty remain independent for longer or navigating complex information about finances, health and wellbeing.

Community Navigation and impacts on dementia

Community Navigation helps 11% people living with dementia navigate complex information, which could be helping with housing, maintaining a safe home and emotional support. Stopping the Community Navigation service could have a negative impact on people living with dementia.

The proposal could lead to people being less able to access information and support to make informed decisions, access the necessary dementia services and connecting with others through dementia cafes, peer support, social opportunities and befriending. The negative impact of this proposal on people with dementia could lead to greater isolation, loneliness, less independence, less guidance, support and respite for carers. And this could increase the number of people needing support from Adult Social Care.

Kent has approximately 25,000 people with dementia with an anticipated 15,000 with a diagnosis. Compared to the national picture, Kent and Medway has a higher number of people with dementia but a low diagnosis rate.

A diagnosis, provided at an early stage, can help people plan for the future and gain the right support and information to understand the changes they are experiencing and live as well as possible, with access to treatments which may help with symptoms, benefits or legal advice.

According to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment cohort model, we expect a 17.9% increase in people with dementia between 2022 and 2027. People with neurological conditions, including dementia, have the highest level of measured social care need.

Mental health

Of the people supported by the Community Navigation service, 8.21% people are living with mental health needs. Community Navigators help to signpost people to information and guidance, emotional and practical

support, or help to access a range of community, health and social care services. Such as accessing financial and benefits information, support with maintaining a safe and warm home which can be a concern for older people due to increased cost of living, as households across the country have struggled to keep up with growing inflation due to unprecedented rises in everyday basics such as food and heating. This can have a negative impact on mental health as people struggle with finances and housing related issues. Providers estimate that around 3,735 of people supported by Community Navigation could be supported by the redesigned services, therefore 8,415 people could be affected by the proposal of which 15.06% have a physical disability.

Of the people supported by Wellbeing Services in the Community 9.4% are people living with mental health needs. Wellbeing Services in the Community promote and support individuals to continue participating in activities they enjoy and maintain or establish new networks and support systems. This can help with emotional wellbeing and mental health. Therefore, restricting the Wellbeing Services in the Community to supporting people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support could have a negative impact on people assessed as needing lower-level support living with mental health needs.

The potential negative impact of the Wellbeing Services in the Community and Community Navigation proposal could be an increase in people with mental health needs self-neglecting and self-medicating with drugs and alcohol which can increase adult social care need and complexity. And this could increase mental and physical health inequalities in Kent.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

In 2024/25 a total of 6,486 people were supported by Live Well. 83 people were supported by the Innovation Fund in 2024/25. From the data:

- 61.05% had mental health
- 34.76% the disability was not recorded
- 4.17% preferred not to say

Consultation summary

Within the consultation the majority of responses were received by people with a long term condition (40%), disability (61%) physical disability (33%) and Mental Health (15%), which is broadly consistent with the data set out above and our pre-consultation assessment that people with long term conditions, physical disabilities and Mental Health are likely to be affected by the proposals.

Consultation responses raised concerns that proposals are short sighted and could impact on people's mental health in the long term. And that potential impact will be on older people living with long term conditions, and therefore disproportionately affecting groups of protected characteristics which is discriminating. Responses referred to groups and activities being tailored to needs, for example seated activities that enable people in wheelchairs to participate. And concerns raised over addressing barriers such as living in rural locations, transport and digital.

There were some concerns raised about stopping the Innovation Fund and how this could have an impact on neurodivergent individuals, who benefit from innovative, intersectional programs that may not yet have established evidence bases but meet unique needs

Feedback from the consultation questionnaire showed:

KCC Prevention Services consultation - closed data summary

61%	Indicated that they experience a disability.
40%	Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
33%	Reported as having a physical disability
24%	No
15%	Reported as having a Mental Health condition
15%	Prefer not to say/blank
10%	Sensory (hearing, sight or both)
3%	Reported as Neurodivergent, such as ADHA, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia
2%	Learning disability
2%	A different disability or health condition

Mitigating Actions for Disability

Officers have undertaken further analysis of the level of duplication in the system following the consultation. It was estimated by providers that 1,662 people could be supported by alternative information, advice and guidance this includes digital platforms and the initial contact points with each provider. Providers estimated that 6,753 people that would have been supported by Community Navigation could come to social care. It is assessed that the following services have capacity for in person support:

- Social Care Connect has capacity to support 1,920 (face to face via clinics) this is assessed as new capacity as the current utilisation levels are very low.
- Kent Enablement Services helpdesk has capacity to support 763 (face to face) people a year. Based on current activity it is estimated that the service is supporting 547 people, therefore the additional capacity available to support people impacted by these proposals is 215.)

It is estimated that between Social Care Connect clinics and Kent Enablement Service helpdesk there is additional capacity to support 2,135 people. These are for in person support and will be closely monitored and could increase capacity with demand.

Therefore, of the total number of people that could need to make contact with social care (6,753) there is an estimated capacity for 2,135 people to access in person support (this can increase if there is demand), the remaining 4,618 people potentially impacted could be supported by:

- Adult Social Care Connect telephone support, however, to deal with all the demand the service may need to use a waiting list.
- There is unlimited support available via digital platforms.

During 2024/25 the Wellbeing Services supported 14,375 people, providers were asked to consider the capacity available to support people with medium to higher levels of need if proposals were implemented. Providers estimated that 6,504 people could be supported by alternative groups and activities provided outside of these services and that 3,885 people could contact social care via the initial contact point – Adult Social Care Connect, of these 20% may require an assessment and of that between 1-10% of may require formal care and support from KCC. For those make contact with social care and not eligible for social care will be connected with alternative groups and activities.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of alternative groups and activities, and to assess whether in every case an alternative group or activity will be available to every individual. However, officers have carefully considered which groups and activities could potentially stop under these proposals across Kent and what alternatives are available that are relevant to older people. The alternative groups and activities considered physical wellbeing and connection through social groups such as reading groups. From this assessment it has been identified that there is a broad range of activities available outside of the contract across Kent. However, in a small number of specific localities within districts there are fewer alternative groups and activities or individuals may need travel to access a suitable alternative. However, the proposal is not to end particular groups and activities; it is that the lead partners would receive less funding and therefore focus on supporting people with medium to higher levels of support. When Officers were engaging people as part of the consultation, some suggestions were that groups and activities could review the funding model, looking at potentially increasing costs to individuals in order to maintain some groups and activities for people with lower levels of need. It is therefore considered likely that some of the groups and activities which are potentially affected will continue.

The following services will not be impacted by the proposals. They are not mitigations however have been included here to make clear that they will continue to be available for people that need these services. It is possible that there will be some increased demand for specialist services as a result of the proposal, but this will be limited because the individuals who might use the specialist services are likely to have medium/high needs. We have not included these services in our modelling of alternative options for those currently supported by the services included within these proposals.

Physical Disability

The Wellbeing Services in the Community for those with a physical disability is out of scope of these proposals and will continue to support people with a disability. This service is delivered by Disability Assist [Kent | Disability Assist | England](#), a charity run by and for disabled people. Disability Assist provides information, guidance and advice to disabled adults on a range of topics around independent living and all aspects of life with a disability. The service helps with:

- Peer support.
- Advocacy, supporting people to know and understand their rights when it comes to health and social welfare. To be able to express their views, wishes and needs to ensure they are involved when decisions need to be made.
- Benefits support.

During 2024/25 this service supported 19,894 interactions with people.

Dementia

The Wellbeing Services for people with dementia and their families is out of scope of these proposals. Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services (ADSS) <https://www.alz-dem.org/> and Age UK Herne Bay and Whitstable [Welcome to Age UK Herne Bay](#) are the lead providers of this service. This service provides a similar offer to the universal Wellbeing Support in the Community service described above but with a particular focus on supporting those with a dementia diagnosis and their families. This service will continue to support people living with dementia.

During 2024/25 this service supported 13,103 people.

Sensory Impairments

The Wellbeing Services for people with sensory impairments is out of scope of these proposals. Kent Association for the Blind (KAB) delivers this service on behalf of KCC in partnership with Hi Kent and BSL

Community CIC. KAB work with over 12,000 people in Kent and the surrounding areas, they are one of the largest and most respected local sight loss charities in the UK. They work to prevent avoidable sight loss, deliver excellent support services and enable people to get involved and live independently.

<https://www.kab.org.uk/>

During 2024/25 this service supported 22,834 people.

Information, Advice and Guidance

The proposals have been designed so that in future they are targeted at those who have the greatest needs (people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support). Working with providers in scope, the proposals were reviewed and developed to incorporate elements of Community Navigation into redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community to reduce the negative impact of the proposals on people with a disability.

The Wellbeing Service provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point either by telephone or website.

People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed at needing lower level of support, they would be signposted and connected with a range of services that remain available. The service would help people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support access groups and activities, reducing social isolation and improving physical wellbeing and helping improve mental wellbeing by navigating complex information.

For people assessed as needing lower levels of support and require services such as navigation, can access support from Adult Social Care Connect (social care initial contact point). In addition, people can access the free service provided by Kent Enablement Services which can help with financial information, letters, education and housing applications. There are also other community roles and support includes community wardens and social prescribers. Appendix 1 provides further information on these roles and support.

Information, advice and guidance is available on [Kent Connect to Support](#) which offers information and advice about preventative services, facilities or resources, and helps people to find out about the types of support available locally that may meet their individual needs and circumstances.

To help people with healthy lifestyles there is the [One You Kent](#) which provides advice and support on healthy lifestyle changes including losing weight, stopping smoking, physical exercise and reducing alcohol intake.

During the development of the proposals, it was identified that there is an opportunity to develop the partnership working between SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent and the Adult Social Care Connect service, to share information about the support available in communities and review capacity across the services. This can help mitigate the impacts of these proposals on people with long-term conditions, physical disability, dementia, frailty and mental health needs by ensuring that there is consistent information, advice and guidance across all organisations.

Reviewing the feedback from the consultation there is a theme that there is confusion over where people go for information, advice and guidance. An action as a result of the consultation is that we are planning a campaign to set out where people can go for support.

Frailty

Public Health currently fund <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/care-and-support/live-safe-and-well-at-home/fall-prevention-courses> which help people keep moving, strong and balanced. The Public Health team at Kent County Council (KCC) have proposed changes to this Postural Stability Service in Kent. Proposals do not entail making any savings. The proposal is to change the service so it can be used by more people, more locally to them, and earlier in life so they are able to get the most use out of the help on offer to stay well, fit, mobile and independent for longer. KCC Public Health are proposing these changes because of feedback and what we know about the way the population in Kent is changing which suggests that we need to update the current offer. Following a consultation a [paper](#) went to Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee in July 2025.

To mitigate the impacts of frailty for people, in particular to help with falls prevention there are also other existing services such as the innovative digital [Technology Enhanced Lives](#) service (social and health care apps and wearable technology) that empowers a person and supports them to maintain or improve their independence, safety, and wellbeing with greater choice and control.

Connecting with others

To help people with long-term conditions, physical disability, dementia, frailty and mental health needs connect with others which will help with and social isolation, improve physical and emotional wellbeing, there is [Positive Wellbeing](#), delivered by a delivered by Community Connectors from across a range of services and community organisations. Further information about this service can be found under Appendix 1.

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools (connect to support and Joy platform) to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs (understanding their disabilities and access requirements) and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified.

There are three Market Development Officers within Kent Adult Social Care Commissioning. The postholders work with communities to understand the local needs profile and to identify, encourage and support those interested in identifying, nurturing and setting up compliant micro enterprises that support and deliver the care needs of Kent residents and support KCC's Commissioning Intentions for Adult Social Care. This can include groups and activities.

Non-Digital Services

Some of the consultation responses made reference to older residents not being able to access digital services or platforms and not having the comprehension or ability to use digital devices. As part of the mitigating actions there is consideration to in person contact and support by a range of different services. Non-Digital Services:

Kent Enablement Services: They provide face to face for support to have help with accessing information and advice, help with letters, bills, finding groups and activities, college and education courses, paid and voluntary employment, information about keeping safe, housing, wellbeing, benefits and help with making

phone calls. The service is currently underutilised as it is not well promoted, and there is capacity to create more sessions and locations if there is more demand. Further details about the service and its capacity can be found above in Appendix 1.

Adult Social Care Connect Community Clinics: The purpose of these clinics is to establish effective community interfaces between ASC Connect and wider community services, and to provide alternative settings in which to undertake initial face to face conversations with people referred to ASCH for information and support. Further details about the service and its capacity can be found above and in Appendix 1.

To help people with disabilities people build confidence with digital ways of accessing support which may help reduce the impact of social isolation there is a scheme called [Digital Kent](#). Further information can be found under Appendix 1.

Transport

To access alternative groups and activities, this may require people to have access to transport, where with current service offer, they may not need to travel. This was raised as a concern during the consultation. The concerns around transport have been considered following the consultation, if transport is identified as a barrier, social care teams use the [KCC transport scheme](#), which provides information on locally run and managed transport schemes across Kent. Through the scheme there is encouragement and grants for parishes, charities, and community groups can to set up [community transport schemes](#). Social Care teams also have a list of transport providers for health-related travel, such as appointments, hospital discharge. There is also the Kent Karrier, which is a dial-a-ride service operating across Kent. Drivers can collect people from home and take them to a location, such as a supermarket, town centre or hospital, for a small fee. To access this service, people must have one or more of the following:

- Have a medical condition that makes travelling on public transport difficult, or
- Live in a rural area more than 500 metres from a bus route or railway station, or
- Aged 85 or over.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue, and these include a range of support, activities and groups for people of all ages.

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data for disabilities, for example an increase in the number of people not sharing their disability, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The EqiA has identified that the proposal will have an adverse impact on some disabled people. However, it is assessed that this any particular adverse impact is objectively justified, as it is pursuing the legitimate aims set out above and is proportionate due to the mitigations identified. Services will continue to support people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support. For disabled people assessed as needing lower levels of support there is a range of digital and non-digital ways of continuing to provide support. Community Wellbeing services specifically commissioned to support those with particular disabilities would be unaffected.

The proposal may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity as regards disabled people. However, as above, a range of mitigations have been identified. The proposals ensure a targeted approach, supporting people with medium to higher levels of need. The range of mitigations will still support people needing lower levels of support, signposting and connecting them with alternative services that are provided outside of these contracts. Mitigations have also considered barriers for people getting the right support such as living in rural areas where transport can issue. Community Wellbeing services specifically commissioned to support those with particular disabilities would be unaffected.

The proposals may have an adverse impact on fostering good relations between those who are disabled and those who are not. However, the mitigations identified and KCC’s approach to prevention overall will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts which will continue. The council also ensures the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities. Community Wellbeing services specifically commissioned to support those with particular disabilities would be unaffected.

c) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Disability

Simon Mitchell

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

a) Are there negative impacts for Sex? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex

Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing

The following data from April 2024 to March 2025 shows the data of sex:

All Services	Total		Services	Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Sex	Number	%	Sex	Number	%	Number	%
Female	16334	61.55	Female	6853	56.91	9481	65.4
Male	9646	36.35	Male	5182	43.03	4464	30.79
Intersex	7	0.02	Intersex	1	0	6	0.04
Prefer not to say	68	0.25	I prefer not to say	4	0.03	64	0.44
Unknown	87	0.32	Unknown	0	0	87	0.6
No data	393	1.48	No Data	0	0	393	2.71

Community Navigation supports 56.91% females and 43.03% males.
Community Wellbeing supports 65.4% females and 30.79% males.

The 2021 Census shows there are more females to males in Kent (51.2% female to 48.8% male) and this pattern is seen in all of Kent's local authority districts. The Wellbeing Services in the Community are supporting 65.4% of females which in comparison to the Kent female and male population is a higher percentage. The proposal would reduce groups and activities for people assessed as needing lower levels of support and this could increase the risk of social isolation in females.

Community wellbeing and social isolation in females

Wellbeing Services in the Community promote and support individuals to continue participating in activities they enjoy and maintain or establish new networks and support systems. This can help with emotional wellbeing and mental health. Reducing access to services that provide connection with others could have a negative impact on social isolation in females.

In 2018, work was undertaken to identify which groups of older people in Kent are at greater risk – see the document linked here: [Social-isolation-and-loneliness-in-Kent.pdf \(kpho.org.uk\)](#). Risk profiling resulted in an estimate of 29,500 Kent residents over 65 being at risk of social isolation. In comparison with all Kent residents aged 65+, the group identified as being at higher risk of social isolation or loneliness are more likely to be female.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

As the Innovation Fund is used to test new ideas which could be short-term support or events, there is limited data on the number of people supported and breakdown of protected characteristics. However, we do have information from the Live Well service as a whole and have used this to assess the potential impact of the proposal. In 2024/25 a total of 6,486 people were supported by Live Well. From the data 42.96% were male and 55.18% were female.

Consultation Summary

Within the consultation the majority of responses were received by women (57%) and (31%) of men, 12% preferred not to say or left the question blank, which is broadly consistent with the data set out above and our pre-consultation assessment that more women are likely to be affected by the proposals than men. There were some comments on how wellbeing groups and activities that people attend are mainly attended by females and therefore felt proposals will have a negative impact on females. There were also comments about the need for more activities and better promotion of activities to males.

c) Mitigating Actions for Sex

Officers have undertaken further analysis of the level of duplication in the system following the consultation. It was estimated by providers that 1,662 people could be supported by alternative information, advice and guidance this includes digital platforms and the initial contact points with each provider. Providers estimated that 6,753 people that would have been supported by Community Navigation could come to social care. It is assessed that the following services have capacity for in person support:

- Social Care Connect has capacity to support 1,920 (face to face via clinics) this is assessed as new capacity as the current utilisation levels are very low.

- Kent Enablement Services helpdesk has capacity to support 763 (face to face) people a year. Based on current activity it is estimated that the service is supporting 547 people, therefore the additional capacity available to support people impacted by these proposals is 215.)

It is estimated that between Social Care Connect clinics and Kent Enablement Service helpdesk there is additional capacity to support 2,135 people. These are for in person support and will be closely monitored and could increase capacity with demand.

Therefore, of the total number of people that could need to make contact with social care (6,753) there is an estimated capacity for 2,135 people to access in person support (this can increase if there is demand), the remaining 4,618 people potentially impacted could be supported by:

- Adult Social Care Connect telephone support, however, to deal with all the demand the service may need to use a waiting list.
- There is unlimited support available via digital platforms.

It is assessed that through the in person, telephone and online support there is capacity to provide information, advice and guidance to people that could be impacted by the proposals.

During 2024/25 the Wellbeing Services supported 14,375 people, providers were asked to consider the capacity available to support people with medium to higher levels of need if proposals were implemented. Providers estimated that 6,504 people could be supported by alternative groups and activities provided outside of these services and that 3,885 people could contact social care via the initial contact point – Adult Social Care Connect, of these 20% may require an assessment and of that between 1-10% of may require formal care and support from KCC. For those make contact with social care and not eligible for social care will be connected with alternative groups and activities.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of alternative groups and activities, and to assess whether in every case an alternative group or activity will be available to every individual. However, officers have carefully considered which groups and activities could potentially stop under these proposals across Kent and what alternatives are available that are relevant to older people. The alternative groups and activities considered physical wellbeing and connection through social groups such as reading groups. From this assessment it has been identified that there is a broad range of activities available outside of the contract across Kent. However, in a small number of specific localities within districts there are fewer alternative groups and activities or individuals may need travel to access a suitable alternative. However, the proposal is not to end particular groups and activities; it is that the lead partners would receive less funding and therefore focus on supporting people with medium to higher levels of support. When Officers were engaging people as part of the consultation, some suggestions were that groups and activities could review the funding model, looking at potentially increasing costs to individuals in order to maintain some groups and activities for people with lower levels of need. It is therefore considered likely that some of the groups and activities which are potentially affected could continue.

Information, advice and guidance

The Wellbeing Services currently provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point for people that would have accessed Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in

the Community. People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed at needing lower level of support, they would be signposted and connected with a range of services that remain available.

There are a range of services that will be available to provide information, advice and guidance, these include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing. These are available for face-to-face support. There are also digital platforms such as Connect to Support which provide information, advice and guidance. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Reviewing the feedback from the consultation there is a theme that has emerged that there is confusion over where people access information, advice and guidance. An action as a result of the consultation is that we are planning a campaign to set out where people can go for support. And within this to think about how the campaign can raise awareness of support available for males.

Social Isolation and Connecting People

There are a few groups provided by SEK and subcontracted providers within East Kent that are specific for men or women (men's shed, men's group and netball for women).

To help females at risk of isolation there is [Positive Wellbeing](#), delivered by Community Connectors from across a range of services and community organisations. Further information about this service can be found under Appendix 1.

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools (connect to support and Joy platform) to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified.

There are three Market Development Officers within Kent Adult Social Care Commissioning. The postholders work with communities to understand the local needs profile and to identify, encourage and support those interested in identifying, nurturing and setting up compliant micro enterprises that support and deliver the care needs of Kent residents and support KCC's Commissioning Intentions for Adult Social Care. This can include groups and activities.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue and these include a range of support, activities and groups for males and females. There are specific campaigns in Kent to raise the awareness and support for mental health in males [Release the pressure - Kent County Council](#).

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data for sex, for example decrease in the number of males accessing the service, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The EqiA has identified that the proposal is likely to impact more women than men, as a result of the gender mix of those using the relevant services. Most of the services within the proposal do not provide specific groups and support for women, it is that a larger proportion of women are supported by these

services. It is assessed that any particular adverse impact on women is justified, as it is pursuing the legitimate aims set out above, and is proportionate due to the mitigations that have been identified, these include positive wellbeing, and a range of other groups and activities provided outside of these services. Mitigations identified consider digital and non-digital ways of continuing to support people.

The proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity regarding gender. Men and women will be able to access services equally. The difference in impact between the two genders is a result of the different gender mix of those currently using the services. The proposals will continue to promote equality of opportunity through the mitigations that have been identified. An additional mitigation identified following consultation – prevention campaign will help people (in a digital and non-digital way) find out about what support is available to them. This will need to consider how to promote these services to men, to increase the number of men with medium to higher levels of need engaging with the services.

For the same reasons the proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact on fostering good relations. The proposals will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Sex

Simon Mitchell

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

a) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Community Wellbeing and Community Navigation

The following data from April 2024 to March 2025 shows the data of gender reassignment/being transgender:

All Services	Total		Services	Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Gender Identity	Number	%	Sex	Number	%	Number	%
Yes - Gender reassignment/Transgender (Trans) including non-binary, or other	8	0.06		0	0	8	0.06
No - Gender reassignment/Transgender (Trans) including non-binary, or other	8169	68.37		0	0	8169	68.97

Prefer not to say - Gender reassignment/Transgender (Trans) including non-binary, or other	3	0.02		3	100	0	0
Did not ask (Wellbeing)	1965	16.44		0	0	1965	16.59
No Data	1513	12.66		0	0	1513	12.77
Unknown	289	2.41		0	0	289	2.44

Wellbeing Services in the Community supported 0.06% of people that were listed as having gender reassignment/being transgender. This compares with 0.1% people of the Kent population. The proposals could therefore impact people listed as having gender reassignment/being transgender.

Community Wellbeing and having gender reassignment/being transgender

Wellbeing Services in the Community supported 0.06% of people having gender reassignment/being transgender in 2024/25. Wellbeing Services in the Community provide groups and activities that are reflective of needs within communities. The groups delivered by Wellbeing Services in the Community are not specific for LGBTQIA+ people, however all groups are inclusive. Wellbeing Services in the Community develop a good understanding of communities and services, helping people to connect. If proposals are implemented, 10,388 people could not be supported by the providers and therefore impacted by the proposal. People that had gender reassignment or who are transgender are more likely to suffer with their mental health and this can be linked with social isolation. People may seek the support from Wellbeing Services in the Community to help them connect with others and help improve their wellbeing.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The service supported 0.88% people that had gender reassignment/are transgender. The data is unknown for 11.29% of people. People that have had gender reassignment/are transgender are more likely to suffer with mental health disorders or experience depression and anxiety. Poor mental health may be linked to experiences of discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, bullying and social isolation.

Some of the Innovation Fund projects that had a LGBTQIA+ focus:

- Young people aged 17 to 25 and who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community - structured programmes of support to develop resilience, learn new skills and to enhance physical wellbeing.
- Mental Health Resource Centre – Wellbeing Groups – 10 places funded for two groups: focused on LGBTQIA+ people and young people.
- The BeYou Project – funded to organise two events, one in West Kent and one in Medway to promote access to services for LGBTQIA+ people.

Consultation Summary

In the consultation responses, 16% left blank/preferred not to say, 83% had the same gender as birth and there were 3 responses that stated their gender was not the same as birth. The responses to consultation are broadly in line with the pre consultation analysis which identified that there could be a negative impact on people with this protected characteristic, however the number of people potentially impacted is low.

During the consultation there was some comments about ensuring targeted engagement and awareness on services available to support with gender identity/transgender.

c) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

These services are not commissioned to provide specific support for gender identity/transgender, this includes information, advice and guidance and groups and activities. However, groups, activities and support are inclusive. Mitigations to reduce the impact on gender identity/transgender have been considered and updated following the consultation.

The proposals have been designed so that in future services are targeted at areas and those who have the greatest needs (people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support). Working with providers in scope, the proposals were reviewed and developed to incorporate elements of the Community Navigation into redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community to reduce to the negative impact of the proposals on this protected characteristic.

Information, Advice and Guidance

The Wellbeing Services currently provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point for people that would have accessed Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community.

People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed as needing lower level of support they would be signposted and connected with support and services. Services have a good understanding of their communities and are able to signpost and connect people.

There are a range of services that will be available to provide information, advice and guidance, these include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing. These are available for face-to-face support. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Reviewing the feedback from the consultation there is a theme that has emerged that there is confusion over people go for information, advice and guidance. An action as a result of the consultation is that we are planning a campaign to set out where people can go for support.

There are national organisations that provide specific support, these include:

- MindOut is a mental health service run by and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) people.
- LGBT Foundation is a national service providing health and wellbeing support
- Canterbury Trans Network provides a mutual aid network and social community open to Transgender, Non Binary, and Intersex adults and any adults questioning their gender identity.
- The Proud Trust is national, providing advice and support.

When preparing the EQIA for consultation (October 2024) it was identified that there was a gap on information on gender reassignment/transgender on the information, advice and guidance platform [Kent Connect to Support](#). This has now been addressed a section has been added and linking to national and local resources.

Groups and Activities

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools (connect to support and Joy platform) to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs (this includes consideration to gender identity/transgender) and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue and these include a range of support, activities and groups for people of all ages. There are services supporting LGBTQIA+ which will not be affected by these proposals such as:

- The BeYou Project – is for LGBT+ young people provided by Porchlight.
- Porchlight developed a resource pack to help people [The BeYou Project - Porchlight](#)
- Website [Welcome to our bold and beautiful new website - The BeYou Project - Porchlight](#).
- Release the Pressure is a Kent campaign for mental health in men [Release-the-Pressure-LGBTQ-poster.pdf](#)
- Groups and activities provided outside of these contracts that have a specific focus on LGBTQIA+. Include Canterbury Trans Network hosts regular support groups.

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data, for example a decrease in the number of people with gender reassignment/who are transgender accessing the service, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity regarding the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Individuals with and without the protected characteristics will be able to access services equally. The proposals will continue to promote equality of opportunity through increased awareness of gender identity/transgender groups and support that people can be connected with. Through market development officers understanding where there are gaps in gender identify/transgender and working communities to address these gaps.

For the same reasons the proposal is unlikely to have any significant adverse impact on fostering good relations. The proposals will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender

Simon Mitchell

23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

a) Are there negative impacts for Race? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Race

Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing

Data from the services from April 2024- March 2025:

All Services			Services	Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Race	Number	%	Race	Number	%	Number	%
Asian/Asian British							
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	100	0.37		29	0.24	71	0.48
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	26	0.09		7	0.05	19	0.13
Asian/Asian British: Indian	444	1.67		116	0.97	328	2.26
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	74	0.27		8	0.06	66	0.45
Asian/Asian British: any other Asian background	171	0.64		72	0.6	99	0.68
Black/Black British							
Black/Black British: African	158	0.59		63	0.52	95	0.65
Black/Black British: Caribbean	117	0.44		35	0.29	82	0.56
Black/Black British: any other Black background	4	0.01		0	0	4	0.02
Mixed							
Mixed: White and Asian	28	0.1		6	0.05	22	0.15
Mixed: White and Black/African	21	0.07		8	0.06	13	0.08
Mixed: White and Black/Caribbean	0	0		0	0	0	0
Other: Arab	28	0.1		5	0.04	23	0.15
Other: Any other Ethnic Group	325	1.22		131	1.09	194	1.33
Mixed: any other mixed/multiple ethnic background	14	0.05		0	0	14	0.09
White							
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	20076	75.9		9148	76.58	10928	75.32
White: Gypsy, Romany or Traveller	43	0.16		16	0.13	27	0.18
White: Irish	103	0.38		43	0.35	60	0.41
White: any other White background	432	1.63		132	1.1	300	2.06
Ethnicity Unknown	3439	13		2121	17.75	1318	9.08
Prefer not to say	77	0.29		0	0	77	0.53
No Data	768	2.9		0	0	768	5.29

The Community Navigation service supported:

- Asian: 1.92%
- Black: 0.81%
- Mixed: 1.24%
- White: 78.16%
- Unknown: 17.75%

Community Wellbeing service supported:

- Asian: 4%
- Black: 1.23%
- Mixed: 1.8%
- White: 77.97%
- Unknown: 9.08%

The 2021 Census shows that 89.4% of residents were of White British ethnic origin. Asian ethnicity was 8.8%, Black was 5.2% and Mixed was 4.7%. By completing the Equality Impact Assessment, it has identified that services are supporting a percentage of White residents that reflects the Kent population. However, the numbers of people supported from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicity are lower to that of the Kent population.

The Community Navigation service supports a higher percentage people of Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicity. Members of these communities may have complex needs as well as additional language and cultural barriers. Individuals from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicities may be disadvantaged in terms of actively self-referring to services due to language barriers and other cultural factors. These individuals are likely to be disproportionately affected by the reduced capacity of providers to undertake assertive outreach work to engage with community groups who may be less able to access support through traditional referral pathways. People from a Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds are more likely to suffer from underlying health conditions and require support with navigating complex information and getting the right levels of support.

Wellbeing Services in the Community support 5.32% of people from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds. Helping people to connect with cultural related activities and communities, which can reduce social isolation help promote wellbeing. The services work in partnership with communities to understand the groups that are available such as the North Kent Caribbean Network in Gravesham which is a voluntary community group that works in partnership with Kent based organisations to celebrate diverse communities. The services in scope of the proposal work in partnership across Kent with both the voluntary and statutory sectors to promote community cohesion and to eliminate discrimination.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

In 2024/25 a total of 6,486 people were supported by Live Well. The breakdown for ethnicity:

- Asian: 2.59%
- Black: 2.54%
- Mixed: 1.61%
- White: 78.01%
- Unknown: 13.86%

Consultation Summary

Within the consultation the majority of responses on ethnicity, 80% were white, 14% preferred not to say and around 1% and below for Black, Asian and other backgrounds, which is broadly consistent with the data set out above and our pre-consultation assessment.

There were comments in the consultation about the potential negative impact on people over the age of 55 from ethnic groups. That proposals will create more isolation in ethnic groups. Some consultee responses raised concerns about people not engaging with Wellbeing and Community Navigation due to cultural and language needs and therefore creating a barrier. And that from the data on ethnic groups are already a lower proportion of people supported by the services.

There were comments that there needs to be more done to promote the support available to ethnic groups. There was also a suggestion that there needs to be clearer plans for training staff and ensuring these services are accessible and user-friendly for diverse groups and that would enhance the mitigation strategy, ensuring that training follow expert-by-experience advice.

Feedback from the consultation questionnaire showed:

Ethnicity	Number of responses	Percentage
White English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or British	974	80%
White Irish	7	1%
Any other White background	16	1%
White and Black African	2	0.2%
White and Asian	4	0.3%
Any other Mixed or Multiple background	5	0.4%
Asian or Asian British Indian	11	1%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	2	0.2%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	2	0.2%
Asian or Asian British Chinese	1	0.1%
Any other Asian background	1	0.1%
Black or Black British Caribbean	5	0.4%
Black or Black British African	3	0.2%
Any other African background	3	0.2%
Roma	1	0.1%
Any other ethnic group	10	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	164	14%

c) Mitigating Actions for Race

For most of the services the support provided is not specific for race, however they are inclusive. In North Kent, some of the groups and activities provided reflect the needs of the local community. Such as funding allocated to North Kent Caribbean Network which operates in Gravesham and holds a weekly group, providing hot lunch for members and enables members from the Caribbean community to share experiences and personal contributions to Kent life and socialise. And Kent Equalities Cohesion Council which offers community events, social activities and separate Asian men's and Asian women's yoga groups across north Kent

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of alternative groups and activities, and to assess whether in every case an alternative group or activity will be available to every individual. However, officers have carefully considered which groups and activities could potentially stop under these proposals across Kent and what alternatives are available that are relevant to older people and this protected characteristic. The alternative groups and activities considered physical wellbeing and connection through social groups such as reading groups. From this assessment it has been identified that there is a broad range of activities available outside of the contract across Kent. However, in a small number of specific localities within districts there are fewer alternative groups and activities or individuals may need travel to access a suitable alternative. However, the proposal is not to end particular groups and activities; it is that the lead partners would receive less funding and therefore focus on supporting people with medium to higher levels of support and areas of need such as more diverse communities, deprivation. When Officers were engaging people as part of the consultation, some suggestions were that groups and activities could review the funding model, looking at potentially increasing costs to individuals in order to maintain some groups and activities for people with lower levels of need. It is therefore considered likely that some of the groups and activities which are potentially affected will continue.

The proposals have been designed so that in future services are targeted at areas and those who have the greatest needs (people assessed as needing medium to higher levels of support). Working with providers in scope, the proposals were reviewed and developed to incorporate elements of the Community Navigation into redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community to reduce to the negative impact of the proposals on this protected characteristic.

In developing the Equality Impact Assessment, it has been identified that the percentage of people of Black, Asian and Mixed ethnicity supported by Community Wellbeing and Navigation services are lower in comparison to the Kent population. The aim of the proposal is that there needs to be consideration of a more targeted approach and support to communities to ensure the percentage of people supported reflects the Kent population. To get better insights from Kent residents and people who draw on care and support, adult social care has KCC Social Care Involvement Officers who have a mix of lived experience themselves along with a breadth of working knowledge about communities, working across Kent engaging residents and communities, understanding where there are gaps and opportunities. During the consultation some concerns were raised about people being turned away from places due to their cultural and language needs. Therefore, this will need to be considered as part of the redesigned Wellbeing Service on how people and communities with cultural and language needs are better supported.

Information, Advice and Guidance

The redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point for people that would have accessed Community Navigation

and Community Wellbeing. People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed as needing lower levels of support they would be signposted and connected with a range of services that remain available.

For people assessed as needing lower levels of support there are a range of services that will be available to provide information, advice and guidance, these include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing. These are available for face-to-face support. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Identified Actions for Information, Advice and Guidance

When developing this EQIA in October 2024 and reviewing the digital information available on the digital platform Connect to Support, there was a gap in the information, advice and guidance available for race. This has now been reviewed and information added to Connect to Support.

Reviewing the feedback from the consultation there is a theme that has emerged people get confused over where to go for information, advice and guidance but people do not know where to go. An action as a result of the consultation is that we are planning a campaign to set out where people can go for support. And within this to think about how the campaign can raise awareness of support available for ethnicity.

To develop clearer plans for training staff and ensuring these services are accessible and user-friendly for diverse groups and that would enhance the mitigation strategy, ensuring that training follow expert-by-experience advice.

Groups and Activities

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools (connect to support and Joy platform) to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs (this includes consideration to cultural needs) and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue, and these include a range of support, activities and groups for people of all ages. These include culturally sensitive support for diverse communities. It can help people manage their mental health, feel like part of the local community, improve their confidence and become more independent.

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data for race, for example a downward trend in certain ethnicities accessing the service, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The EqiA has identified that the proposal will place those of any particular racial group at a particular disadvantage. However, the data shows that the numbers of people supported from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicity are lower when compared to numbers in the Kent population. During the consultation some consultee responses raised concerns about people not engaging with Wellbeing and Community

Navigation due to cultural and language needs which creates a barrier. It is possible that there may be some adverse impact in terms of the availability of groups and activities, and information and advice, which could particularly impact individuals from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicities as a result. However, the proposal is about making the services more responsive to the needs of these communities through a targeted approach which could help with increasing the number of people from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicity engaging with these services. There are also other services and support that are provided outside of these contracts that support people with this protected characteristic. Therefore, it is considered that any particular adverse impacts on those from any particular racial group is objectively justified, due to the legitimate aims set out above, and is proportionate, due to the mitigations that have been identified. Further steps will be taken to make the services more accessible to those from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicities.

The proposal may have an indirect adverse effect on equality of opportunity as a result of impacts on the availability of groups and activities, and information and advice, given the potential barriers to engagement with these services discussed above. However, the proposal would also help promote equality of opportunity through a targeted approach and ensuring groups and activities are responsive the communities they support and that there is increased awareness of groups and support that people can be connected with. And through market development officers understanding where there are gaps in and working communities to address. An identified action from the consultation was for clearer plans for training staff and ensuring these services are accessible for diverse groups and that would enhance the mitigation strategy, ensuring that training follow expert-by-experience advice. We are therefore proposing to take this forward as an action.

The proposal may have an adverse impact on fostering good relations for the same reasons as in respect of equality of opportunity. However, the mitigations identified will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts which means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Race

Simon Mitchell

24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

a) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief

Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing

Data from the services from April 2024- March 2025:

All Services	Total		Services	Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Religion	Number	%	Religion	Number	%	Number	%

Buddhist	75	0.28		22	0.18	53	0.36
Christian	9760	37.29		3675	31.22	6085	42.25
Muslim	200	0.76		28	0.23	172	1.19
Sikh	315	1.2		45	0.38	270	1.87
Hindu	92	0.35		29	0.24	63	0.43
Jewish	2	0		0	0	2	0.01
Other Religion	435	1.66		187	1.58	248	1.72
Religion - I prefer not to say	4052	15.48		1700	14.44	2352	16.33
No Religion	5983	22.86		5479	46.55	504	3.5
Unknown	4350	16.62		603	5.12	3747	26.02
No Data	904	3.45		0	0	904	6.27

Community Navigation supported:

- Christian 31.22%
- Other religion – details are unknown 1.58%
- Hindu 0.24%
- Muslim 0.23%
- Sikh 0.38%
- No religion 46.55%
- Religion is unknown 5.12%

Community Wellbeing supported:

- Christian 42.25%
- Buddhist 0.36%
- Muslim 0.19%
- Hindu 0.43%
- Other religion – details are unknown 1.72%
- No religion 3.5%
- Religion is unknown 26.02%

The 2021 Census shows that in Kent 40.9% had no religion, 48.5% were Christian, 1.2% Hindu, Muslim 1.6%, Sikh 0.8%, 0.6% Buddhist and 0.6% other religion, Therefore, the religion percentages supported by the services is reflective of the Kent population. There is also a large percentage of religion unknown particularly within the Wellbeing Services in the Community, which makes it more difficult to assess the potential impact of proposals on this protected characteristic.

The Community Navigation service helps people navigate complex information taking into account additional language and cultural barriers. Individuals from different backgrounds may be disadvantaged in terms of actively self-referring to services due to language barriers and other cultural factors. These individuals could be disproportionately affected by the reduced capacity of providers to undertake assertive outreach work to engage with community groups who may be less able to access support through traditional referral pathways.

The Wellbeing Services in the Community help people connect with culturally related activities by having awareness of the groups within communities, such as the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara in Gravesend. This is not a group developed by the service, but the service has an understanding of communities and where required develops groups and activities that are required to meet the diverse needs of Kent residents.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

As the Innovation Fund is used to test new ideas which could be short-term support or events, there is limited data on the number of people supported and breakdown of protected characteristics. However, we do have information from the Live Well service as a whole and have used this to assess the potential impact of the proposal. In 2024/25 a total of 6,486 people were supported by Live Well. The service supported the following percentages of people:

- Christian 20.49%
- Muslim 1.86%
- Other religion 1.77%
- Preferred not to say 26.41%
- Sikh 0.55%
- Hindu 0.29%
- Jewish 0.14%
- No Religion 48.05%

Consultation Summary

Within the consultation the majority of responses on religion, 42% were Christian, 27% no religion, 17% preferred not to say and other religions were between 1-2%. These responses are broadly consistent with the data set out above and our pre-consultation assessment.

Some consultee responses raised concerns about people not engaging with Wellbeing and Community Navigation due to cultural needs and therefore creating a barrier. And that there is a low proportion of people supported by the services under this protected characteristic and therefore question if the needs of religion, belief and cultural are meeting met.

There were comments that there needs to be more done to promote the support available for religion and belief. There was also a suggestion that there needs to be clearer plans for training staff and ensuring these services are accessible and user-friendly for diverse groups and that would enhance the mitigation strategy, ensuring that training follow expert-by-experience advice.

Feedback from the consultation questionnaire showed:

Religion	Number of responses	Percentage
- Atheist	30	2%
- Christian	559	42%
- Buddhist	4	0.3%
- Hindu	7	1%
- Jewish	3	0.2%
- Muslim	8	1%
- Sikh	9	1%
- A different religion or belief	15	1%
No	357	27%
Prefer not to say / blank	222	17%

c) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief

For most of the services the support provided is not specific for religion and belief, however they are inclusive. In North Kent, some of the groups and activities provided reflect the needs of the local community such as Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara which offers social groups, single-sex exercise classes and art classes specifically for the Sikh community in Gravesend and Gravesend & Dartford Muslim Association which hosts a weekly social group at Gravesend Central Mosque including hot drinks.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of alternative groups and activities, and to assess whether in every case an alternative group or activity will be available to every individual. However, officers have carefully considered which groups and activities could potentially stop under these proposals across Kent and what alternatives are available that are relevant to older people and this protected characteristic. The alternative groups and activities considered physical wellbeing and connection through social groups such as reading groups. From this assessment it has been identified that there is a broad range of activities available outside of the contract across Kent. However, in a small number of specific localities within districts there are fewer alternative groups and activities or individuals may need travel to access a suitable alternative. However, the proposal is not to end particular groups and activities; it is that the lead partners would receive less funding and therefore focus on supporting people with medium to higher levels of support and areas of need such as more diverse communities, deprivation. When Officers were engaging people as part of the consultation, some suggestions were that groups and activities could review the funding model, looking at potentially increasing costs to individuals in order to maintain some groups and activities for people with lower levels of need. It is therefore considered likely that some of the groups and activities which are potentially affected will continue.

Information, Advice and Guidance

The redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point for people that would have accessed Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing. People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed as needing a lower level of support they would be signposted and connected with a range of services that remain available and outlined within this section, helping to mitigate the adverse impacts on religion.

For people assessed as needing lower levels of support there are a range of services that will be available to provide information, advice and guidance, these include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing. These are available for face-to-face support. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Reviewing the feedback from the consultation there is a theme that has emerged that there is confusion over people go for information, advice and guidance. An action as a result of the consultation is that we are planning a campaign to set out where people can go for support. And within this to think about how the campaign can raise awareness of support available for religion and belief.

To develop clearer plans for training staff and ensuring these services are accessible and user-friendly for diverse groups and that would enhance the mitigation strategy, ensuring that training follow expert-by-experience advice.

Groups and Activities

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs (cultural requirements) and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified. On the [KCC local directory](#) there is information about the faith groups across Kent.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue, and these include a range of support, activities and groups for people for all religions and belief. These includes culturally sensitive support which can help people manage their mental health, feel like part of the local community, improve their confidence and become more independent.

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data for religion and belief, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The EqiA has identified that the proposal could have more of a negative impact on people who have a Christian religion/belief as the services support a higher proportion of people with this religion. It is possible that there may be some adverse impact in terms of the availability of groups and activities, and information and advice, which could particularly impact individuals with certain religion and belief. However, the proposal is about making the services more responsive to the needs of these communities through a targeted approach. There are also other services and support that are provided outside of these contracts that support people with this protected characteristic. It is assessed that any particular adverse impact on people with this protected characteristic is justified, as it is pursuing the legitimate aims set out above and is proportionate due to the mitigations that have been identified, these include positive wellbeing, and a range of other groups and activities provided outside of these services. Mitigations identified consider digital and non-digital ways of continuing to support people.

The proposal may have an indirect adverse effect on equality of opportunity as a result of impacts on the availability of groups and activities, and information and advice, given the potential barriers to engagement with these services discussed above. However, the proposal would also help promote equality of opportunity through increased awareness of religion and belief groups and support that people can be connected with. Through market development officers understanding where there are gaps in religion and belief and working communities to address.

There were comments received in the consultation that there needs to be more done to promote the support available for religion and belief. An additional mitigation identified following consultation – prevention campaign will help people (in a digital and non-digital way) find out about what support is available to them.

The proposal may have an adverse impact on fostering good relations for the same reasons as in respect of equality of opportunity. However, the mitigations identified will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts which means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Religion and belief

Simon Mitchell

25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

a) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. Answer: Yes/No

No

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation

Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing

Data from April 2024- March 2025:

All Services	Total		Services	Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Sexual Orientation	Number	%		Number	%	Number	%
Heterosexual	17687	66.76		7785	64.9	9902	68.3
Bisexual	35	0.13		6	0.05	29	0.2
Gay Lesbian	125	0.47		33	0.27	92	0.63
Prefer not to say	4104	15.49		3734	31.12	370	2.55
Unknown	3460	13.06		430	3.58	3030	20.9
No Data	1055	3.98		0	0	1055	7.27
Other	25	0.09		7	0.05	18	0.12

Community Navigation supported:

- Heterosexual 64.9%

- Preferred not to say 31.12%
- Bisexual 0.05%
- Gay or lesbian 0.27%

Community Wellbeing supported:

- Heterosexual 68.3%
- Bisexual 0.2%
- Gay or lesbian 0.63%
- Unknown 20.9%

The 2021 Census reported that 90.6% of Kent residents were heterosexual, 1.3% gay or lesbian, 1.1% bisexual and 6.7% not answered. The Wellbeing Services in the Community and Community Navigation services are supporting slightly lower percentage of people that are bisexual, gay or lesbian compared to the Kent population. There is also a large percentage of unknown in Wellbeing Services (20.9%) and large percentage where people preferred not to state their sexual orientation in Community Navigation (31.12%), which makes it more difficult to assess the potential impact of proposals on this protected characteristic.

The Wellbeing Services in the Community service helps people to improve their wellbeing, reduce social isolation and connect with others.

The Wellbeing Services in the Community map out and understand communities and put in place groups and activities that are needed to meet people's needs.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The service supported:

- Heterosexual 71.51%
- Bisexual 3.40%
- Gay or lesbian 2.61%

Live Well support more people that are bisexual, gay or lesbian in comparison to the Kent population. Some of the Innovation Fund projects that had an LGBTQIA+ focus:

- Young people aged 17 to 25 and who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community - structured programmes of support to develop resilience, learn new skills and to enhance physical wellbeing.
- Mental Health Resource Centre – Wellbeing Groups – 10 places funded for two groups focused on LGBTQIA+ and on young people.
- The BeYou Project – funded to organise two events, one in West Kent and one in Medway to promote access to services for LGBTQIA+ people.

Consultation Summary

Within the consultation the majority of responses on sexual orientation, 71% heterosexual/straight, 18% preferred not to say and 1% bisexual, gay or lesbian and 0.4% preferring to define own sexuality.

Consultation response highlighted the need to increase awareness of what support is available.

c) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation

These services are not commissioned to provide specific support for those of any particular sexual orientation, this includes information, advice and guidance and groups and activities. However, groups, activities and support are inclusive. Mitigations to reduce the impact on sexual orientation have been considered and updated following the consultation

Information, Advice and Guidance

The Wellbeing Services in the Community provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point for people that would have accessed Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community. People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed as needing a lower level of support they would be signposted and connected with support and services. Services have a good understanding of their communities and are able to signpost and connect people.

A gap identified when doing this EqIA is that on the information, advice and guidance platform Kent Connect to Support there was no information about sexual orientation, this has now been updated.

For people assessed as needing lower levels of support there are a range of services that will be available to provide information, advice and guidance, these include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing. These are available for face-to-face support. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Reviewing the feedback from the consultation there is a theme that has emerged that there is confusion over where people go for information, advice and guidance. An action as a result of the consultation is that we are planning a campaign to set out where people can go for support. And within this to think about how the campaign can raise awareness of support available for sexual orientation.

Groups and Activities

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue and these include a range of support, activities and groups for people of all ages. There are services supporting LGBTQIA+ which will not be affected by these proposals such as:

- The BeYou Project – is for LGBT+ young people provided by Porchlight.
- Porchlight developed a resource pack to help people The BeYou Project - Porchlight
- Website Welcome to our bold and beautiful new website - The BeYou Project - Porchlight.
- Release the Pressure is a Kent campaign for mental health in men Release-the-Pressure-LGBTQ-poster.pdf

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data, for example a decrease in the number of people who are gay accessing the services, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The EqiA has identified that the proposal may adversely impact individuals with the protected characteristic of sexual orientation. However, particular impacts on these individuals specific to their protected characteristic are likely to be limited, as the services in scope of the proposals (other than some projects previously supported by the Innovation Fund) do not provide specific support for this protected characteristic. There are other services and support that are provided outside of these contracts that support people with this protected characteristic. Therefore, it is assessed that any particular adverse impact is objectively justified, as the proposals are pursuing the legitimate aims set out above, and is proportionate in light of the mitigating measures identified.

The proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity regarding the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Individuals with and without the protected characteristic will be able to access services equally. The proposals will continue to promote equality of opportunity through increased awareness of sexual orientation groups and support that people can be connected with. This was raised during the consultation about having increased awareness. Through market development officers understanding where there are gaps in sexual orientation and working communities to address the gaps.

For the same reasons the proposal is unlikely to have any significant adverse impact on fostering good relations. The proposals will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sexual Orientation

Simon Mitchell

26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

a) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? Answer: Yes/No

No

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity

Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing

Data has been sought from the following services from April 2024- March 2025:

All Services	Total		Services	Community Navigation		Wellbeing	
Pregnancy & Maternity	Number	%		Number	%	Number	%
Yes	6	0.27		3	100	3	0.13
No	280	12.83		0	0	280	12.84
Unknown	33	1.51		0	0	33	1.51
Did Not Ask	1590	72.86		0	0	1590	72.96

No Data	273	12.51		0	0	273	12.52
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Providers capture if someone is currently pregnant or supporting someone that is the maternity period of 33 weeks. The Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community are to support people over the age of 55+ or under 55 if they have complex health conditions or disabilities.

Wellbeing Services in the Community and Community Navigation services each supported 3 people. Although the number is small, there could a be a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the individual as they could have complex health/disabilities in addition to being pregnant or during the maternity period. They could be accessing support to help them connect with others to improve mental health and wellbeing.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)
 As the Innovation Fund is used to test new ideas which could be short term support or events, there is limited data on the number of people supported and the breakdown of protected characteristics. However, we do have information from the Live Well service as a whole and have used this to assess the potential impact of the proposal.

During 2024/25 the service supported 61.77% of people that were not pregnant, 0.81% were pregnant and 37.42% not recorded/did not disclose.

Consultation Summary
 Information on pregnancy and maternity was not captured as part of the consultation. During the consultation there were not any comments raised on the impact of Pregnancy and Maternity, therefore the pre-consultation analysis that although could be a negative impact the number of people potentially impacted is low as the services are mainly designed to support older people.

c) Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

These services are not commissioned to provide specific support for pregnancy and maternity, this includes information, advice and guidance and groups and activities. The Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing services are commissioned to support people over 55+ or under if complex health conditions, therefore it has not supported many people who are pregnant or during the maternity period in 2024/25.

People under this protected characteristic can access support from include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing. These are available for face-to-face support. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

There are a range of services that provide specific support to people with this protected characteristic, these include:

- KCC Family Hubs have developed a directory of services suited to this cohort, available here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/activities-and-groups-near-you>. The main site also provides links to advice and guidance which include the following topics: SEND

support, Safeguarding, Mental Health, Pregnancy, Physical Health and Childcare. For 'Pregnancy and Maternity', residents can access advice and support for pregnancy, planning a family, help with baby's feeding, sleeping, crying and other behaviour and support for toddlers and children in their first two years. Available here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/pregnancy-and-the-first-two-years>. Residents can find their local Family Hub and join by entering their postcode on the website available here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/your-local-family-hub>

- NHS Kent and Medway have a dedicated site named 'Bump, Birth and Beyond', available here: <https://www.kentandmedwaylms.nhs.uk/>, which includes advice and guidance, finding support in your area, links to free online antenatal courses and specific support for fathers at 'DadPad' <https://www.kentandmedwaylms.nhs.uk/partners-families/dadpad>
- Midwives help people and connect them with information, advice and guidance and groups.

The Wellbeing Services in the Community for those with a Physical Disability is out of scope of these proposals. This service is delivered by Disability Assist [Kent](#) | [Disability Assist](#) | [England](#) a charity run by and for disabled people. Disability Assist provides information, guidance and advice to disabled adults on a range of topics around independent living and all aspects of life with a disability. The service helps with:

- Peer support
- Advocacy, supporting people to know and understand their rights when it comes to health and social welfare. To be able to express their views, wishes and needs to ensure they are involved when decisions need to be made.
- Benefits support.

The Live Well Kent and Medway Service will remain unaffected by proposals and offer Mental Health support to people with this protected characteristic.

Conclusion

The EqIA has identified that the proposal will not have any significant adverse impact on pregnancy or maternity. The services in scope of the proposals do not provide specific support for this protected characteristic. There are other services and support that are provided outside of these contracts that support people with this protected characteristic. And no issues were raised during the consultation.

The proposal will continue to promote equality of opportunity through increased awareness of support for maternity services and groups that people can be connected with.

Proposals will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Pregnancy and Maternity

Simon Mitchell

27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships

redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community to reduce to the negative impact of the proposals on this protected characteristic.

People under this protected characteristic can access support from include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing. These are available for face-to-face support. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Social Isolation

To help people at risk of isolation there is [Positive Wellbeing](#), delivered by Community Connectors from across a range of services and community organisations. Further information about this service can be found under Appendix 1.

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools (connect to support and Joy platform) to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified. Examples of groups and activities that are provided outside of the contracts within the proposal can be viewed in Appendix 1.

To help people build digital confidence there is a scheme called [Digital Kent](#) which may help reduce the impact of social isolation.

Conclusion

The EqiA has identified that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on marriage and civil partnerships. There are other services and support that are provided outside of these contracts that support people with this protected characteristic. And no issues were raised under the consultation.

The proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity regarding marriage/civil partnership. The proposals will continue to promote equality of opportunity through increased awareness of groups and support that people for people under this protected characteristic.

The proposals are also unlikely to have any adverse impact on fostering good relations. The proposals will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Simon Mitchell

28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's Responsibilities

a) Are there negative impacts for Carer's Responsibilities? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer's Responsibilities

There is limited data on Carers Responsibilities as it has not been a requirement for the Community Navigation and Wellbeing Services in the Community to collect this data.

In Kent, an estimated 148,341 adults aged 16+ provide the following unpaid care each week:

- 94,640 provide 1-19 hours
- 18,131 provide 20-49 hours
- 35,570 provide 50 hours

Therefore, carers are playing a key role in supporting people and could negatively be impacted by the proposal if the person they care for has reduced access to the support and services affected by the proposal. This could impact a carer’s mental health and wellbeing.

The Peoples panel held on the 06/02/2025 raised the issue that Carers could be negatively impacted due to Wellbeing services being affected by the proposal. When the person being cared for attends these groups/sessions this provides the carer the opportunity to make time for themselves, without this time it could impact a carers mental health and wellbeing.

The services estimate that around 21% of people supported through Community Navigation were also supported by an unpaid carer.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

As the Innovation Fund is used to test new ideas which could be short term support or events, there is limited data on the number of people supported and breakdown of protected characteristics. However, we do have information from the Live Well service as a whole and able to use this to assess the potential impact of the proposal. The number of people supported by the service in 2024/25 who identified as having Carer Responsibilities:

Number of carers with Severe/Serious Mental Illness	180
Number of carers with Common Mental Illness	493
Number of carers Not diagnosed/prevention	29

Consultation Summary

Consultation responses showed 17% reported being a carer and 69% were not, 14% preferred not to say or left blank. As providers do not capture and report on carers it was difficult to determine the potential impact on carers. However, responses to the consultation show that a higher proportion of people that responded and supported by the services were not carers.

Concerns were raised in the consultation on the negative impact on carers by not having the right support in place and access to groups and activities for a break, particularly helping with carers Mental Health. And that these services play a key role in helping tired carers navigate information, advice and guidance and the

get support that is needed. Responses stated about carers feeling isolated and without these services will struggle in their caring roles.

c) Mitigating Actions for Carer's Responsibilities

KCC have developed a Kent Adults Carers Strategy 2022 to 2027 the strategy describes how we plan to work with all our partners to make welcomed changes towards improving the experiences of unpaid adult carers in Kent '**Kent Adult Carers' Strategy 2022 to 2027**'

A carer delivery plan has been developed from the Kent Adults Carers' Strategy to support the delivery of the strategy, within this a 'Carers' voice' group was set up, comprising a series of workshops held to help shape the future of services. The Kent Carers' Strategy Group is co-chaired by a person with lived experience of being an unpaid carer. It is made up of representatives from carer support organisations, people with lived experience and KCC officers. Our involvement groups across the county also provide the opportunity to hear about carers' experience and views so that we can shape the service for all carers across Kent. <https://kent.connecttosupport.org/get-involved/get-involved-involvement-groups/>

Carers Support

There are a range of services funded by the council that support carers and are out of scope these proposals:

Carers Support services

- Carer assessment to determine support required for a carer.
- Carers direct payments.
- Carer-specific navigation services to information, advice and guidance.
- Carer wellbeing services to improve physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Opportunities for work, leisure or education.
- Financial wellbeing support.
- Opportunity to influence services for the person they care for and for themselves.
- Carer Short Breaks, providing a chance to step away from the caring role to recharge.
- Carer and Dementia Crisis support.

The carers support offer includes completing carers assessment to determine support required. In addition the carers support services provide carer specific information, advice and guidance, helping carers build with people in a similar position to share experiences, help to access Health or Social Care Services, benefit support and help filling in forms and identifying if adaptations or equipment at home would help the person they care for. Involve, Imago and Carers Support East Kent provide the carers support service. For those requiring a break from their caring role, Crossroads Kent provide a short break service. Home - Carers' Support East Kent. This service supported 22,832 people in 2024/25. However these contracts are currently out for tender Kent Carers Support Service. The service requires the following minimum activity:

- 1,550 carers assessments
- 86,000 carers breaks
- 24,000 emergency carers breaks

Wellbeing Services for people with Dementia and their families

Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services (ADSS) and Age UK Herne Bay and Whitstable are the lead providers of this service. This service provides a similar offer to the universal Wellbeing Support in the

Community service described above but with a particular focus on supporting those with a dementia diagnosis and their families.

Information, Advice and Guidance

The redesigned Wellbeing Services in the Community provided by SEK, Imago Community and Involve Kent would still have an initial contact point for people that would have accessed Community Navigation and Community Wellbeing. People would be assessed to determine the level of support needed. For people that are assessed as needing a lower level of support they would be signposted and connected with a range of services that remain available and outlined within this section, helping to mitigate the adverse impacts on carers.

There are a range of services that will be available to provide information, advice and guidance, these include Adult Social Care Connect, Kent Enablement Service, Social Prescribing, positive wellbeing. These are available for face-to-face support. More information about these services can be viewed in Appendix 1.

There is a range of information, advice and guidance available for carers to help with their wellbeing:

- The information, advice and guidance platform Kent Connect to Support has information and support for carers [Search Results | Connect to Support | Kent](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing: Kent & Medway ICS](#)
- [Support for carers - Kent County Council](#)

Groups and Activities

Social care staff and partners can use the digital tools to find out about groups and activities within communities along with local knowledge and connections. A discussion with the individual first helps to understand the support needs and areas of interest so that relevant groups and activities can be identified.

For the Live Well Proposal (removing the Innovation Fund and efficiencies in the back office)

The mitigation is that core services provided by Live Well Kent will continue, and these include a range of support, activities and groups for people including carers.

The demographics will be monitored, if there is a change in data, reasons for this would be explored along with actions to improve accessibility of the services.

Conclusion

The EqiA, and feedback received during the consultation, has identified that the proposal may have an adverse impact on some carers. However, there are a range of services commissioned to support carers specifically. Concerns were raised in the consultation on the negative impact on carers by not having the right support in place and access to groups and activities for a break, particularly helping with carers Mental Health. However, a range of services and support that are provided outside of these contracts that support people carers and people that they care for. The carers strategy and delivery plan focus on ensuring the right support is in place for carers. Therefore, it is assessed that any adverse impacts are objectively justified.

The proposal will continue to promote equality of opportunity through increased awareness of groups and support that will support carers and people that they care for.

Proposals will continue to foster good relations as there are a broad range of services and functions offered outside of these contracts means that a wide range of activities continue to promote good relations. The council ensure the fostering of good relations through the Your Voice network which considers the voices of individuals. Adult social care attends a wide number of in person information, advice and guidance events across the county through our Involvement Officers, seeking feedback and fostering good relations with people and communities. There is a carers strategic group that oversees the implementation of the carers strategy.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Carer’s Responsibilities

Simon Mitchell

Appendix 1 Further information about the mitigations

Some of the mitigations are limited in capacity, however, together form a range of mitigations that reduce the impact of the proposals.

Prevention Campaign

The campaign would aim to raise awareness of, promote and publicise the benefits of the range of services and support that KCC social care teams and other providers/services/agencies provide across Kent. The campaign would help:

- people looking for advice and support for themselves, loved ones and local people can do so easily
- people don't reach crisis point before asking for help
- people stay independent for longer by accessing 'low level' support available
- people access the right support when they need it - and are more able to navigate the care 'system'
- the perception of the breadth of services KCC provides in the county improves/increases
- professional organisations are equipped with the right information to help people find the right support

It is anticipated that this campaign would start in October 2025. The campaign will initially run for 3 months and would cost £20k and the impact would be measured. The campaign would be designed to reach up to 20,000 people.

Adult Social Care Connect

Provides an initial contact point for people wanting to access care and support. This service is provided by Adult Social Care. Contact and support can be made via telephone, online or in person. They offer low-level intervention support such as providing information, advice, and guidance, proportionate assessments, and equipment.

In April 2024, work began on redesigning the Area Referral Management Service to align with our Make a Difference Everyday strategy. There are 24 local community teams across four hubs: North Kent, West Kent, Ashford & Canterbury, and Thanet & South Kent Coast. Each area has an ASC Connect team and a Safeguarding Hub.

Since the redesigned service went live from 7 October 2024 and up to May 2025 there were 17,860 contacts (to note these may not be individual people, as people could have made contact multiple times over this period) and there has been 8,902 proportionate assessments (carried out through a mix of telephone conversations, in-person visits, and assessments undertaken at clinic appointments).

There is a focus on connecting people with support or guidance as quickly as possible on the basis of initial information submitted through their first contact or referral. This has allowed ASC Connect to support people and resolve almost 9% more initial enquiries and referrals without need for formal assessment. Under the Adult Social Care Connect model, Kent has seen a decrease in the proportion of initial contacts resulting in an assessment for long-term care of 4.6% compared to the comparable period the previous year. This equates to an average 120 fewer requests per month coming to community social work teams for Care Needs Assessments.

The Adult Social Care Connect maintains information about different kinds of service, facilities or resources that can be preventative and can help people live well and maintain their independence or caring roles for longer. Through these services and that of our partners, such as district councils, people are enabled to access relevant services. The team use the Connect to Support platform and [ReferKent](#) which funded by KCC's Helping Hands Scheme is an example of such a mechanism to navigate residents to the support they need. It is an online referrals platform with over 300 organisations, team's groups and services. It aims to strengthen referrals across Kent for adults and families and allows organisations to refer directly.

Availability:

The Adult Social Care Connect Service has been set up to help connect people with information and support in a timely way with the following values at the core of the service:

- Think Independence and Enablement First
- Make Practice-Led Decisions
- Keeping People Close to their Communities.

The staffing model within the service reflects the ambition to strengthen the connectivity of front door services with the wider network of providers and partners working within local communities, with more Social Work Officers embedded in each hub. Work has been undertaken following the initial go-live of the service October 2024 to maximise resource within the service. This has particularly focused on the provision of information and support based on information provided through an initial referral to the service. This includes the establishment of a "duty system" where

focused resource is allocated daily to support people with information and referrals either without a more detailed assessment conversation, or while this conversation is scheduled.

Accessibility:

People can contact Adult Social Care Connect in the following ways:

- During office hours (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm): Call 03000 41 61 61.
- Outside of office hours (for emergencies only): Call 03000 41 91 91.
- Text relay: 18001 03000 41 61 61.
- Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk.
- Drop in one of the community clinics.

Capacity:

Since the establishment of Adult Social Care Connect in October 2024, a regular series of clinics have been established at different locations across the county to offer support, information, advice and guidance about what is available within their communities. As the service has become established, opportunities to embed further clinics at different settings are being progressed, with at least two further clinics being established from August - which will further increase the capacity of the service, in addition to being able to access ASC Connect via online and telephone referral.

There are currently four weekly clinic sessions started to be established from November 2024 and more being developed. The current clinics are in Ashford and Canterbury and Thanet and South Kent Coast, and two additional clinics from August are in North Kent (Gravesend Civic Centre and New Ash Green). Options being explored for West Kent, two locations were tested in Spring 2025 (Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone), however these were not utilised and paused as other locations are being considered. The current clinics have capacity to see up to 10 people per session and run for 48 weeks of the year. Currently, therefore, 1,920 people per year can access this face-to-face support. It is assessed that this is new capacity as the clinics are not being utilised with very low utilisation levels.

Kent Enablement Service – Helpdesk

The helpdesk is free service provided Kent Enablement Services. There are weekly sessions in key locations across Kent providing support to people with accessing information and advice, help with letters, bills, finding groups and activities, college and education courses, paid and voluntary employment, information about keeping safe, housing, wellbeing, benefits and help with making phone calls. The service is currently underutilised as the sessions are not well promoted and has the capacity to create more sessions and locations if there is more demand.

These sessions are in person at the following places, days and times:

Location	Venue	Day and times
Ashford	The Ashford Gateway, Church Road, Ashford TN23 1AS	Weekly on Tuesdays between 11.00 am & 1.00 pm
Canterbury	The Canterbury Job Centre, 115-120 Northgate, Canterbury CT1 1EZ	Weekly on Mondays between 1.00 pm and 3.00 pm
Dover	At the Big Local, Charlton Centre, High Street, Dover CT16 1TT	Weekly on Tuesdays between 1.00 pm & 3.00 pm
Sittingbourne	Sittingbourne Library, Central Avenue, ME10 4AH	Weekly on Mondays between 1.00 pm & 3.00 pm
Sheerness	Sheppey Gateway, 38-42 High St, Town Centre, Sheerness ME12 1NL	Weekly on Tuesday between 11.00 am & 1.00 pm
Margate/Thanet	Desk 8, Thanet Gateway Plus, Cecil St, Margate CT9 1RE	Weekly on Thursday between 1.00 pm & 3.00 pm.
Dartford	Dartford Central Library & Museum, Market Street Dartford DA1 1EU	Weekly on Thursday between 10.00 am & 12.00 pm
Tunbridge Wells	Montague House	1 x months; Frist Friday of the months 10.00-12.00
Maidstone	Library Maidstone	1 x months; Frist Thursday of the months 10.00-12.00
Folkestone	Morrisons, 148 Cheriton Road, Folkestone, CT19 5JS	Weekly on Mondays between 10:00 am & 12:00 pm.

Accessibility

The drop sessions across Kent are open to all adults.

Capacity:

Each helpdesk is open for 2 hours as an ad hoc walk in facility and manned by one person. The service will increase the staffing if aware of any risks and also if the helpdesk is continually showing high demand.

For 2024 -2025, there was 10 Helpdesks open these were increased gradually throughout the year.

As some of the sessions fall on bank holidays, the sessions are not moved to alternative date and closed over the Christmas period.

If the team are supporting with a task such as benefit paperwork this can take up to 1 hour. In some areas where the footfall can be busier, the team offer appointments outside of our helpdesk times to provide support. This happens particularly in Ashford, Dover, Sittingbourne or Sheppey. In areas where helpdesks are not available (Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells) appointments can be made at the person's home or a safe community space.

From Sept 24 to April 25, there was a total across 10 helpdesks is which supported 365 people. The main supporting tasks are money and budgeting/benefits/support with paperwork.

This service provides 8 weekly sessions across the county, there is capacity to support 2 people per session, there is capacity to support up to 763 people in the year through the helpdesks (taking into account bank holidays, operational 48 weeks). The service monitors demand and can increase/decrease the drop-in sessions where required. From September '24 to April '25 the service supported 356 people via these clinics. Using these figures, it is estimated that the service would have supported 547 people in the year and has capacity to support 763 people, therefore additional capacity to support 215 people.

Social Prescribing

Is a way of improving residents health and wellbeing other than through medicine. Staff in GP surgeries write a 'prescription' to take part in activities in the community that will be of benefit. NHS Kent and Medway intend to continue funding these services which could help residents potentially impacted by these proposals although it is not known what capacity the service currently has. There is a plan to launch a digital solution across Kent. This is called the 'Joy' platform and it will signpost and connect people and communities to information, advice, guidance and services across Kent and Medway Integrated Care System. As part of this work, social infrastructure at geographical area level is being mapped e.g. hospitals, GPs, pharmacies, care homes, schools, leisure centres, libraries, faith settings and green spaces to identify partners and accessibility of services.

Social prescribing and community navigation is helping to connect people to community-based support, services, resources, and groups in the local area. This is helping to improve outcomes for people, supporting people to stay well, independent

and resilient, reducing social isolation and helping to support physical and mental health.

Availability:

Local agencies such as local charities, social care, and health services refer people to a social prescribing link worker.

Accessibility:

Social prescribing is a partnership of organisations and is an approach that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social, and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing. Social prescribing link workers also support existing community groups to be accessible and sustainable, and help people to start new groups, working collaboratively with all local partners. It is an all age, whole population approach.

Capacity:

There are 128 [Social prescribing](#) workers in Kent and Medway, of these 114 are in Kent.

The table below sets out the Social Prescribers per PCN across Kent.

PCN	Sum of Headcount
ABC PCN	2
ASHFORD RURAL PCN	9
ATHENA PCN	1
CANTERBURY NORTH PCN	4
CANTERBURY SOUTH PCN	4
CARE KENT PCN	5
DEAL & SANDWICH PCN	4
DOVER TOWN PCN	2
FOLKESTONE HYTHE & RURAL PCN	2
GARDEN CITY PCN	4
GRAVESEND ALLIANCE PCN	1
HERNE BAY PCN	13
LMN PCN	2

MAIDSTONE CENTRAL PCN	2
MALLING PCN	4
MARGATE PCN	8
MID KENT PCN	5
RAMSGATE PCN	4
SEVENOAKS PCN	4
SHEPPEY PCN	3
SITTINGBOURNE PCN	12
THE MARSH PCN	1
THE RIDGE PCN	2
TONBRIDGE PCN	2
TOTAL HEALTH EXCELLENCE EAST PCN	2
TOTAL HEALTH EXCELLENCE WEST PCN	3
TUNBRIDGE WELLS PCN	2
WEALD PCN	5
WHITSTABLE PCN	2
Grand Total	114

Joy Platform

Since we have developed Connect to Support, there has been a development - Joy is a digital social prescribing platform, with a variety of aspects that can be used by both professionals and Kent Residents to help navigate the complex health and social care system, and the support available to both individuals and communities. Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board have funded a 15-month pilot for primary care teams, including GP Practices and their Social Prescribers to use the system.

Joy Connect – sits on top of the primary care clinical system, and allows GP practice staff, including Social Prescribers, to refer directly to community support in the local area. This will reduce the need for primary care staff to search through large directories and service websites to find and refer people for support.

The marketplace is an online public facing directory, which enables Kent & Medway residents to type in their postcode, filter categories and find local support available to them, and self-refer to support.

Kent County Council have identified an opportunity in building upon the existing work for the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board pilot, to reduce internal and system duplication in the signposting and referring space and explore opportunities for adult social care staff to use the system.

In Summer of 2024 the ICB asked KCC to implement the Joy platform. The Joy platform has many functions that can be utilised by social care, and we are now developing this solution which could replace the Connect to Support and continue to enhance our digital offer. With this work funding has been provided by the ICB to have dedicated resources to working with partners to develop the Joy Market place which will help us get to a one directory of service. The Joy solution uses AI to maintain the Directories of Services which will help with sustainability.

Digital Kent

[Digital Kent](#) has supported over 16,700 residents since 2021. The support includes digital hubs, of which there are 30 across Kent and Medway and digital workshops. Digital Kent also offers a Hardware Access Scheme which provides residents with a laptop to enable access and opportunity and a Connectivity Access Scheme which provides residents with a connection to broadband. The offer of regular digital support has helped residents to be more socially included and empowered. Digital Kent is funded by KCC's Helping Hands Scheme, which supports projects that help people who are experiencing, or at risk of, financial hardship. Digital Kent also leads on the Digital Champions Network and has over 200 digital champion volunteers

Availability:

Digital Kent is a person-centric programme, focused on supporting the residents of Kent with digital inclusion. The service provides a variety of different resources to support people in using technology and not becoming excluded. Digital Kent measures financial benefit to the Kent County Council through the support of digital skills to all residents of all demographics, this can support with paying bills online, GP services through the NHS app, energy services through the UKPN project or just supporting someone to be more confident and able online.

Accessibility:

Digital Kent provides a non-chargeable service to Kent residents requiring digital skills and support. There are a variety of different ways that this service is provided, through one-to-one hubs with a digital champion volunteer, digital support sessions within an organisation or a workshop covering a particular subject. Support is available to all Kent residents over 18. The aim of Digital Kent is to reduce digital exclusion and increase inclusion across the county. The programme and subsequent projects are reviewed under a DPIA where required.

Capacity:

Digital Kent has included the staffing capacity needed to support the delivery of the service as well as the support of over 200 digital champion volunteers from the digital champions' network. Digital Kent regularly reviews staffing and capacity to ensure the delivery of the workshops and hubs around the County.

Kent Connect to Support

[Kent Connect to Support](#) offers information and advice about preventative services, facilities or resources, and helps people to find out about the types of support available locally that may meet their individual needs and circumstances. The Kent Connect to Support service is the gateway for providing information and advice about care and support in the county. The information and advice cover a range of topics including general information, information for carers, self-directed support, community directory, home and community, caring for someone, health and wellbeing, housing, out and about, money and legal. This also provides information and advice at all stages of the care and support assessment, provision and review process. It's aim is to provide coherent, up to date, availability and accessible information and advice relating to care and support to the whole population in Kent.

Services for self-help promoting choice and control include:

[Care and support assessments](#)

[Estimate how much you may need to pay towards your care - Kent County Council](#)

[Technology Enhanced Lives House | Connect to Support | Kent](#)

[Equipment House | Connect to Support | Kent](#)

[Community services map | Connect to Support | Kent](#)

The [Private Pay Service provided by Argenti](#) is for people who are not eligible for Council funded services, or who do not wish to be assessed.

We have initiated an Information Co-production Group inviting people with lived experience of social care to help develop and improve our information, advice and guidance. This includes our adult social care printed and online materials that help to make things clear for the public in Kent including standard annual letters and finance documentation.

The Connect to Support platform was implemented as part of our initial digital roadmap in 2021/22, recognising that this was a gap, this was not to be the final stage and that we were always to seek opportunities to enhance and improve. This platform is used by many councils and there is a community practice with the developer and councils that regularly come together to feedback and further develop.

Availability:

This is a free digital platform that is co-produced with key stakeholders, partners and people with draw on care and support. Regular communications through internal and external meetings and social media posts. We completed an Internal accessibility audit to ensure it is compliant. The outcome of the audit stated low risk.

Our future plans for sustainability and continuous improvement includes reviewing both this platform and the social prescribing platform to ensure information, advice and guidance is accessible through one signal route digitally.

Accessibility:

It is a free digital platform that is co- produced with key stakeholders, partners and people with draw on care and support. Regular communications through internal and external meetings and social media posts. Internal accessibility audit complete with an outcome of low risk.

Capacity:

This helps the workforce when offering information, advice and guidance. It supports our partners and key stakeholders when they provide information, advice, guidance and public facing website. The website hosts a comprehensive community directory.

Technology Enhanced Lives

The [Technology Enhanced Lives \(TELS\)](#) service provides social and health care apps and wearable technology) empowers a person and supports them to maintain or improve their independence, safety, and wellbeing with greater choice and control. There are a range of technologies which include prompts and reminders, detection of fall devices and sensors. The service includes a free of charge short-term service of up to 10 weeks which aims to reduce people needing ongoing care and support. The Technology Enhanced Lives service has also developed a private pay option for Kent residents. TELS information, advice and guidance has been developed to help people consider how they can use technology to remain independent and this includes the development of virtual technology and equipment house. The service is tailored to the person and makes use of technology a person may already own such as a phone or smart speaker and/or technology provided through the Technology Enhanced Lives service, for example wrist-worn falls monitors so that carers can be alerted if falls occur.

Availability:

TELS is designed to be outcome based and person-centric to find technology solutions to support a person to manage care and support needs. The service provides a variety of technologies to supports a person's needs which can include utilising already owned devices such as smart phone or smart speakers, offering standalone devices, sim card enabled devices, and linked monitored devices. TELS measures financial benefit to the Kent County Council through the adoption and use

of technology solutions, this can be through a reduction or avoidance in care and support or supporting a person to access a private pay alternative.

Accessibility:

TELS provides a non-chargeable service to Kent residents who meet the TELS eligibility criteria. TELS offers competitive rates for people accessing the private pay pathway in line with other assistive technology providers. All technology provided by TELS has been through rigorous testing protocols to determine the safety and reliability of each device. Trained technician and members of the TELS team are available to support with installations when a self-install is not possible. The range of devices available under TELS aims to reduce areas of digital exclusion through its assistive technology solutions. All devices are reviewed under a DPIA where required.

Capacity:

The TELS team have capacity to manage an additional 40 short term referrals per week. This includes Kent TELS colleagues and sufficient capacity from Argenti to deliver the service in partnership with Kent.

Positive Wellbeing

Positive Wellbeing (PW) is a tiered, non-clinical social prescribing service delivered by Kent County Council. The business plan for PW includes scaling up and expanding the service to be provided by a range of KCC services, partners, and community-based services, such as those offering care and support in the community. Positive Wellbeing is currently delivered by Community Wardens, Heart in the Community CIC in Thanet, and volunteers from the Thanet Know Your Neighbourhood (KYN) project.

Positive Wellbeing is not only interventional but also focuses on reducing the stigma surrounding social isolation and loneliness. It ensures that the signs and symptoms are recognised and promotes the idea that it is everyone's responsibility to know where and how to signpost someone at risk of experiencing social isolation to the appropriate service.

Positive Wellbeing is delivered by Community Connectors from across a range of services and community organisations, to Kent residents aged over 18. Support is offered face-to-face, by telephone or video appointments for up to 12 weeks. It aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness, enhance quality of life, and improve overall wellbeing. Support is given by signposting residents to various organisations, groups, clubs and events and attending alongside the resident where appropriate. The main objectives are to reduce isolation and loneliness in Kent, improve wellbeing, reduce demand on health and social services.

- Tier 1 Positive Wellbeing support is delivered by 38 Community Wardens across 12 Kent districts. On average, each Warden can support 2 people over a 12-week period, totalling 8 people per year. Therefore, Tier 1 Positive Wellbeing can support an average of 304 people per year. From April '24 to March '25 a total of 150 people were supported.
- Tier 2 Positive Wellbeing support is an approach that is being developed and will be delivered by volunteers. There are around 15-20 potential volunteers who have expressed interest in receiving training and this number is expected to grow when we advertise the opportunity to volunteer, this is expected by Autumn 2025. In addition, there are 153 Positive Wellbeing Champions who have undergone training. They now have a better understanding of the county-wide issue of Social Isolation and Loneliness. The training has equipped them with knowledge on who it affects, how it presents, and what to look out for. They are well-prepared to refer isolated and lonely individuals to the appropriate support sensitively and appropriately. From April '24 to March '25 a total of 27 people received signposting support.

Availability:

Positive Wellbeing support is delivered by Community Wardens across 12 Kent districts. The location of Positive Wellbeing delivery is guided by where the Warden is based. Currently, there are 38 Community Wardens who have been trained to deliver Positive Wellbeing, covering 77 wards. Tier 1 Positive Wellbeing is available between 8 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays.

Accessibility:

Tier 1 Positive Wellbeing support is delivered by Community Wardens within the home of the person. Other venues include libraries, local cafés, or community centres. If delivered outside of the home, a suitable venue will be agreed upon between the person and Community Warden, based on the accessibility and transport requirements of the individuals. Tier 1 Positive Wellbeing is also available via video calls (MS Teams) or phone calls upon request.

Capacity:

Positive Wellbeing support is delivered by 38 Community Wardens across 12 Kent districts. On average, each Warden can support 2 people over a 12-week period, totalling 8 people per year. Therefore, Tier 1 Positive Wellbeing can support an average of 304 people per year.

Market Development Officers

KCC has put in place Market Development Officers who work with communities and people to understand what support is required and where there are gaps. They work

with people and communities to address the gaps by developing small businesses, known as Community Micro-Enterprises to provide the services.

Kent County Council Community Warden Service

When the Community Warden service was first established, its main aim was to form a key part of the Council's response to its statutory responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006).

- Under Section 6 of the 1998 Act, we must work with the other responsible authorities, such as Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service, to tackle local 3 crime and disorder.
- Under Section 17 of this Act, we must consider crime and disorder implications for all of our functions and decisions.

The service's remit has evolved and expanded from the initial crime and disorder focus and the service now also contributes to our duties under the Care Act 2014.

- Under Section 1 of this Act, we must promote individual wellbeing, and under Section 2, we must prevent needs for care and support. This means we have to consider: what services, facilities and resources are already available in the area (for example local voluntary and community groups), and how these might help local people. Identifying people in the local area who might have care and support needs that are not being met, identifying carers in the area who might have support needs that are not being met.

Wardens contribute to these duties by having knowledge of the communities they serve and being able to connect residents to what will promote their wellbeing or prevent care and support needs. This could be financial support, housing, information and advice, carers support, social connections, and activities. Today, the wardens provide a proactive and visible service that helps in a variety of ways to improve residents' quality of life and allow their communities to thrive. The current service remit can be described by its four key objectives:

- Objective 1 - Strengthening community resilience to ensure 'Stronger, Safer Communities'. Helping residents feel safer and be resilient at times of challenge.
- Objective 2 - Supporting the elderly and vulnerable. Facilitating access to the right support, care and services.
- Objective 3 - Fostering community cohesion and wellbeing. Working across communities to help build a sense of community.
- Objective 4 - Assisting residents to navigate public services.

The service works closely with district Community Safety Units (CSUs) and receives requests from multiple different partners such as Adult Social Care, Kent Police, Trading Standards, district and borough councils, parish and town councils, community groups, schools, health services (e.g. GPs) and Kent Fire and Rescue

Service. These requests can be to: provide local knowledge or advice, support community safety and engagement initiatives, assist partner organisations to engage with hard-to-reach residents, provide one to one support to the partner organisation's clients where they are limited due to capacity or eligibility, provide support to clients which only the wardens can provide due to their trusted community position, provide support during emergency incidents.

Availability:

The six teams work in the 12 Kent districts in particular wards – details can be found here <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/community-wardens#contact-warden>

Accessibility:

The service is available at the times stated on the website, and via the central and area specific contact numbers and email addresses also available on the website. Wardens are community based (within the areas shown on the website), making them known and approachable by residents directly within those communities. The wardens respond to specific needs within each community.

Capacity:

There are 38 wardens (including 6 team leaders) who have knowledge of the communities they serve and are trained to connect residents to support which will promote their wellbeing and/or help prevent care and support needs. In the last year, Community Wardens have supported 2000 people on a one-to-one basis. Community wardens also work at a group and community level, providing information on making the community environment safer and stronger, giving scams talks, tackling low level crime, setting up and running support groups/events, during 24/25 this approach supported 6000 people. The Community warden service has been transformed over the last year, reducing staff levels, refocused and targeted.

Kent Libraries

Kent Libraries - most libraries host weekly activities such as, knit and natter, games, speakers, quizzes, recreational activities and tea and chat. Libraries in Thanet are part of a major new initiative to create volunteering opportunities and support those experiencing loneliness. An £85,000 grant will allow Thanet libraries to run a range of activities and events over 2025/26. Examples of the activities include walking and gardening for wellbeing, children's craft activities, menopause cafes, family learning support events and social prescribing.

Information on all the events that will be taking place please go to: [Clubs and activities in libraries - Kent County Council](#). During 2024/25 the events and activities across 99 libraries were attended by 213,478 people.

Ageing Well Communities

During April 2025, Public Health is recruiting a role to lead specific projects which will enable older people to stay living in their homes, participate in activities they value and contribute to their communities for as long as possible. The postholder starts end of July, initially starting with Ashford working through the Ashford Health alliance to initially present information which demonstrates the significant size of the population over 65, the opportunity for health and wellbeing Age Friendly Communities creates.

The postholder will be responsible for working with Kent districts, NHS, social care and wider partners responsible for Ageing Well. The core duties may include:

- To lead work with partners to understand the extent to which Kent districts are 'Age Friendly Communities' – places where people are enabled to stay living in their homes, participate in the activities they value and contribute to their communities for as long as possible. The WHO's Age Friendly Communities framework has 8 domains and there is a four-step process for places to go through to embed age-friendly ways of working which this postholder would be responsible for. [What's an Age-friendly Community? | Centre for Ageing Better](#)
- To consolidate insights from existing work and to build/strengthen local networks of older people across Kent from all different communities, particularly underserved groups, who can share experiences, shape strategic priorities and advocate for action.
- To support work to implement recommendations around tackling social isolation in older people, in partnership with key stakeholders.
- To assist with understanding, documenting and promoting the population health needs of older people in Kent and ensuring this information is incorporated and acted upon in all appropriate plans.
- Develop and support specific needs assessments and action plans relevant to ageing e.g. dementia, frailty, falls, carers.
- Contribute to setting up and participating in an ageing well public health group which enables those with a specialist portfolio to adopt a life course approach which meets the needs of older people.

