



Equality Relevance Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Policy title	Reduce Apetito meals subsidy
Lead officer	Jennifer Scott – Head of Social Policy
Date relevance considered	18 September 2013
2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will, or may potentially:	
General Duties	Impact on equality (Yes or No)
Reduce or increase discrimination, victimisation or harassment against people covered by the equality protected characteristics?	Yes
Reduce or increase equality of opportunity between people who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
Provide opportunity to improve good relations between those who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	No
4. Equality impact assessment required? (Two Yes above = full assessment necessary)	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Decision rationale	
<p>A full Equality Impact Assessment will be required in this instance. The reduction in subsidy for Apetito meals will raise the cost to service users who are likely to be disabled people or older people. This budget measure is likely to have a disproportionate impact on people in those protected groups.</p>	

- No assessment required – process ends
- Assessment required – continue to next section

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Details of others involved	Jennifer Scott - Head of Social Policy Douglas Pirie – Technical Accountant Kenny Selbie – Equality Officer Hannah Gardner – Equalities Analyst
Date assessment conducted	17/12/14
2. Aims of the proposed change to council policy or resources	
<p>The council is working with partners to deliver outcomes and to ensure that it continues to provide high quality care in the community to older people and people with disabilities.</p> <p>This budget measure proposes to reduce the subsidy towards the cost of meals provided by Apetito, a hot meal supplier to customers in the community, in order to realise savings.</p>	
3. What equality data, research or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?	
Evidence was collected from local & national research and from West Lothian Council's Finance and Estates department.	
4. Details of consultation and involvement	
The assessment has been subject to scrutiny by representatives of the equality community forums through a specific focus on Delivering Better Outcomes projects as agreed by the council's Corporate Working Group on Equality.	
5. Issues identified and 'protected characteristics' impact (Covering: age; disability; gender; gender identity; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief and sexual orientation equality)	

Providing high quality care and support for older people is a fundamental principle of social justice and is an important hallmark of a caring and compassionate society. Demographic changes coupled with a decade of difficult public finances means this is one of the biggest challenges facing Scotland.

When asked as part of the Scottish Government consultation on the subject, respondents said that given the option, people want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Of all the questions asked, this one received a near unanimous response, and was tempered with “for as long as people feel safe”; or “for as long as a person doesn’t feel too cut off”. The Apetito service helps to enable people to stay in their own home even if they are struggling with shopping or preparing their own meals. There are currently 207 people in the West Lothian community using this service with a total of 49761 meals delivered in 2014.

However, there are alternatives open to current users of the Apetito service. The charity, Food Train, is supported by the council and NHS Lothian and works in conjunction with two large supermarkets. They provide weekly deliveries of fresh groceries to older people in West Lothian who are struggling to manage their own shopping and membership costs only £1 a year. In 2014, 78.2% of members were aged 75 years or older (*Food Train Annual Report 2014*) and 32,400 grocery deliveries were made to members in regional branches in Dumfries & Galloway, West Lothian, Stirling, Dundee, Glasgow and Renfrewshire (*Food Train Annual Report 2014*). 86.8% of customers surveyed stated they would either find it difficult or be unable to access a shop for food supplies without the service and 72.8% felt that the service had helped their independence (*Food Train Survey Results 2014*). Furthermore, 62.6% felt the service made them feel able to stay in their own home. Other benefits reported included helping social contact (38.3%) and a reduced risk of falling (36.5%).

In addition, market research suggests that supermarket pricing of similar products is competitively priced. For example, a frozen ready meal for 1 of Liver and Bacon with Colcannon mash from ASDA currently costs £1.50 or £4 for 3. A frozen meal provided by the Apetito contract is currently priced at £1.91. Delivery services direct from supermarkets are becoming commonplace too, with charges ranging from free to around £6 depending on the shop and the chosen day of delivery. Food Train charges £3 for delivery and passes on any individual savings to the customer.

In conclusion, the impact on older adults, and those with disabilities living within West Lothian, is likely to be minimal due to the competitively priced alternatives that are available to them. In some cases there could be a positive impact to their health and well-being where the customer switches to an alternative that better suits their dietary needs.

6. What measures are in place to monitor the actual impact following implementation?

The Delivering Better Outcomes projects are being monitored by the Modernisation Board during implementation and equality impact assessment is identified as a key enabler for projects.

7. Recommendation

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined below)
- Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality

8. Mitigating actions and additional outputs

The assessment identified that supermarket pricing of similar products to those provided by the Apetito contract are now competitive, and provide greater choice in many circumstances. Supermarket food labelling has improved significantly also enabling clients to choose products better suited to their dietary needs. Customers can also take advantage of the Food Train service.

- **Equality impact assessment completed**