Equality Impact Assessment

New directory of services – Connect to Support Surrey

Did you use the EIA Screening Tool?

Yes

1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Is this a:

Change to a service or function

Summarise the strategy, policy, service(s), or function(s) being assessed. Describe current status followed by any changes that stakeholders would experience.

Surrey County Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to provide a universal information and advice service about care and support in Surrey. This service is expected to be provided by a range of organisations include NHS, charities, local councils and care providers although the county council should have the lead oversight in its area. The council is obligated to provide information in a range of formats that help people to understand what's available locally, regardless of their needs. This includes digital resources, telephone services, printed information, face to face support through key information and advice roles in a range of settings and commissioned information and advice services.

Adult Social Care (ASC) currently provides an online directory of services called Surrey Information Point (SIP). The publicly available directory is aimed at residents but also helps professionals signpost residents to support and increase their knowledge of non-statutory support in their communities to help people self-serve and manage demand on ASC and the local NHS. It currently contains almost 4,000 services with a wide range of information about local support in the community. It can be accessed universally via mobile phones, i-pads, laptops and computers.

The current directory of services is provided by Oxford Computer Consultants (OCC) and the contract is due to expire on 30.09.2023.

During the summer of 2022 at the start of the re-procurement process two workshops were held with almost 60 people attending to look at the specific requirements of a new directory that would meet the needs of different users. This informed the new specification.

ASC has procured a new directory of services with enhanced functionality and search results, provided by People Places Lives (PPL). A decision has been made by a multi-agency reference group that has overseen the re-procurement process, to rebrand the directory to call it Connect to Support Surrey and aim to re-launch as a new resource and re-engage users. Through user research, ASC has worked with identified user groups to complete observational testing. This was through eight usability tests (scenario based) to capture evidence of online behaviours with identified user groups across the county and with different protected characteristics.

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In addition, throughout the project ASC has been co-producing with a multi-agency reference group with attendees representing:

- People with lived experience
- Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
- Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Partnership
- Surrey and Borders NHS Partnership Foundation Trust
- Adult Social Care professionals
- Adult Social Care Information and Advice Service
- Public Health
- SCC Safer Communities
- Age UK Surrey
- Citizens Advice
- Healthwatch Surrey
- Surrey County Council Web and Digital Service
- District and borough councils.

This EIA will assess any impact on residents, social care staff and other professionals with protected characteristics on the implementation of a new Directory of Services – Connect to Support Surrey.

How does your service proposal support the outcomes in [the Community Vision for Surrey 2030](#)?

- Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing.
- Everyone gets the health and social care support and information they need at the right time and place.

Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make an impact?

- Countywide

Assessment team

- Siobhan Abernethy, Information, Advice and Engagement Lead
- Adult Social Care, Surrey County Council
- Manager of service

- Rowena Stone
- Adult Social Care, Surrey County Council
- Project Manager

- Karen Burns
- Adult Social Care, Surrey County Council
- ASC Web and Digital Manager

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- Elise Edmonds
- Adult Social Care, Surrey County Council
- Digital Information Officer

- Karen Wallace
- Adult Social Care, Surrey County Council
- Digital Information Officer

2. People who draw upon care and support / residents

Age

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

The usually resident population of Surrey, counted by the 2021 Census, was 1,203,108. This represents an increase of 70,718 (6.2%) since 2011. The largest 5 year cohort across Surrey are those aged 50-54 years, with a population of 87,327. The fastest growing cohort compared to previous Census are those aged 70-74, with a growth of 34.1% (an additional 14,869 persons) and reflects the post-WWII baby boom. Other older age groups have also increased - those aged 75-79 by 18.1%, and those aged 80 or older by 14.6%. The overall effect of this is that Surrey's population is made up of a large and growing proportion of people aged over 70s. Health and age are closely related, with older people being more likely to be in poorer health and needing social care and support.

+ People of all ages should have access to information and advice services and be able to use and access the new directory of services – Connect to Support Surrey.
+ Connect to Support Surrey will have the same amount of functionality as the current directory – SIP, and will also have advanced features which will make it easier to use for all age groups to search for and find information.
+ Connect to Support Surrey will simplify information searches for people of all ages.
+ The information available is very relevant to older people.
+ Information searches can be filtered by age and other protected characteristics.
- Some older people have no access to computers or the internet.
- Some older people lack the skills to find information online.
- Connect to Support Surrey may be beyond the skills and confidence of some older people to use.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

There will be a communications campaign to maximise the positive impacts of the launch of Connect to Surrey. This includes promoting the resource to professionals working in the health

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and care environment, charities and care providers, local councils so they are aware of the support available in local communities and can help people access the information if people contact them directly.

This campaign will also target family members, carers, care arrangers who may be the people seeking information on behalf of their loved ones.

Connect to Support Surrey is being designed to be as straight forward to use as possible to support those residents that may lack digital skills.

Libraries across Surrey have services in place to support people of all ages who may not have access to computers or the internet for them to still be able to access computers and the internet. Digital-Surrey.co.uk highlights what support is available to help people achieve greater digital skills or find organisations that can help find information for people not confident online. All professionals can help people find information and email/text or print personalised information to them.

Promote Tech Angels, the digital inclusion service run with Action for Carers Surrey, which can provide devices, digital literacy training and confidence-boosting support to people in Surrey.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

- Launch of the 'Supporting people to live their best lives' marketing campaign.
- Adult Social Care Customer Front Door programme.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

None.

Disability

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

In the 2021 census 21.3% of Surrey residents were classified as having a disability under the Equality Act or had a long term physical or mental health condition (but day-to-day activities were not limited). One in 20 residents were classified as disabled under the Equality Act where their day-to-day activities were limited 'a lot' and represented 61,835 individuals.

- + The information available is very relevant to people with disabilities of any type.
- + Information searches can be filtered by impairment.
- + Connect to Support Surrey contains the following accessibility features: listen only version, text only version, larger/smaller text, reverse colour text, an accessibility page with hot keys for accessing different pages of the site, bright and easy to understand icons, and the pages are written as simply as possible.
- + It contains information for younger adults with disabilities from age 14 and above. It allows parents to find relevant information as their children grow up.

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- + It provides an alternative source for information, located in one place. Therefore, there is less need to travel or call around for information, which can be challenging with certain disabilities.
- - There is not an easy read version of Connect to Support Surrey, so it is less accessible to people with learning disabilities.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

There will be a communications campaign to maximise the positive impacts of the launch of Connect to Support Surrey.

Although there is not an easy read version of Connect to Support Surrey it has been designed to be simple and clear to use with engaging graphics and imagery. Additionally, carers, family members or professionals can help people access the information.

Promote Tech Angels, the digital inclusion service run with Action for Carers Surrey, which can provide devices, digital literacy training and confidence-boosting support to people in Surrey.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

- Adult Social Care Customer Front Door programme.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

None.

Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

In the 2021 census three quarters of Surrey residents reported that they identified as White British, alongside 8.9% who reported that they were 'White Other' and 14.5% who reported that they identified as ethnicities which were not White.

In the 2021 census 93.1% cent of Surrey residents aged 3 and above reported English as their main language.

- + All Adult Social Care public information is designed for universal usage and understanding unless there is a specific requirement to tailor information to a particular ethnic group.
- + Connect to Support will include support available in Surrey for people of different ethic or national origins, colour or nationality.

+ The language used throughout Connect to Support Surrey is English. For residents that may need information in a different language there is a Google Translate integration as a component so residents can have information translated into another language.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

Ensure Google Translate integration is a component of Connect to Support Surrey.

There will be a communications campaign to maximise the positive impacts of launch of Connect to Surrey.

Promote Tech Angels, the digital inclusion service run with Action for Carers Surrey, which can provide devices, digital literacy training and confidence-boosting support to people in Surrey.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

• Adult Social Care Customer Front Door programme.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

None.

6. Religion or belief including lack of belief

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

In the 2021 Census 50.2% of Surrey residents were Christian, 36.3% of the population reported 'no religion', non-Christian religions were reported by 7% of Surrey residents and Muslims represented 3.2% of Surrey residents.

+ All Adult Social Care public information is designed for universal usage and understanding unless there is a specific requirement to tailor information to a particular faith group.
+ Most of the services listed are secular in nature, but there are also faith-based services listed for users that prefer accessing these types of services.
- We may need to understand more specific requirements of religious and faith groups around information and advice and respond to any new or changing requirements.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

There will be a communications campaign to maximise the positive impacts of the launch of Connect to Support Surrey.

Promote Tech Angels, the digital inclusion service run with Action for Carers Surrey, which can provide devices, digital literacy training and confidence-boosting support to people in Surrey.

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What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

- Adult Social Care Customer Front Door programme.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

None.

Adult and young carers*

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

In the 2021 census 8% of residents reported that they provided unpaid care. The largest groups within unpaid carers were residents who provided 9 hours or less unpaid care a week (3.5% of the usual population) and residents who provided 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week (2.1% of the usual population).

+ Carers' representative groups were involved in the initial user testing to create the list of requirements for a new directory of services.
+ The directory is a substantial resource for carers, with a great deal of relevant information which is easy to access.
+ Connect to Support Surrey can simplify information searches for those that are able to use it and have difficulty with existing search engines and websites.
+ This digital resource will appeal to young carers who are likely to have access to and be confident in using digital channels.
- Not all carers will have the necessary computer and internet access.
- Some carers will lack the skills and confidence to find information online and Connect to Support Surrey may be beyond the skills of some to use.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

There will be a communications campaign to maximise the positive impacts of the launch of Connect to Support Surrey.

Connect to Support Surrey is being designed to be as straight forward to use as possible to support those residents that may lack digital skills and confidence.

Libraries across Surrey have services in place to support people who may not have access to computers or the internet for them to access computers and the internet. Digital-Surrey.co.uk highlights what support is available to help people achieve greater digital skills or find organisations that can help find information for people not confident online. All professionals can help people find information and email/text or print personalised information to them.

Promote Tech Angels, the digital inclusion service run with Action for Carers Surrey, which can provide devices, digital literacy training and confidence-boosting support to people in Surrey.

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What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

- Adult Social Care Customer Front Door programme.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

None.

Those experiencing digital exclusion*

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

Ofcom's research on digital exclusion from March 2022 indicates that the number of households without home internet access now stands at 6%. A further 5% of household rely solely on mobile internet access to connect to the internet, whether via mobile data, a dongle or USB.

+ Connect to Support Surrey simplifies information searches for those that are able to use it and have difficulty with existing search engines and websites.
- Connect to Support Surrey is a website and is therefore not accessible to people who don't have access to the internet.
- Some people lack the skills to find information online and Connect to Support Surrey may be beyond the skills and confidence of some to use.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

Connect to Support Surrey works consistently across the main web browsers and is not limited to any specific browser or platform. This supports residents who may not have a computer and internet but have a smart phone with mobile data.

There will be a communications campaign to maximise the positive impacts of the launch of Connect to Surrey. This includes promoting the resource to professionals working in the health and care environment, charities and care providers, local councils so they are aware of the support available in local communities and can help people access the information if people contact them directly.

This campaign will also target family members, carers, care arrangers who may be the people seeking information on behalf of their loved ones.

Libraries across Surrey have services in place to support people who may not have access to computers or the internet for them to still be able to access computers and the internet. Digital-Surrey.co.uk highlights what support is available to help people achieve greater digital skills or find organisations that can help find information for people not confident online. All professionals can help people find information and email/text or print personalised information to them.

Promote Tech Angels, the digital inclusion service run with Action for Carers Surrey, which can provide devices, digital literacy training and confidence-boosting support to people in Surrey.

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What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

- Adult Social Care Customer Front Door programme.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

None.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities*

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

The January 2023 Traveller caravan count from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, reported an estimated 887 caravans in Surrey.

- + Connect to Support Surrey simplifies information searches for those that are able to use it and have difficulty with existing search engines and websites.
- - Not all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities will have the necessary minimum access to equipment and the internet to access Connect to Support Surrey.
- - Some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities may lack the skills to find information online and Connect to Support Surrey may be beyond the skills and confidence of some to use.
- - There may be some reluctance to engage with a resource provided by the Council for some members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

Connect to Support Surrey works consistently across the main web browsers and is not limited to any specific browser or platform. This supports residents who may not have a computer and internet but have a smart phone with mobile data.

Libraries across Surrey have services in place to support people who may not have access to computers or the internet for them to still be able to access computers and the internet. Digital-Surrey.co.uk highlights what support is available to help people achieve greater digital skills or find organisations that can help find information for people not confident online. All professionals can help people find information and email/text or print personalised information to them.

As part of the communication campaign we will engage with Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum to make sure this community is aware of Connect to Support Surrey.

Promote Tech Angels, the digital inclusion service run with Action for Carers Surrey, which can provide devices, digital literacy training and confidence-boosting support to people in Surrey.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

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- Adult Social Care Customer Front Door programme.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?
None.

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3. Staff

Disability

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

3.3% of the Adult Social Care workforce have declared a disability compared to 2.91% of the council wide workforce.

+ The back-end admin function of Connect to Support Surrey meets WCAG 2.1 AA Accessibility standards. This supports staff who may have a disability and need to use the directory 'back end'.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

As part of the communication campaign, we will engage with staff to make them aware of Connect to Support Surrey.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

None.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

None.

4. Recommendation

Based your assessment, please indicate which course of action you are recommending to decision makers. You should explain your recommendation below.

- **Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required.** This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken.
- **Outcome Two: Adjust the policy/service/function** to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?
- **Outcome Three: Continue the policy/service/function** despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are:
    - Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact

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- Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact.
- **Outcome Four: Stop and rethink the policy** when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).

Recommended outcome:

Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required.

Explanation:

Connect to Support Surrey has been developed with user groups from various different protected characteristics and their requirements have been built into the development.

There are clear mitigations in place to reduce any potential negative impacts.

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5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

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Insert your action plan here, based on the mitigations recommended.

Involve you Assessment Team in monitoring progress against the actions above.

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/ Closed
1	October 2023	Communications campaign to maximise the positive impacts of launch of Connect to Surrey.	Laura Downton, Senior Communications Manager, ASC	January 2024		Open
2	July 2023	Ensure Google Translate integration is a component of Connect to Support Surrey.	Karen Burns	October 2023		Closed
3	July 2023	Design Connect to Support to be simple and clear to use with engaging graphics and imagery for residents with a learning disability and / or autism.	Karen Burns	October 2023		Closed
4	October 2023	Engage with Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum to make sure this community is aware of Connect to Support Surrey	Mel Honor	January 2024	Liaise with Chair of Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum.	Open

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6a. Version control

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Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	Initial draft.	Rowena Stone	17/08/2023
2	Review and edits.	Siobhan Abernethy	23/08/2023
		Rowena Stone	06/09/2023
3	Final review and edits	Kathryn Pyper	26/09/2023
		Rowena Stone	26/09/2023
4	Final review following feedback from Kathryn Pyper and Barbara Anu	Rowena Stone	01/11/2023

The above provides historical data about each update made to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Please include the name of the author, date and notes about changes made – so that you can refer to what changes have been made throughout this iterative process.

For further information, please see the EIA Guidance document on version control.

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6b. Approval

Secure approval from the appropriate level of management based on nature of issue and scale of change being assessed.

Approved by	Date approved
Head of Service – Siobhan Abernethy	
Executive Director	N/A
Cabinet Member	N/A
Directorate Equality Group	31 October 2023

Publish:
It is recommended that all EIAs are published on Surrey County Council's website.

Please send approved EIAs to: **INSERT SHARED EMAIL ACCOUNT ADDRESS**

EIA author:

6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Team Role
Rowena Stone	Project Manager	SCC	Project Manager
Siobhan Abernethy	Information, Advice and Engagement Lead	SCC	Manager of Service
Karen Burns	ASC Web & Digital Manager	SCC	Specialist

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, on CD or in another language please contact us on:

Tel: 03456 009 009

Textphone (via Text Relay): 18001 03456 009 009

SMS: 07860 053 465

Email: contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk