

Appendix 2 - Diversity & Equality Implications

1. Introduction

Personal care, Day care and Meals on Wheels services are provided to people who are older and/or disabled, therefore the impact of making any changes to these services will disproportionately affect people with the protected characteristics of age and disability.

The extent to which they will be affected by the changes outlined in the O & S report depends on the service used:

For people receiving care in their own homes, residential or extra care services, the new models of care will enable them to receive a more holistic service with greater choice and ability to determine the type of service that is important to them. The impact will therefore be positive.

2. Day care

People using day care services will be impacted by the reduction in day care centres, resulting in a reduced choice of venue for some service users and possibly longer travel times.

2.1 Choice of venue

Prior to the pandemic around 109 people attended the three day care centres. A survey was carried out in August 2020 and 102 people responded; the remaining seven were confirmed as not returning to day care.

The breakdown in centre usage was as below which indicates that almost half (49%) already attend the Cromwell Road centre.

	Total	
Bell House	18	18%
Cromwell Road	50	49%
Kynoch Court	34	33%
Total	102	

Therefore, the new proposals affect around 52 people who would need to attend a different centre from the one they attended previously.

Due to the pandemic and forced lockdowns, many older and vulnerable people have deteriorated in both their physical and mental health. This has been recognised by many studies including Age Concern UK¹ who state:

¹ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2020/10/age-uk--research-into-the-effects-of-the-pandemic-on-the-older-populations-health/>

“Months of being cooped up at home have led to muscle weakness – ‘deconditioning’ as clinicians term it - and sometimes a reduced sense of balance, increasing the risk of falls.

The research also found evidence of new and emerging cognitive decline. In some cases, this might have happened anyway, but families told the Charity they feared it was exacerbated by the very difficult, often isolated conditions in which their loved ones were living, due to the pandemic.”

Whilst carrying out home visits during the pandemic Thurrock Council staff have reported that many service users have experienced the effects indicated in the Age UK report. Providing extra visits has enabled them and their carers to remain linked in, and many have expressed the wish for this to continue even when the service re-opens.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that everyone will want, or be able, to return to day care services; moves to increase social outreach and linking up with virtual groups and connections will enable many to engage without having to physically attend the centres.

For those who do wish to return, the need to change centres may not be their desired option. The survey indicated that 18 (36%) of those attending Kynoch Court and Bell house would be willing to attend another centre meaning that 33 (64%) indicated they would not. We do not know how many of these people would be able, and/or desire to return to a physical day-care but based on the study and experiences of staff outlined above it is not likely to be everyone. Individual needs assessments and conversations will need to be held with service users to determine a tailored plan to suit the individual. If people do not wish to attend the Cromwell Road site then other opportunities, including the virtual day care offer can be offered.

2.2 Travel

Prior to the pandemic around 85% of service users travelled to a centre using one of the Councils minibuses. The minibuses collect people from around the borough to attend their nearest centre. If there were only one centre open, that could mean increased journeys for those people who live further away from Grays. This could affect up to 55 existing service users plus any new users in future.

The chart below indicates pre Covid-19 service users who would need to change centres and the difference in mileage to be travelled.

Ref	Existing centre	Distance to existing centre from home (miles)	Distance to Cromwell Rd centre from home (Miles)	Difference
66364	Bell House	1.5	4.4	2.9
34139	Bell House	1.5	4.4	2.9
87713	Bell House	2.4	7.6	5.2

33011	Bell House	0.4	5.3	4.9
34006	Bell House	0.6	5	4.4
38169	Bell House	0.4	4.9	4.5
3980	Bell House	0.4	4.9	4.5
30155	Bell House	0.7	4.7	4
3949	Bell House	0.5	4.4	3.9
17124	Bell House	0.4	4.4	4
16636	Bell House	1	3.9	2.9
14515	Bell House	2.1	4.4	2.3
8354	Bell House	2	3.8	1.8
90515	Bell House	0.4	4.4	4
18909	Bell House	1.7	4.8	3.1
78245	Bell House	1.7	4.2	2.5
22411	Bell House	4.1	2.6	-1.5
1253	Kynoch Court	4.1	3.2	-0.9
69167	Kynoch Court	5.9	1.2	-4.7
29736	Kynoch Court	0.3	5.9	5.6
19466	Kynoch Court	1.7	6.5	4.8
960	Kynoch Court	3.9	4.6	0.7
36799	Kynoch Court	3.4	4.1	0.7
82048	Kynoch Court	1.4	7	5.6
88088	Kynoch Court	1.4	7	5.6
29758	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
67439	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
92523	Kynoch Court	1.3	7.1	5.8
37204	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
69436	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
76248	Kynoch Court	1.8	7.7	5.9
82943	Kynoch Court	2	7.8	5.8
86848	Kynoch Court	1.6	7.8	6.2
85440	Kynoch Court	1.6	7.4	5.8
P177253	Kynoch Court	2.3	7.6	5.3
75465	Kynoch Court	1.4	7.2	5.8
88800	Kynoch Court	1.8	7.4	5.6
75020	Kynoch Court	1.2	6.7	5.5
74661	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.8	5.5
87781	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
89221	Kynoch Court	1.5	7.1	5.6
80839	Kynoch Court	1.9	7.5	5.6
84660	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
22634	Kynoch Court	1.9	7.8	5.9
31135	Kynoch Court	3.3	9.2	5.9

The differences range from a reduction of 1.5 miles to an increase of 6.2 miles.

The average is an increase of 4.7 miles for Kynoch Court and 3.3 miles for Bell House service users. At an average speed of 30 miles an hour, this will add an average of less than 10 minutes to each journey.

The proposed changes to how day care services will run from Cromwell Road will help to mitigate this impact. Plans include extending the hours into weekends and evenings – this will allow the minibuses to make an increased number of shorter journeys.

An extended programme of activities will mean that service users can choose a morning, afternoon or evening session rather than having to attend for the whole day. This improved menu will run alongside the virtual offer enabling a “Mix & Match” approach so that more choice is available.

3. Meals on Wheels

The service has been running for more than 25 years and is largely delivered in the same format i.e. a driver delivers a hot meal and dessert to the service user and checks on their welfare.

Around 90 service users regularly have a daily meal delivered although there are 105 people for whom the service is commissioned.

In a recent survey, (April 2021) 66% of current service users indicated that they could make their own meal or have someone else who would do it for them.

A report of all service users indicates that 29 people (28%) have no other services commissioned from the Council. There is a danger that this group of people could be particularly disadvantaged however, with everyone having a reassessment this should mitigate the danger.