



Transformation, Income, and Saving Proposal No 52 and 54

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA, please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset Council – Somerset Lifeline		
Version	1.0	Date Completed	10/08/2022

Description of what is being impact assessed

The Lifeline services that are currently provided in Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset are being combined to create 'Somerset Lifeline' from April 2023.

This service provides vulnerable people with help in the event of emergencies and/or the need for support through the provision of an emergency alarm, monitored by a 24/7 contact centre and on-call emergency response officers.

This impact assessment is in relation to the decision to introduce one, unified set of fees and charges for customers. Charges in Sedgemoor and South Somerset were not increased last year, whilst customers in Somerset West and Taunton experienced a 5% increase. The fees and charges proposal is for a universal 3% increase. This has been kept lower for customers to ensure that the increased cost is more manageable.

As a minimum, the costs of the service must cover the costs of running Somerset Lifeline or the service would be subsidised by the Council. Under the current financial constraints, subsidising this service would not be sustainable

Evidence

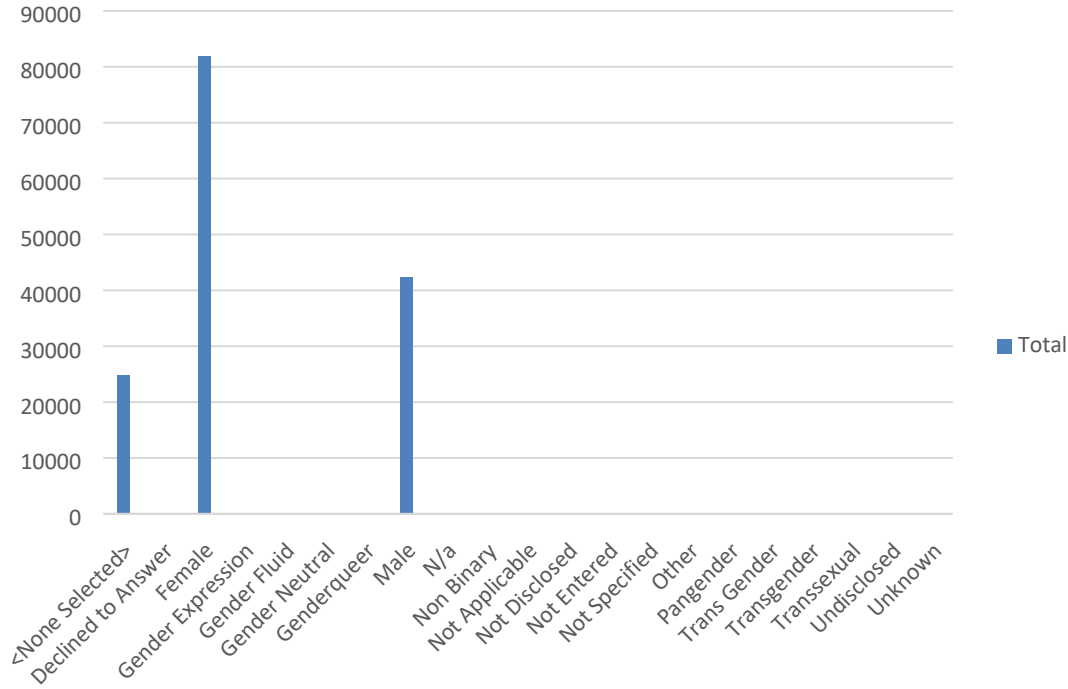
What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

1. Our current customers:

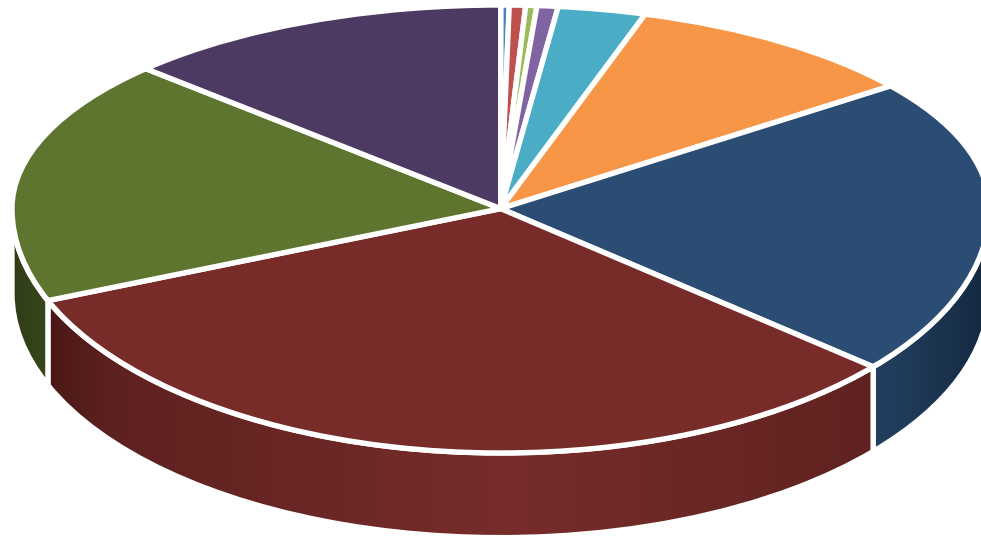
The data collated across each of the current local authority services identifies the following:

- Most customers are female, accounting for 65% of those where data is present.
- Transgender customers account for 0.02% of customers.
- 93.4% of customers are aged 60+
- 58.0% of customers are aged over 80
- 5.9% of customers are of working age.

Customers by Gender (all services)



Customers by Age (all services)



< 30 100+ 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70-79 80-89 90-99 Unknown

**Please note that this data includes customers of external organisations that contract to our services*

2. Broader demographics

Whilst making considerations regarding fees and charges, the following broader demographic has been considered:

Misc.	Total population	562,225	100.0%
	Live in rural area	269,868	48.0%

Ethnicity	White British	531,865	94.6%
	Black & Ethnic Minority	11,245	2.0%
	Polish	5,622	1.0%
	German	2,249	0.4%
	Irish	2,249	0.4%
	South African	2,249	0.4%
	Portuguese	965	0.2%

Location	South Somerset	168,350	29.9%
	West & Taunton	155,120	27.6%
	Sedgemoor	123,180	21.9%
	Mendip	115,590	20.6%

Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	535,238	95.2%
	Gay/Lesbian	5,060	0.9%
	Bisexual	6,184	1.1%
	Other	2,249	0.4%
	Don't Know	13,493	2.4%

Disability	Have long-term condition/disability	105,698	18.8%
	No disability	456,527	81.2%

Homelessness (Rough sleepers in 2017)	Mendip	19	0.0034%
	Sedgemoor	7	0.0012%
	South Somerset	4	0.0007%
	West & Taunton	27	0.0048%
	Total	57	0.0101%

Marriage/Civil partnership	Single	120,825	27.8%
	Married	224,255	51.5%
	Same-sex civil partnership	699	0.2%
	Separated	10,322	2.4%
	Divorced	44,329	10.2%
	Widowed	34,952	8.0%

Carers	Provide care (1 in 9)	50,712	9.0%
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Age range	Male	% Male	Female	% Female	Total	% Total
0	14,580	5.3%	13903	4.8%	28,483	5.1%
0-5	16,307	5.9%	15908	5.5%	32,215	5.7%

5-10	16,483	6.0%	15669	5.4%	32,152	5.7%
10-15	15,022	5.5%	14021	4.9%	29,043	5.2%
15-20	13,237	4.8%	11791	4.1%	25,028	4.5%
20-25	14,542	5.3%	14010	4.9%	28,552	5.1%
25-30	14,845	5.4%	15616	5.4%	30,461	5.4%
30-35	14,347	5.2%	15351	5.3%	29,698	5.3%
35-40	13,945	5.1%	15102	5.2%	29,047	5.2%
40-45	17,479	6.4%	18922	6.6%	36,401	6.5%
45-50	20,337	7.4%	21626	7.5%	41,963	7.5%
50-55	20,400	7.4%	21320	7.4%	41,720	7.4%
55-60	18,379	6.7%	19170	6.7%	37,549	6.7%
60-65	18,286	6.7%	19235	6.7%	37,521	6.7%
65-70	18,269	6.7%	19414	6.7%	37,683	6.7%
70-75	12,385	4.5%	14035	4.9%	26,420	4.7%
75-80	8,541	3.1%	10125	3.5%	18,666	3.3%
80-85	4,771	1.7%	7123	2.5%	11,894	2.1%
85-90	2,401	0.9%	5328	1.9%	7,729	1.4%
All	274556	100.0%	287669	100.0%	562225	100.0%

3. Comparison of charges with other local/similar providers:

Provider	Response	Price per week (Analogue)	Price per week (Digital)	Connection fee
Age UK		3.96	4.15	69.00
Aster		3.58		
Bournemouth & Poole	6.58	3.99	6.02	32.00

Bristol City Council Care line		3.50		15.00
Careline24		2.67		40.00
Carelink (North Somerset)		2.90		45.00
Dorset County Council		-	4.30	30.45
Lifeline 24		3.00		
Progress lifeline	7.15 or 7.84	4.38	5.07	
Saga		3.68		
Telecare24		2.31		
Yourlife Yourway	5.20	3.35		

4. Consideration has been given to the current cost of living crisis:

Any changes to customers fees and charges must take into consideration the impact on customers given the ‘cost of living crisis’ - the fall in ‘real’ disposable incomes (that is, adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits) that the UK has experienced since late 2021. It is being caused predominantly by high inflation outstripping wage and benefit increases and has been further exacerbated by recent tax increases.

- Without any new policy changes, the typical real household income is projected to fall by 5 per cent in 2022/2023 and a further 6 per cent in 2023/2024 equating to a £3,000 drop in income.
- Average real incomes are set to be 7% lower in 2024/2025 than in 2019/2020 (the worst parliament on record for growth, by a large margin), and incomes across the distribution are currently projected to be lower in 2026/2027 than in 2016/2017 and only marginally above where they were in 2006/2007.
- The number of people living in absolute poverty is currently projected to rise from 11 million in 2021/2022 to 14 million in 2023/2024 - a rise from 17 to 21 per cent, including 30 per cent of children.

It is expected that the cost-of-living crisis won’t just be a problem this winter but will be for years to come. Energy bills may stay high in the long term, and so may prices. Higher prices across the board mean that higher benefits will be needed.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

- Housing 3 – Private Sector and Universal Provision Sub Workstream (Service Alignment)
- Informal consultation with Senior Leadership

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	As the data shows, most customers of our technology enabled care services are older, with 58% being over the age of 80 and 93.4% over the age of 60. This reflects the traditional nature of service provision, having been developed to support sheltered housing schemes. An aim of the service is to increase subscriptions amongst younger vulnerable people through providing modern technology which breaks the stigma of pendant alarm provision.	❑	⊠	❑

Disability	Although data is not easily obtainable regarding the nature of disabilities experienced, most of our customers will be experiencing a form of disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	The data analysed does not indicate any negative impacts on this protected group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	The data analysed does not indicate any negative impacts on this protected group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	The data analysed does not indicate any negative impacts on this protected group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	The data analysed does not indicate any negative impacts on this protected group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	The data analysed does not indicate any negative impacts on this protected group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	The data analysed does not indicate any negative impacts on this protected group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sexual orientation	The data analysed does not indicate any negative impacts on this protected group.	□	□	☒
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Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
<p>To assist with the increased charges to both new and existing customers, Somerset Lifeline have ensured that there is a consistent approach regarding VAT exclusion. This means that any customer that is classified as chronically sick or disabled will be exempt from paying VAT for their ongoing Lifeline subscription.</p> <p>A person is 'chronically sick or disabled' if they are a person with a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities • condition which the medical profession treats as a chronic sickness, such as diabetes 	31/10/2022	Gareth Denslow and Richard Burge	There will be no need for ongoing monitoring.	☒
A hardship policy will be developed to ensure that customers who are experiencing financial difficulties can receive a	31/03/2022	Gareth Denslow and Richard	Once implemented	☒

reduced subscription to assist them for an agreed period of time. This policy/procedure will also include how the service can assist customers to access support regarding finance and access to benefits that may assist them.		Burge	there will be no need for ongoing monitoring.	
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				
Completed by:	Gareth Denslow			
Date	9/11/2022			
Signed off by:				
Date	20.01.2023			
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:				
To be reviewed by: (officer name)				
Review date:	31/03/2023			