



## **Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group**

### **Statement from the Integrated Lifestyle Service Task & Finish Group**

#### Background

The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group was invited by Leicestershire County Council to be involved in the development of the Integrated Lifestyle Service, in particular to provide challenge and support in the consideration of equalities impacts. Members of LECG met with officers in the spring of 2018 to provide feedback on emerging proposals. A specific Task & Finish Group was subsequently set up to consider the proposals that went out for consultation.

Members of the LECG PTPS Task & Finish Group met with County Council officers involved in the development of the Integrated Lifestyle Service on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018. The Group explored the details of the proposals, public consultation feedback and equalities considerations relevant to the development of the service in general as well as the specific proposals for the weight management service.

Following the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018, the following statement was agreed by members of the Group:

We appreciate the pressures on the Council and the context in which these proposals have been developed and need to be considered. The challenges of obesity and unhealthy lifestyles are real and the County Council should have an important role in addressing those challenges.

In that context, members of the group are not clear about the ambition of the council with regards to the new weight management service. How many people does it hope to support? What efforts is it going to take to ensure as many people as possible know what support they can access? How is this new service going to help tackle some of the underlying health inequalities the council has already identified? While it is not necessarily clear that the proposed new service will have a negative impact in relation to these existing health inequalities, it is also not immediately clear how this service helps address them.

The group would recommend that the Council does not operate its healthy lifestyle services in isolation. The words 'Integrated Lifestyle Service' raise expectations of a level of integration with Health Services and services offered by Voluntary organisations that sadly appears to be missing from the actual proposals. It would be beneficial for the service to work with Voluntary & Community groups, especially those who work with communities that experience health inequalities or who may experience barriers to being able to take up these services.

There is a lot to commend about the proposed holistic approach to focusing on enabling service users to achieve sustained behavioural lifestyle changes. We like the proposed case management system and would also recommend the use of online tools that support people in making behavioural changes, such as online mindfulness tools.

The consultation feedback from current / recent users of the existing weight management services suggests that the key element that would be missing from the proposed service is peer support and social interaction. Again, the group feels those elements may be best provided by voluntary and community groups. It would, for example, be useful to be able to continue the good work that is being achieved through cookery classes for south Asian women in Loughborough.

The group welcomes the recognition by the Council that certain groups, such as people who are deaf or hard of hearing, would struggle to make use of a telephone service and supports the Council's approach to build in capacity to support people with a face-to-face service where required.

The group also recommends the council also considers how it can make the telephone service and its online offer accessible to people whose first language is not English.

The Group want to thank County Council officers for their time.

#### **LECG Task Group Members**

Lucy Smith	LECG Vice Chair and Chair of Older Persons Engagement Network
Iris Lightfoote	The Race Equality Centre
Caroline Gadsby	Turning Point
Tadeusz Stenzel	Leicester & Rutland Minority Ethnic Forum
Kazi Mashud	Equality Action, Leicester
Mina Rodgers	Older Persons Engagement Network
Samantha Smith	Transactive
Carine Cardoza	LECG Engagement Officer

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