

2025/26 Budget Equality Impact Assessment

1. The Project

Directorate:	Adults and Housing
Theme or area:	Learning Disability and Mental Health
Lead Officer:	Gerald Hunt
Date:	29 November 24

Budget Reference	Budget Proposal	2025/26 Budget reduction (£)	2026/27 Budget reduction (£)	2027/28 Budget reduction (£)
ASH04	Learning Disability and Mental Health commissioning arrangements – including return to NSC/Local provision	£400,000	£200,000	£200,000

Description of the project:

North Somerset Council Adult Social Services currently has a Specialist Care and Support Framework for the provision of community-based services to support individuals who have a learning disability, autism or mental health disorder, physical and sensory impairment, acquired brain injury and those in transition. The framework has 4 specialist areas:

- supported living,
- individualised support,
- adult building-based day services, and
- complex health and behaviour.

The contract supports individuals to live in their own home with support, to access the community and to build independent skills.

In addition, North Somerset have a small number of specialist care homes for people with learning disabilities or mental health disorders. They tend to have limited provision, with very low turnover of residents as people tend to live in these homes long term, and in turn this leads to little vacancy provision, and as a result a number of people are supported outside of North Somerset.

Summary of changes:

We are developing local specialist provision to meet community needs and potentially support individuals to return to North Somerset.

The Specialist Care and Support Framework contract is currently in the process of being retendered. As part of this process the specifications have been reviewed with a refocused emphasis on providers evidencing that they have supported individuals to achieve their assessed outcomes; additionally, how many hours have been reduced because of successful enablement by the provider, which then frees up their capacity to effectively support others.

North Somerset council is also working with Bristol and South Gloucestershire Councils and the Integrated Care System to pilot a Positive Behaviour Support approach to improve outcomes for people with complex care and support needs. The project aims to:

- Meaningfully improve the quality of life and outcomes for the individuals involved in the pilot
- To support those individuals' friends, families, care providers and other associated health and social care professionals to work together in ways that produce exceptional outcomes
- Work in partnership with providers/families and carers to develop their own strength and skills ('doing with', not 'doing to')
- Reduce restrictive practice in residential and community settings
- Reduce the frequency, duration and intensity of incidences of challenging behaviour among pilot participants
- Reduce the number of people in inpatient settings

North Somerset Council adult social services is working jointly with BNSSG local authorities and the integrated care system to develop more specialist housing and care provision particularly to support individuals with complex care needs to be discharged from long term hospital stays.

North Somerset Council is committed to working with care home providers to develop more specialist provision for individuals with more complex needs, particularly because of a learning disability, autism and mental health disorders, and in doing so, reducing the need for specialist out of area placements and enabling individuals to remain living close to family and friends.

Benchmarking of Adult social care indicates that for under 65's NSC has an over reliance on bedded based care, which has led to higher cost provision, by developing more local focused alternative care models to Bedded care, future and potential existing care provision can be delivered to maximise independence and reduce long term care costs.

Are any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the changes proposed in this project have a disproportionate impact (or bias) for any of these groups?

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, - = Negative

Protected or significant group	Impact Level				Impact type	
	H	M	L	N	+	-
Disabled people (Including the consideration of neurodiversity)	x				x	
People from different ethnic groups				x		
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)				x		
People who are LGBTQ+				x		
People on a low income			x		x	
People in particular age groups			x		x	
People in particular faith groups				x		
People who are married or in a civil partnership				x		
People who are undergoing gender reassignment				x		
Other significant groups, for example: Armed Forces Community, care experienced young people, carers, parents. Please specify:	Carers	x			x	

3. Explanation of customer impact

The customer equality impact assessment indicates that for those potentially affected, the impact should be positive as the activities identified will support those individuals with eligible needs as assessed under the Care Act 2014. Alternative care models that are locally based

and identify alternatives to expensive out of area bedded care will offer the potential to maximise independence and reduce long term care costs and enable individuals to receive care and support whilst continuing to live in North Somerset.

In respect of the recommissioning of the specialist care and support framework, engagement has been completed with various stakeholders which have included those that use the services, carers, staff, providers and various teams within North Somerset Council.

According to our data North Somerset Adult Social Services currently support 579 people with a learning disability, which is an increase of 2.70% from the same period in 2023. Of these 579 people, 506 are aged between 18 -64, and 73 aged 65 +. 353 are male and 225 are female; 98.6% are white British.

Similarly North Somerset Adult Social Services currently support 232 people with complex mental health disorders, which is an increase of 3.60% since 2023. 151 people are aged between 18-64, with 81 being 65+; 115 are male and 117 female; 80.20% are white British, with 10% of individuals ethnicity recorded as unknown.

The Commissioning Strategy for Adult Social Services and Housing 2024-2031 shows, that the size of population has increased by 7% from 2011 to 2021. The area has seen an increase of 22% in people over the age of 65 years and an increase of 2.6% in people between the ages of 15 – 64 years. This increase will have an impact on the need of services to this population. Of the current population the prevalence of adults with learning disabilities has remained steady over recent years at just over 1,000 adults. Around half of these received support from North Somerset Council. The population in North Somerset is mostly white British and this is reflected in those that take up services. There are predicted to be in North Somerset circa 7,000 people aged 18-64 to have an impaired mobility but this is predicted to remain steady.

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to those impacted.

Contract awards are published on the North Somerset Website.

Individuals who are in receipt of care and support undergo an annual review, or sooner if there is a change in needs, and therefore changes to care provision will be discussed on an individual basis with the person's affected by the change and where appropriate their family / representative.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal?

No

Explanation of staff impact

If yes, please describe the nature of the impact, including how many posts could be affected, please state whether they are vacant, or filled permanently or temporarily.

5. Cumulative equality impacts

Is this project linked to or likely to have an impact on any other service areas?

For example are you moving the location of a service that may also be impacted upon by a change to public transport provision.

There will be some links to the MTFP target in respect of identifying new supported living schemes as a more cost effective and independence maximising alternative to residential placements.

6. Action Plan

Are there any further actions that should be taken because of this Equality Impact Assessment?

Issue Identified	Planned Action	Lead Officer	Time for review
Current frameworks ending March 2025	Recommissioning of frameworks, specs reviewed and updated	Michelle Pankow	March 2025
Managing providers within our market	To work with local providers to take our framework rates and to create equity with other providers	Michelle Pankow	Ongoing
PBS Pilot	Working with social care team and provider on nominations and referrals into this project	Michelle Pankow	2 year BNSSG pilot
Increased specialist care home provision	Market engagement with care home providers	Estelle Ratcliffe	Ongoing

7. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes No

Please note that if this assessment indicates a potential 'medium' or 'high' impact on any protected or significant group a further, more detailed assessment will be required.

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Approved – Gerald Hunt, Assistant Director Commissioning Partnerships and Housing **Date:** 2 December 2024