



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Roger Allonby and Liz Farr

Directorate: Economy and Environment/ Children and Young People

Name of lead person for this activity: Alexia Heath

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Alexia Heath

Date assessment completed: 21 August 2026

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Delivery of the national Connect to Work programme in Herefordshire.

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

Connect to Work is a voluntary supported employment programme, led by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) but devolved to local authority areas, aimed at assisting individuals who face significant barriers to employment. It is focused upon those aged 18 plus with a disability, health condition, or other complex personal challenges, with an emphasis on both supporting individuals to access work and supporting those in the workplace to retain work who may otherwise be at risk of a loss of employment.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Service users | ☐ Visitors to the county |
| ☒ Communities | ☒ Carers |
| ☐ Children | ☐ Patients |
| ☒ All staff | ☐ All part-time staff |
| ☐ Staff at a particular location | ☐ Other: |

Is this:

- ☐ Review of an existing activity/policy
- ☒ New activity/policy
- ☐ Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

The Get Britain and the Get Marches Working plan data and priorities. Local labour market data, demographics, Census data - Understanding Herefordshire website. Herefordshire SEND strategy, Learning Disability Strategy and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Autism Strategy and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Work Strategy.

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

A request for information market engagement has been undertaken to inform delivery and procurement of the programme.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	☒	☒	☐
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	☒	☐	☐
Foster good relations between different groups?	☒	☐	☐

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

Connect to Work Herefordshire is expected to have a positive impact on all three elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The programme is intended to improve access to employment and sustained work for individuals who face significant barriers to participation in the labour market, with a particular focus on disabled people, people with long-term health conditions and those who experience multiple forms of disadvantage. Through the provision of personalised, voluntary and tailored support, the programme seeks to reduce inequalities in employment outcomes and promote greater economic inclusion across Herefordshire.

The programme will support the council's duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation by ensuring that services are delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation. The commissioned delivery provider will be required to provide an inclusive, accessible and person-centred service, ensuring that no individual is disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic. Participants will be supported to identify and overcome barriers to employment, while employers will be encouraged to adopt inclusive recruitment and employment practices, including the implementation of reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

The programme is expected to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by providing targeted support to groups who are disproportionately represented amongst those who are economically inactive or furthest from the labour market. This includes disabled people, individuals with mental or physical health conditions, carers and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Through personalised action planning, employment support and in-work assistance, the programme aims to improve access to employment opportunities, increase financial resilience and support participants to achieve greater independence and wellbeing.

The programme will also contribute to fostering good relations between different groups by promoting understanding, inclusion and positive engagement within workplaces and local communities. Employer engagement activity will encourage awareness of the benefits of a diverse workforce and support employers to create inclusive working environments. Increased participation in employment can also help reduce social exclusion and improve community cohesion by enabling individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to participate more fully in economic and social life.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group. Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	☒	☐	☐	Connect to Work is expected to have a positive impact on people of different ages by providing tailored employment support to eligible individuals who face barriers to securing and sustaining work. The programme will support younger adults transitioning into employment as well as older individuals who may be seeking to re-enter the labour market or overcome health-related barriers to work. Delivery will be undertaken in accordance with safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring that any vulnerabilities are identified and addressed appropriately. The programme is expected to improve access to employment opportunities, increase financial independence and support social inclusion.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	☒	☐	☐	A positive impact is anticipated as disabled people and individuals with physical, sensory, learning and mental health conditions are a key target group for the programme. The service will adopt a personalised and strengths-based approach, providing tailored support, reasonable adjustments and in-work assistance to help individuals achieve and sustain employment outcomes. The programme is intended to reduce barriers to labour market participation and improve equality of opportunity for disabled residents. Accessibility requirements will be embedded within service delivery to ensure equitable access.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	☐	☒	☐	The programme is available to all eligible residents regardless of gender identity or gender reassignment status. No differential impact has been identified. Participants will be treated with dignity and respect, and personal information will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation and confidentiality requirements. Equality and inclusion principles will be reflected throughout programme delivery.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	☐	☒	☐	The programme is not expected to have a differential impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership. Eligibility and access to support will be determined by programme criteria and individual need rather than marital status. All participants will have equitable access to services and employment support.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	☐	☒	☐	Flexible delivery arrangements and personalised support planning will help participants access employment opportunities that are compatible with their circumstances. This may support economic

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
				independence and improve longer-term employment prospects.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	☐	☒	☐	Individuals from ethnic minority communities may benefit from additional support to overcome barriers to employment, access opportunities and develop confidence within the labour market. Delivery providers will be expected to promote inclusive practices and ensure information is accessible and culturally appropriate where required.
Religion & Belief	☐	☒	☐	No differential impact has been identified in relation to religion or belief. The programme will be delivered in a way that respects and accommodates individuals' beliefs where reasonably practicable. Support will be available to all eligible participants without discrimination.
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of "sex")	☐	☒	☐	The programme is expected to have a positive impact by providing equitable access to employment support for both women and men who face barriers to employment. Flexible and personalised support may particularly benefit individuals whose employment opportunities have been affected by caring responsibilities, part-time working patterns, health conditions or periods of economic inactivity. The programme will promote fair and inclusive access to employment opportunities for all participants.
Sexual Orientation	☐	☒	☐	No differential impact has been identified in relation to sexual orientation. The programme will be delivered in an inclusive manner that promotes equality, dignity and respect for all participants. Appropriate arrangements will be in place to ensure individuals feel safe and supported whilst accessing services.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	☒	☐	☐	A significant positive impact is anticipated for groups facing additional disadvantage within the labour market. Carers, care leavers, homeless individuals and those experiencing socio-economic deprivation often face multiple and complex barriers to employment. The programme's personalised approach will help individuals address these barriers, improve employability, access sustainable employment and increase financial wellbeing. This support is expected to contribute to improved social inclusion and reduced disadvantage.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	☒	☐	☐	A positive impact is expected through improved access to employment and the wider benefits associated with participation in work. Employment is a recognised determinant of health and wellbeing, and the programme specifically targets individuals with health conditions and disabilities who experience barriers to employment. By supporting individuals into suitable and sustainable work, the programme has the potential to reduce health

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
				inequalities, improve wellbeing, increase financial resilience and support greater independence.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

The programme will incorporate ongoing equality monitoring, participant feedback and contract management arrangements to ensure that any emerging inequalities are identified and addressed promptly. This will support compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and help ensure equitable access and outcomes for all eligible Herefordshire residents.

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Disabled participants may experience barriers accessing support, venues, communications or digital platforms.	Ensure all programme materials and delivery methods are accessible. Provide reasonable adjustments, alternative formats, assistive technology and accessible venues. Monitor participant feedback and accessibility issues.	Connect to Work Delivery Providers, and Herefordshire Council Contract Lead	Throughout programme delivery
Rural residents may face transport difficulties and limited access to services.	Deliver support through a combination of face-to-face, outreach and virtual methods. Utilise community venues and local partner organisations where appropriate.	Connect to Work Delivery Providers	Throughout programme delivery
Digital exclusion may prevent some residents from engaging with the service.	Offer face-to-face and telephone support alongside digital options. Assess digital needs at enrolment and provide appropriate support or signposting.	Connect to Work Delivery Providers	Throughout programme delivery
Individuals with caring responsibilities may find it difficult to engage with appointments and activities.	Offer flexible appointment times and personalised support plans which take account of caring responsibilities.	Connect to Work Delivery Providers	Throughout programme delivery
Low awareness of the programme amongst underrepresented groups	Develop targeted engagement and referral pathways with community organisations, health	Herefordshire Council and	Mobilisation and ongoing

may result in unequal access.	services, Jobcentre Plus, voluntary sector partners and equality groups. Monitor participant demographics.	Connect to Work Delivery Providers	
Participants from ethnic minority communities may face language or cultural barriers.	Provide accessible information, translation or interpreting support where required and ensure staff understand cultural considerations.	Connect to Work Delivery Providers	Throughout programme delivery
Participants may experience discrimination or stigma from employers relating to disability, health conditions or protected characteristics.	Deliver employer engagement activities promoting inclusive recruitment practices, reasonable adjustments and disability equality. Provide participants with advocacy and in-work support.	Herefordshire Growth Hub and Connect to Work Delivery Providers	Throughout programme delivery
Some groups may be underrepresented within referrals or programme outcomes.	Regularly monitor participation, referrals, starts and outcomes by protected characteristic and take corrective action where disparities are identified.	Herefordshire Council Contract Lead and Delivery Providers	Quarterly monitoring
Staff may not have sufficient awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion issues.	Ensure all staff complete Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and understand safeguarding, confidentiality and inclusive practices.	Connect to Work Providers	At mobilisation and refreshed annually
Confidentiality concerns may discourage participation by some groups, including LGBTQ+ individuals and people with health conditions.	Maintain robust data protection processes and ensure participants understand how information will be collected, stored and shared.	Connect to Work Providers and Herefordshire Council	Throughout programme delivery

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

Through contract review meetings and reports

When will you review this EIA?

At least annually

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This

means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.

- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

Alexia Heath

Date signed

21 August 2026