

7. Key Operations – Social Care



Risk Title:
Social Care

Risk description:
The potential impact of a No Deal Brexit on the council’s social care services.

Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating
Threat Risk Rating		
4	5	20
Opportunity Risk Rating		
3	3	9
Tolerance Rating		
3	3	9
Preparedness		
Medium		

Key threat risks:

1. Pressures on workforce and supply chain could lead to disruption to services.
2. Impact on the timeliness / quality of care delivered in different settings (e.g. hospital discharge, residential and nursing homes, homecare, children’s residential care, foster care) due to shortages of care staff/ carers.
3. A tightening labour market leading to increased wage demands could lead to further cost pressures on providers.

Key opportunity risks:

1. Maintaining the existing strong focus on recruiting to care jobs in Bristol.

Actions and performance:

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1	Work with commissioned and in-house care provision to better understand risk/ contingency/ opportunity plans for Brexit.
2	Maintain the existing strong focus on recruiting to care roles in Bristol - this is already high priority in the ACE Directorate as it underpins BCC's ability to ensure sufficiency of supply of care and to meet statutory duties.
3	Map exposure to EU loans underpinning strategic new build plans in the Adult Social Care sector.
4	Support the LGA's calls for a secure and sustainable Adult Social care workforce and excellent care skills to be a priority for the Government in drafting a future Immigration Bill ¹⁶ .
5	Lobby Government to add care workers to the list of 'shortage occupations' exempted from the Government's proposed £30,000 minimum salary threshold for migrants seeking five year visas.
6	Continual focus on Delayed Transfers of Care (DTCs) from hospital and how a lack of care staff plays into this.
7	Work closely with fostering households concerned about deportation. There may be a reduction in foster carers and potential foster carers if they consider their living situation to be precarious. Discuss with prospective foster carers at application stage / fostering panel and similarly for prospective adopters at assessment and panel stages.
8	In line with the commitment made in the Mayor's State of the City address the council will consider extending its offer of assistance with Settled Status application costs to commissioned providers to help stabilise their workforce.

Overview

The Adult Social Care sector is already facing difficulties due to reductions in overall funding, whilst the challenge in delivery is already recognised at the national level. It is also a sector considered most vulnerable to changes in migration, thus exiting from the EU is adding an additional layer of risk to an already fragile sector.

In the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group area 19% of all care workers are non-UK born – 2,130 people. Of those 9% (1,206 employees) are EEA citizens.

The council foresees a proportionately higher impact for frontline care workforce, such as home care, given this is generally a lower level entry sector and the impact of changes to people's status will therefore have a greater impact.

¹⁶ https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/12062018_EuropeanUnionBill_LGABriefing_v3.pdf

The council is already seeing challenges in regard to recruitment for nursing roles within its care homes where a significant number of nursing staff are from the EU and in the ability of commissioned providers to recruit to homecare roles. These predicted pressures for the provider supply chain will adversely affect areas such as delayed transfers of care from hospitals out to social care provision.

Commissioned providers may yet not be clear on the implications of No Deal on their own organisations and staff, whilst a tightening labour market could result in increased wages, adding further cost pressures to the sector. It therefore remains vital that the council's commissioned and in-house services are futureproofing their workforce plans for the coming period.

As part of Government efforts to reduce low-skilled migration post-Brexit, the Immigration White Paper proposes the introduction of a £30,000 minimum salary threshold for migrants seeking five year visas. The National Association of Care and Support Workers has warned that this could have a severe impact on the social care sector and further compound staffing shortages¹⁷. The threshold will be consulted on for 12 months. In line with the LGA's campaign for a secure and sustainable Adult Social Care workforce, we will actively lobby central government for the White Paper to better reflect the needs of the sector; specifically, that carers should be added to the list of 'shortage occupations' exempted from the cap.

In Detail - Threats and Opportunities

As a result of pressures on its workforce and supply chain, there is a significant threat that council services could fail to be delivered and that the council would therefore be unable to deliver its statutory duties, impacting on service users, families and citizens.

This could have a knock-on effect on other services as the council is forced to dedicate less resource to discretionary services.

Local authorities will need to apply for Settled Status on behalf of Looked After Children, when the scheme opens in March. This may be a complex process, with the possibility that there will be gaps between the data we hold and the information required by central government. In preparation for the opening of the scheme, Children's Services officers have begun to obtain and analyse the relevant records to ensure information is complete and accurately recorded, including nationality and immigration status.

The extent of risk for council providers in regard to loans from the EU that underpin new builds and investments continues to be investigated, including the potential impact on strategic new build plans in Adult Social Care. This mapping exercise will continue in the coming weeks. Challenges in nursing recruitment, for example, would be an additional threat to Adult Social Care and providers' ability to deliver statutory requirements on placing service users in nursing care.

More broadly, exiting the EU could offer the opportunity to take innovation approaches to delivery of services. However when this relates to statutory services, there is an increased legal risk for the council associated with this. Collaboration across sectors is also a further opportunity; in particular between local authorities and other local partners such as the Acute Trusts in the City and commissioned providers as organisations prepare to leave the EU.

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/dec/19/carer-30k-immigration-rule-decimate-sector-post-brexit>