

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:** Adult and Community Portfolio Holder

**Date:** For pre-decision scrutiny by the Adult and Community PDS committee on 25 January 2011

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**Title:** **SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE: PROMOTING TECHNOLOGY**

**Contact Officer:** Kirsty Armstrong, Project Manager (Universal Services)  
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**Chief Officer:** Terry Rich, Director of Adult and Community Services

**Ward:** N/A

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1. Reason for report

The report updates the PDS on progress towards achieving a web-based information, advice and guidance system, as part of the Supporting Independence Programme, and outlines the joint work with Bromley Libraries and the Field Studies Centre to utilise Future Jobs Fund candidates to support this work.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. The PDS note and comment upon the developments outlined in the report.
2. The Portfolio Holder endorses the overall strategy of delivering information, advice and guidance via a web-based portal and through Bromley's libraries.

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
  2. BBB Priority: Supporting Independence.
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
  2. Ongoing costs: N/A. Dependent on outcome of trial.
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Transforming Social Care
  4. Total current budget for this head: £2.5 m over three years
  5. Source of funding: Social Care Reform Grant
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 15 additional staff, funded through Future Jobs Fund
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-statutory - Government guidance. Grant conditions required to secure Social Care Reform Grant as above. Transforming Adult Social Care, LAC (DH (2009) 15<sup>th</sup> March 2009. Putting People First 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007
  2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Central Library, Bromley had 9,140 weekly visits according to the October 2009 survey; in total, libraries had 27,220 visits. Website has been developed both for residents and service providers within the borough, and for those looking to source services within the borough.
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 A key component of the Supporting Independence in Bromley Programme has been the development of universal information, advice and guidance aimed at signposting people who may not be eligible for Council-funded services towards other solutions to meet their needs. This is part of what is called the 'universal offer' and aims to ensure that people are offered advice that will help to prevent an early acceleration of needs into the critical and substantial categories of need.
- 3.2 The SIB Programme has consulted upon and developed an Information, Guidance and Advice strategy, and this is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 One of the recommendations within the strategy is for a website to provide information, advice and guidance on available services, and allows users to self-assess their own social care needs. Following a review of available software packages, OLM has been selected as the best solution for Bromley. An initial plan to work with another software developer did not proceed due to technical and cost issues. OLM currently provide Bromley's social care client information system and are well placed to work with the Council to roll out the web-based IAG system.
- 3.4 The website will provide an information, advice and guidance 'portal', including directory of care services and products available, self-assessment questionnaires, a personal budget calculator, and, in time, will have the capability to provide individual personal budget statements, citizen accounts, user ratings and review facilities. The system is currently under development, and, over the coming months, its functionality will expand with the following milestones:

January 2011:

- Basic website (information, advice and guidance only) in place; user acceptance testing through working group and through libraries to assess effectiveness prior to launch.

March 2011:

- Enhancements to information, advice and guidance, to include events pages, and service guides; improvements to 'search' function.
- Site feedback – users can provide views on their experience of using the website, and can rate services used.
- MyAccount – users can save a personal calendar of events.
- Self-Assessment Questionnaires and resource allocation system– users can complete and submit to the Council a self-assessment questionnaire.

June 2011 – ongoing enhancements, with new developments including:

- Site feedback enhancements – users can submit 'stories' about services for publication following approval; users and providers can submit events for publication.
- Support planning – users can download a Support Plan template for submission.

September 2011 – ongoing enhancements, with new developments including:

- Client Personal Budget statement – statements can be sent to MyAccount, where they can be viewed as a PDF.

- e-Commerce/e-Market – links to e-Commerce/e-Market to allow users to purchase services on-line.

- 3.5 It is recognised that a proportion of the social care target audience will need support to use the website. This is despite the increasing coverage and usage of the Web as a source of information on Council services: research indicates that usage of the Council's main website has increased from 27% in 2005 to 52% in November 2009, with 29% of residents rating the Council's website as the most useful source of Council information. However, while 96% of under 60s reported home-based web access, this fell to 49% for over 60s.
- 3.6 As a result, it is planned that access to the information, advice and guidance for social care will be available through Bromley's libraries. The website will be accessible within libraries and, as with the Department's 'Homeseekers' choice-based lettings housing allocation system, library staff will be able to assist customers gaining access to the system from the public access computer terminals within their local library.
- 3.7 As well as free access to the web, Bromley libraries also provide tutorials on computer and web usage. The 2009 Public Library Users Survey indicates that 30% of library users are over 65; of these, 90% have been using the library for more than three years. Between April 2009 and March 2010, 861 people attended computer sessions aimed at older people (the Silver Surfer, and Older and Bolder groups).
- 3.8 In partnership with Bromley Libraries and the Field Studies Centre, the SIB programme is utilising Future Jobs Fund candidates to provide support to those accessing Council websites, and to carry out research into how web access can be promoted in future. The Future Jobs Fund is a project to provide young people aged 18-25 who are long-term unemployed with a six-month work placement, although graduates are fast-tracked onto the project. The candidates are paid at minimum wage; these costs are met by central government and the Council meets training and support costs. Initial indications are that the scheme is working well; as yet, there is limited monitoring information available, but its impact is being monitored. The libraries are tracking the number of people assisted by Future Jobs Fund candidates, as well as the kind of queries asked, in order to develop future support plans.
- 3.9 The scheme has been advertised in the local press and a communications plan is in place to promote it alongside the launch of the new web-based information, advice and guidance system; the scheme may be rolled out to the one-stop shops at Cotmandene and Mottingham.

#### 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Information, advice and guidance is a key part of the Supporting Independence Programme, and supports the overall Building a Better Bromley criteria of Supporting Independence.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The website has been purchased on a trial basis, at an initial cost of £85k for the first year, funded from the Transforming Social Care Capital budget for 2010/11.

Future Jobs Fund candidates are paid for by the Future Jobs Fund project, and costs are met by Central Government. There is a small cost of approximately £1,500, associated with the training programme, which provides additional training in social care issues, and this is being funded from within the overall Transforming Social Care budget for 2010/11.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	N/A

