

Appendix 3

Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthens the law in important ways, to help tackle discrimination and equality. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010.

Public bodies are required in it to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5 April 2011. The duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all. It ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

The Equality Duty encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

The new equality duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties, for race, disability and gender. The new equality duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – including lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Council has also decided to treat people who have care experience as if they had a protected characteristic under the law.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the equality duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies, including how they act as employers, how they develop, evaluate and review policies, how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Complying with the equality duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve making use of an exception or the positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic.

The Equality Duty also explicitly recognises that disabled people's needs may be different from those of non-disabled people. Public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

There is no explicit requirement to refer to the Equality Duty in recording the process of consideration but it is good practice to do so. Keeping a record of how decisions were reached will help public bodies demonstrate that they considered the aims of the Equality Duty. Keeping a record of how decisions were reached will help public bodies show how they considered the Equality Duty. Producing an Equality Impact Assessment after a decision has been reached will not achieve compliance with the Equality Duty.

It is recommended that assessments are carried out in respect of new or revised policies and that a copy of the assessment is included as an appendix to the report provided to the decision makers at the relevant Cabinet, Committee or Scrutiny meeting.

Where it is clear from initial consideration that a policy will not have any effect on equality for any of the protected characteristics, no further analysis or action is necessary.

Public bodies should take a proportionate approach when complying with the Equality Duty. In practice, this means giving greater consideration to the Equality Duty where a policy or function has the potential to have a discriminatory effect or impact on equality of opportunity, and less consideration where the potential effect on equality is slight. The Equality Duty requires public bodies to think about people's different needs and how these can be met.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Directorate:	Chief Executive	Title of the Lead Officer responsible for EIA	Director of Housing
Name of the policy or function to be assessed:		Allocations Policy	
Title of the Officer undertaking the assessment:		Housing Operations Manager	
Is this a new or an existing policy or function?		Updated policy for existing function	
<p>1. What are the aims and objectives of the policy or function?</p> <p>The purpose of the policy is to set out who can apply for social housing, how priority is given to different applicants and how the housing register is maintained.</p>			
<p>2. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy or function?</p> <p>A fair Allocations process, which is clear on who can apply for housing and the priority that applicants are given.</p>			
<p>3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy or function?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants • Tenants • Employees who band applications and allocate properties 			
<p>4. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy or function?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants • Tenants • Employees who band applications and allocate properties Other agencies who may be supporting applicants to apply for properties 			
<p>5. What baseline quantitative data do you have about the policy or function relating to the different equality strands?</p> <p>Personal data is held for applicants on the Choice Based Lettings system which records pregnancy, marital status, age, disability and gender.</p>			

Directorate:	Chief Executive	Title of the Lead Officer responsible for EIA	Director of Housing
<p>6. What baseline qualitative data do you have about the policy or function relating to the different equality strands? Supporting evidence is regularly provided by applicants and other agencies to support a housing application.</p>			
<p>7. What has stakeholder consultation, if carried out, revealed about the nature of the impact? Applicants are asked to complete a survey in regard to their experience in applying for housing. Annual reviews are undertaken each year.</p>			
<p>8. From the evidence available does the policy or function affect or have the potential to affect different equality groups in different ways? In assessing whether the policy or function adversely affects any particular group or presents an opportunity for promoting equality, consider the questions below in relation to each equality group:</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the policy or function target or exclude a specific equality group or community? Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently? If yes, can this be justified? Applicants must be over the age of 18 to apply. This can be justified. There is also eligibility criteria to qualify for housing with the Council, such as immigrations status. This can be justified</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the policy or function likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups or communities? If no, can this be justified? Yes, provided the eligibility criteria are met and applicants can show that they are met.</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Are there barriers that might make access difficult or stop different equality groups or communities accessing the policy or function? Alerts are placed on the Council's choice based lettings system when applicants require information in a different format or language. This ensures that they are sent information about in a way that they can access.</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Could the policy or function promote or contribute to equality and good relations between different groups? If so, how? No impact in this area is expected.</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> What further evidence is needed to understand the impact on equality? Regular monitoring of the service will be undertaken.</p>			

9. On the basis of the analysis above what actions, if any, will you need to take in respect of each of the equality strands?**Age:**

The eligibility criteria for housing is defined in legislation, applicants must be over 18. The Council may need to refer younger people who wish to apply to the appropriate statutory agency. Younger applicants are more likely to be applying for their first tenancy and may require additional support to ensure that they understand the process and the evidence required. To access the system fully applicants require access via a computer, tablet or phone. Whilst many older applicants do not require any additional support, it is acknowledged that some older applicants may not have access to these. Autobids, which place suitable bids on behalf of applicants, and support of the Housing Needs Assistants is available when required.

Disability: Autobids, which place suitable bids on behalf of applicants, and support of the Housing Needs Assistants is available when required. Home visits are not routinely offered, but will be offered when support is required due to a disability.

Gender: It is not anticipated that the Council will need to take any further action in order to enable access for this group. Regular monitoring and analysis may identify reasons that have not been anticipated. Action will be taken to mitigate any barriers identified.

Gender Reassignment: It is not anticipated that the Council will need to take any further action in order to enable access for this group. Regular monitoring and analysis may identify reasons that have not been anticipated. Action will be taken to mitigate any barriers identified.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Tenants that are married or in a civil partnership are more likely to be joint applicants. Specific questions may arise due to this, which the Housing Needs Assistants can address.

Pregnancy and Maternity: It is acknowledged that applicants may want to make an application during pregnancy, if their current property will no longer be large enough for their family size. Appropriate advice regarding eligibility for larger accommodation will be provided.

Race: It is not anticipated that the Council will need to take any further action in order to enable access for this group. Regular monitoring and analysis may identify reasons that have not been anticipated. Action will be taken to mitigate any barriers identified.

Religion and Belief: It is not anticipated that the Council will need to take any further action in order to enable access for this group. Regular monitoring and analysis may identify reasons that have not been anticipated. Action will be taken to mitigate any barriers identified.

Sexual Orientation: It is not anticipated that the Council will need to take any further action in order to enable access for this group. Regular monitoring and analysis may identify reasons that have not been anticipated. Action will be taken to mitigate any barriers identified.

Care Experience: Care Leavers are given priority under the Allocations Policy to recognise the need for suitable move-on accommodation.

I am satisfied with the results of this EIA. I undertake to review and monitor progress against the actions proposed in response to this impact assessment.

Signature: