



Equality Impact Assessment

Name of project/strategy/service being assessed	Review of the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy	Cabinet meeting date <i>If applicable</i>	6th March 2019
Service area	Housing and Environment	Date EIA created	December 2018
Name of Completing Officer	Kathryn Hobman		
Approved by Head of Service	Nigel Dicker	Date approved	

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) are designed to ensure that Wycombe District Council complies with all relevant legislation and fulfils its duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This comprises of three limbs which are set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires that all public bodies, in the exercise of its functions, to have '**due regard**' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Each service area has an Equality Champion (see the Equalities tab on WySpace for an up to date list). Please ensure that the relevant Champion is aware that an EIA is being undertaken as, if needed, your Equality Champion can provide advice and guidance on completing the EIA. Guidance on the completion of an EIA, along with information on the PSED and protected characteristics can be found in the documents section of the Equality page on WySpace (via the Corporate tab), along with a quick reference guide located here as Appendix 1.



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Stage 1 – Initial Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

Please answer the five questions below to determine whether a full EIA needs to be conducted.

Will the service/policy/strategy affect any people or groups of people directly (including staff/members of the public)?	Yes	X	No	
Will it affect how other services are provided?	Yes		No	X
Will it have employment implications?	Yes		No	X
Do you have information suggesting that this service/policy/strategy will affect particular groups of people?	Yes	X	No	
Do you need further information or to undertake further research to answer any of the above questions?	Yes		No	X

If the answer to any of the above is 'yes', then a full EIA will need to be carried out and Sections 2- 4 will need to be completed.

If the answer to all of the above is 'no' then a full EIA does not need to be carried out, but to ensure consistency in approach, the EIA will need to go through the Challenge Process. Please e-mail the EIA to Catherine Herries-Smith; Catherine.Herries-Smith@wycombe.gov.uk , Policy Officer at who will review and discuss as necessary. Then, if following the Challenge Process:

- a) it is agreed with the Policy Officer that no further stages need to be completed the Head of Service needs to approve the assessment and return a Word electronic copy to the Policy Officer for publication.

OR

- b) it is agreed with the Policy Officer that Stages 2 - 4 need to be completed, then the Head of Service will need to approve only once the full EIA is completed at which point a Word electronic copy should be returned to the Policy Officer for publication.



Stage 2 – Information Gathering/Data Collection

<p>What are the aims of the strategy/policy/procedure? Why is it necessary? What is it trying to achieve?</p>	<p>The allocation of social housing is governed by the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) .The Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy was adopted in May 2014 when a full EIA was undertaken. Following the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 being implemented in April 2018, a review of the Bucks Home Choice Policy has been completed to assist the Council fulfil its' statutory responsibilities in the prevention and relief of homelessness.</p>
<p>Which aspects of the policy/strategy/procedure are relevant to equalities? NB A list of impacts is NOT required at this stage, just identify areas – can be a bullet point list.</p>	<p>The revised policy has 10 major amendments and also a revised banding table. As there is currently an EIA on the existing policy, this EIA will look specifically at the proposed changes. Some changes have been made following legal advice. The changes will be applied upon adoption of the amendments to the Bucks Home Choice policy and encompass all aspects of the protected characteristics.</p> <p>Major changes will be made to the banding table and how applications are prioritised Home Owner Occupiers over the age of 55 will no longer be able to apply for social housing.</p>
<p>Identify the main data sources/information gathered e.g. Workforce reports, census data, staff survey etc.</p>	<p>Main data sources have been taken from existing data, the current Bucks Home Choice Policy and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.</p>
<p>How have you engaged with service users/members of the public/staff? e.g. staff forums, consultations, questionnaires etc.</p>	<p>All stakeholders have been consulted. Consultation finished on 7th January 2019.</p>
<p>Is the responsibility for this strategy/policy/procedure shared with another service/organisation/agency?</p>	<p>Bucks Home Choice is a policy adopted equally by Aylesbury Vale DC, Chiltern DC, South Bucks DC and Wycombe DC. Each authority will be completing an individual EIA.</p>
<p>Is further consultation/research or data collection planned or required? Is so, what is the aim of the research? Why is it needed?</p>	<p>No</p>



Stage 3 – Impact Assessment & Analysis

Areas to consider	Impact Identified Y/N	Description of impact and likelihood of occurrence (positive, negative, no impact; high/medium/low likelihood)
<p>Protected Characteristics (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex and sexual orientation)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Occurrence High, Impact Low.</p> <p><u>Age</u> - Older people will be affected by the change of not allowing owner occupiers and those being able to resolve their own housing need, onto the housing register. The impact on this characteristic will be low as owner occupiers are not considered to be in housing need.</p> <p>Existing tenants will be awarded the highest banding (positive impact) to encourage them to move to more suitable accommodation rather than waiting a long time for adaptations to be carried out to enable them to stay safe in their home. This is likely to have a positive impact on older persons who are under occupying social rented family homes.</p> <p><u>Disability</u>- Social housing tenants residing in accommodation with a disability adaptation will be given the highest priority to move to enable a household needing the adaptations to have accommodation. This will have a positive impact.</p> <p><u>Gender Reassignment</u>- No Impact</p> <p><u>Sex</u>- No impact currently anticipated, however this will be kept under review.</p> <p><u>Maternity & pregnancy</u>- No impact currently anticipated, however this will be kept under review.</p> <p><u>Marriage & civil partnership</u>- no impact currently anticipated but will be kept under review</p>



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		<p><u>Race</u>- no impact currently anticipated but will be kept under review</p> <p><u>Religion and belief (including no belief)</u> - no impact currently anticipated but will be kept under review</p> <p><u>Sexual Orientation</u>- no impact currently anticipated but will remain under review.</p>
<p>Other relevant groups (e.g. low income, ex-armed forces personnel, homeless people etc.)</p>		<p>The biggest change to the banding table will complement the Council's statutory duty to prevent homelessness, by amending the banding table to encourage parents/families to keep their family members at home rather than them being made homeless.</p> <p>Homeless Households who are more likely to be from low income families will be affected as in order to meet the Council's prevention duty, they are being moved to a lower band and will have to wait longer before receiving an offer of social housing (negative impact)</p> <p>By changing the bandings and giving greater priority to households especially those living with family this will have a positive impact on the vast majority of applicants with a protected characteristic. By giving them a greater priority will enable households not needing to become homeless in order to secure social housing.</p>

NB. Please note that when considering impacts in relation to marriage & civil partnership - the duty is solely to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against this protected characteristic.



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Stage 4 - Equalities Improvement Plan

Protected Characteristic/Other relevant groups	Impact Identified Y/N	Measures identified to reduce/mitigate impact (Also include all positive actions included in your proposals)	Review date	Review update/ monitoring comments	Officer/Service Responsible
n/a					

Area of Consideration	How are/will we work to: (Also include all positive actions included in your proposals)	Review date	Review update/ monitoring comments	Officer/Service Responsible
Eliminate discrimination, harassment & victimisation	The Choice Based Lettings System is designed to provide housing assistance based upon housing need. The policy will be reviewed internally to ensure that any groups with protected characteristics are not disproportionately affected.	TBC Post implementation		Housing Options Team Leader
Advance equality of opportunity	The policy is designed to ensure equal opportunity for those in housing need to be able to access social housing. The policy will be reviewed internally to ensure that any groups with protected characteristics are not disproportionately affected.	TBC Post implementation		Housing Options Team Leader
Promote good relations between groups (including community cohesion)	N/A			

NB. Please note that when considering impacts in relation to marriage & civil partnership - the duty is solely to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against this protected characteristic.



Appendix 1 – Quick Reference Guide

For full guidance and further suggested reading please refer to documents located under the Corporate Equalities tab on WySpace. Documents include ‘Completing an Equality Impact Assessment.’ Below are a list of the key terms and definitions:

Protected Characteristics

There are 9 specified Protected Characteristics as listed below:

Age – to include all age groups.

Disability – a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with progressive illnesses such as cancer, multiple sclerosis (MS) and HIV are considered to be disabled from the point of diagnosis.

Gender Reassignment – any person, who has undergone, is undergoing or is considering gender reassignment. A person does not need to be seeing a doctor or under medical supervision to be covered by the Act.

Sex – both men and women are covered.

Maternity & pregnancy – the Act applies during a woman’s pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave.

Marriage & civil partnership – for both marriage and civil partnerships, the PSED only extends to ensuring that due regard is given in relation to eliminating discrimination.

Race - this includes all ethnicities, races, colours, national origins as well as nationalities. This includes Roma & Traveller communities as well as refugees/migrants.

Religion and belief (including no belief) – Religion refers to any religion with a defined structure and belief system. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also provides protection for those with no belief (e.g. agnostic/atheist).

Sexual Orientation - the Act protects heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual people.



Types of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person in the same situation as others is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic they have (or are thought to have – perceptive discrimination) e.g. their age, race, sex etc.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement, although applied equally, excludes, penalises or treats a person less favourably because of their race, disability etc.

Institutional Discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin (taken from the *MacPherson Report, 1999*).

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act as ‘unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating and intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.’ In deciding whether harassment has occurred the following must be considered; the perception of the person; the other circumstances of the case and whether it reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act as treating someone badly because they have done (or you believe they are going to do) a protected act. These include making a complaint of discrimination and helping someone else make a claim. NB The less favourable treatment does not need to be linked to a protected characteristic.

Associative Discrimination - This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.



Quick Guide to the Stages

Stage 1

The questions in this section are there to help you decide whether a full EIA should be undertaken. The questions should also help you to decide whether you have all the relevant information needed and if not, what further data/research is required to continue with the EIA.

Stage 2

Stage 2 is to help you consider the policy/strategy/service under assessment, analyse the data available, highlight areas requiring further research as well as encourage you to consider how equalities (across all strands and including community cohesion) is, in broad terms, relevant and/or impacted by this policy.

Stage 3

Within Stage 3, all protected characteristics should be considered and the Officer should consider each group individually to see if the policy/strategy/service will have an impact. Additionally, the Officer must consider the impact in relation to advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between groups (including community cohesion). It is important that **active consideration and thought** are given to ensure that all possible impacts (negative, positive and no impact) are considered and thought is given to the likelihood of these impacts occurring.

Stage 4

Stage 4 comprises of two action plan tables. In the first table any impacts identified in Stage 3, need to be considered and the steps/actions that are to be taken to mitigate or reduce these impacts, or if positive impacts are required and necessary how these are to be sustained, are to be documented. In addition, the second table requires Officers to consider how the policy/strategy/service under assessment will impact on any of the three main PSED duties and what positive steps could be taken.

These steps need to be concise, measureable and have a realistic timeframe for completion alongside the name of the Officer and service responsible for the action plans. Additionally, there is a requirement for a review date and space for updates to be input into this table to show continuous monitoring and action planning in relation to the required steps.

Continuous monitoring and improvement can include consideration of how actions implemented will be measured, how any results will be analysed and over what time period will the actions/results be reviewed.