

SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

The Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to ensure that in the delivery and development of your service you meet the needs of our diverse community and at the same time demonstrate the Council is meeting its Equality duties. Compliance with the general equality duty is a legal obligation, but it also makes good business sense to get things right for our community.

The Equality Impact Assessment should be a live document and it will be useful for you to start to complete it at the beginning of any process so that you can design into your work the steps you need to take to meet both customer needs and the legislative requirements. This will allow you to think both about the aims of the work and what you want to achieve, and also where there are barriers or issues for protected groups.

The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty, which is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. The duty covers eight protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The equality impact assessment should cover the eight equality protected characteristics. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but not for all aspects of the duty.

The essential guide to the public sector equality duty is available on the intranet.

The [Equality Action Group](#) and its members are available to consult before or during the assessment as well as reviewing it at the end. This does not have to be at formal meetings so please make use of this resource as and when you need to.

Stage 1: Scope of the assessment

Service area: Regulatory	Assessing Officer: Clive Jinman
Date: 24 th May 2019	Activity/policy being assessed: Homelessness Strategy
What are the aims, purpose of the strategy/service etc?	
<i>The Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement. The Council must undertake a review of homelessness in the district, looking at the accommodation available to those at risk of homelessness and the support available to prevent and relieve homelessness and produce a strategy based on that review.</i>	

Detail who is / is going to be affected by the strategy, service etc (is it all Borough residents, or is it a particular group or groups of people).

Homelessness can affect anyone in the community, although it presents as a housing issue there are many underlying factors that can lead a resident to homelessness or the threat of homelessness. Examples include loss of employment, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, mental health issues or drug and alcohol problems. The biggest reason for homelessness in the Borough is someone's tenancy coming to an end and them being unable to find an affordable alternative home due to high house prices in all sectors and the demand for housing.

Certain groups of people are often over represented in homeless populations including care leavers, ex-service personal, ex-prisoners, people with addiction problems and people with mental ill health.

Homelessness is often one symptom of poverty and residents in that situation may have multiple disadvantages and fall outside of universal services.

Procured services and grants

The general equality duty applies to other organisations who exercise public functions. This will include private bodies or voluntary organisations which are carrying out public functions on behalf of a public authority. The duty therefore applies to where the Council has contracted out a service or is considering contracting out or is decommissioning a service. It also applies to the allocation or withdrawal of grants.

Please state if the service is being provided by another organisation on the Council's behalf and what actions have been taken to ensure that the service complies with the equality duty e.g. provisions in the contract, monitoring of the service provided in terms of the protected groups (please refer to the Council's Procurement Toolkit).

While the Council does not contract any external organisation to delivery it's statutory homeless functions by necessity delivering services is done in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary sector partners who either have legal duties and powers to assist or are constituted to deliver services and support to residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Knowing our customers

Understanding our community is an important part of developing and delivering our services.

To help understand how your work impacts on the protected equality groups please detail the information that you have about the interaction of these groups with your service.

From this information detail any evident gaps or issues that need to be investigated e.g. in who accesses the service, satisfaction or other outcomes.

The review of homelessness that has informed the Strategy looked at the data we have on those people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and also the reasons people become homeless. In respect of the protected equality groups the following is noted:

Race: our data would indicate that there is no particular population over represented in local homelessness groups, and no evidence that any group is excluded from accessing our services. The Council has access to Language Line when needed but this is only used once or twice a year. There has been an increase in Nepalese households applying for housing association homes through the Housing Register but there has not been a corresponding increase in homelessness from this group.

Disability: on average the Council accepts 5 residents as having a priority for homelessness assistance because of mental health issues or physical disability. Less severe and enduring mental health issues are a common feature of those in the rough sleeping population where they do not meet the threshold to be provided with accommodation but do need support to help resolve their housing situation. A concern of the Housing Solutions Team is discharge of patients from mental health units with no prior warning. Those with physical disabilities often have very individual circumstances that it hard to target specific services at, however it is usually possible to support these residents through joined up multi-agency working that secures housing in a planned way. The Council has identified a private housing provider with wheelchair accessible accommodation that can be accessed in an emergency and has an SLA for its use.

Sex: Looking at households the Council accepts as homeless over the last 5 years because they have children 41% are couples, 13% are single dads and 54% are single mums. Of the single people accepted as homeless 61% are male and 39% female.

Sexual Orientation: The Council collects no data on sexual orientation. Services are available to everyone and there is no barrier to accessing services anecdotally evidenced in that same sex couples have accessed homelessness and housing register services and issues such as a young person being excluded by his family because of his sexual orientation have been dealt with within usual service delivery. The Government is undertaking specific work around homelessness and the LGBT in 2019 and any learning from that work will be reviewed locally.

Age: The Council collects data on the age of the main applicant and over the last 4 years of those households accepted as homeless the majority of main applicants have been in the 25-44 age bracket. Prior to this the main age group was 16-24. This change has coincided with the main reason for homelessness being loss of private rented accommodation rather than young parents being excluded from their parents' home.

The Council has protocols in place to work with Surrey County Council to prevent 16-17-year olds and care leavers becoming homeless.

A steady supply of independent living properties (sheltered housing) means that it is usually possible to find a housing option for older people who become homeless.

Religion or belief: The Council collects no data on religion and belief.

Gender reassignment: The Council collects no data on gender reassignment.

Pregnancy and maternity: Under the homelessness legislation someone who is pregnant or has a child falls into a priority need group and therefore there is a duty to provide them with accommodation if they are homeless. This historically has been the majority group of people accepted as homeless.

Marriage or civil partnerships: The Council does not collect data on marriage and civil partnership. The test for homelessness is whether someone is reasonably part of someone's household and if they are in a relationship they will be included irrespective of the legal standing of their relationship.

Engagement

The Homelessness Strategy will go to consultation with all local stakeholders.

Stage 2: Assessment and analysis

Public authorities under the equality duty, in the exercise of their functions, are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Please give examples of how the policy/service etc has or will further the three equality aims in the general equality duty? Please consider the positive and negative equality impacts relating to the protected groups: race, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity within the policy/service etc? Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

In answering the above questions, think about:

Positive Impacts

Do you think that the strategy, service etc could have a positive impact on any of the equality groups: improve relations between groups, promote equal opportunities, improve accessibility of services and prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation etc?

Negative Impacts

Do you think that the activity could impact negatively on people from the equality groups, if the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? Please consider the below areas.

- Publicity (including communication issues, design, distribution)
- Accessibility, location, opening times
- Poverty and social inclusion issues
- Discrimination
- Are groups represented in the consultation and the decision making process?
- How does current policy currently meet needs around the equality groups are there any unmet needs?
- Is there any evidence that there is higher or lower take-up by particular groups?
- Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally?
- Is there any indication that particular policies create problems for specific groups?

Race (Race refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins).

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No particular impact.

Homelessness and homeless prevention services are available to everyone.

Ethnicity is monitored and as the Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed annually, any emerging trends will be identified and necessary work initiated.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Disability (A person has a disability if s/he has 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)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

Positive impact.

People experiencing mental ill health have been identified as both needing support to access and maintain accommodation and being represented in the rough sleeping population.

The Strategy commits to a number of actions to address these issues including: commissioning floating support, commissioning day services for single homeless residents, working with other boroughs and districts and health services to prevent homelessness from hospital and supporting bids for a mental health worker to work with rough sleepers.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Sex (Sex refers to someone being a man or a woman)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

Positive impact.

Lone single mums are over represented in homeless and will benefit from the commissioning of floating support and launching Renting Ready (a training scheme to support those at risk of homelessness or who have been homeless acquire the skills to find and maintain accommodation and access other services).

Commissioning day services will benefit the men who are over represented in the rough sleeping population.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Sexual orientation (This is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposites sex or both)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No particular impact.

Homelessness and homeless prevention services are available to everyone.

As the Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed annually any emerging trends will be identified and necessary work initiated. Government work planned in 2019 will also be considered to see what local learning there is for service delivery and development.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Age (This refers to a person having a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or being within an age range (e.g. 18-30 year olds))

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

Positive impact.

Joint work with other Surrey B&Ds, Surrey County Council and housing and support providers will benefit young people and care leavers by providing accommodation and services that support them to independence in a planned way.

Joint work with Surrey County Council to deliver extra care schemes in the borough will offer more options for older people with care and support needs and ensure an appropriate housing offer.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Religion or belief (Religion means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included).

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact.

Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No particular impact.

Homelessness and homeless prevention services are available to everyone.

As the Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed annually any emerging trends will be identified and necessary work initiated.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Gender reassignment (This is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. See also trans, transgender, transsexual)

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact.
Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No particular impact.

Homelessness and homeless prevention services are available to everyone.

As the Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed annually any emerging trends will be identified and necessary work initiated.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Pregnancy and maternity (Maternity is the period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding).

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact.
Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

Positive impact.

Expectant mums will benefit from the commissioning of floating support and launching Renting Ready (a training scheme to support those at risk of homelessness or who have been homeless acquire the skills to find and maintain accommodation and access other services).

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a

personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Marriage or Civil Partnership (Marriage is a union between a man and a woman: Civil partnership is legal recognition of a same-sex couple's relationship. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters).

Give examples of how this activity or policy has a positive or negative impact on this characteristic, or why you consider it has no impact. Please also describe any future work that you will be carrying out because of this assessment.

No particular impact.

All groups will benefit from the focus on homeless prevention and finding individual solutions to a households housing situation, linked to a personal housing plan and accessing wider services.

Stage 4: Sign off

Completion by Assessing Officer:



Signature: _____ Date: 24/5/19

Received and reviewed by Service Head:

Actions arising:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Received and reviewed by Equality Action Group:

Actions arising:

Date:

Date of EIA review (usually in 3 years time or earlier if necessary):

Equality impact assessments and an annual summary of the results will be published on the Council's web site and sent to stakeholders and partners.