

Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Durham County Council to have ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Completion of this template allows us to provide a written record of our equality analysis and demonstrate due regard. It must be used as part of decision making processes with relevance to equality.

Please contact equalities@durham.gov.uk for any necessary support.

Section One: Description and Screening

Service/Team or Section	Strategy, Partnerships and Commissioning
Lead Officer name and job title	Emma Regan, Housing Team Leader
Subject of the impact assessment	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029
Report date (Cabinet/CMT/Mgt team etc)	CMT – 12 th June 2024 Cabinet – 10 th July 2024 Full Council – 17 th July 2024
MTFP Reference (if relevant)	Not relevant
EIA Start Date	05/12/2022
EIA Review Date	June 2025

Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal or practice which is the subject of this impact assessment.

Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to formulate a homelessness strategy by carrying out a homelessness review for the County. Section 2 of the Homelessness Act 2002 prescribes the considerations that local authorities should undertake in conducting a review of homelessness and the purpose of the review in terms of informing a future preventing homelessness strategy.

Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless

Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation

Priority 3: Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (Work with partners to build resilience in people)

Priority 4: Reduce Rough Sleeping

Who are the main people impacted and/or stakeholders? (e.g. general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users, community representatives):

The main stakeholders include the general public, elected members, employees and partners. However, housing need does manifest disproportionately within specific service user groups. For example, young people, offenders, those with mental ill health or are from lower socio-economic groups.

Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics¹?

Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure
Age	N	Y
Disability	N	?
Gender reassignment	N	?
Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')	N	N
Pregnancy and maternity	N	Y
Race	N	?
Religion or Belief	N	?
Sex	N	Y
Sexual orientation	N	?

Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause discrimination or negative impact. Record full details and any mitigating actions in section 2 of this assessment.

The strategy will not have a negative impact across the protected groups.

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

Please provide **brief** details of positive impact. How will this policy/proposal promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The Strategy aims to align to the 4 priority areas in preventing homelessness and ensuring appropriate support is available to those that need it.

Housing need manifests disproportionately within specific service user groups. For example, young people, offenders, and those with mental ill health or are from lower socio-economic groups. In terms of protected groups this means that younger males (for example) are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, however other protected groups can be impacted; women, pregnancy and new mothers, older men etc. The strategy is positive in that it aims to support those groups.

Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your data analysis and any findings?

Please **outline** any data you have and/or proposed sources (e.g. service user or census data, research findings). Highlight any data gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record your detailed analysis, in relation to the impacted protected characteristics, in section 2 of this assessment.

The review has followed the Code of Guidance and has considered:

- Current and future levels of homelessness
- Existing activities carried out to prevent homelessness
- Current resources available to the authority to prevent homelessness and to provide accommodation and support.
- Existing accommodation available for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- The provision of support for people homeless, at risk of homelessness and recurring homelessness
- The supply versus the demand of both accommodation and support for people accessing the service

The Homelessness Review has looked at data and trends from 19/20, 20/21, 21/22, utilising data from Abritas and the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection system (HCLIC) and the government's live data tables on homelessness taken from national DELTA returns. The methodology used has

involved a mixture of desktop research and analysis, benchmarking regionally and nationally as well as focus groups with front line housing officers.

The consultation is in 2 phases. Phase 1 of the consultation between September 2022 and February 2023 is on the priority areas and to assist with the development of the revised strategy and action plan:

Phase 1

28/9/22 to 28/02/23 - attendance at partnership meetings to discuss the proposed priorities and initial data;

05/12/22 to 17/02/23 - consult with wider stakeholders via email with a link to a survey on the DCC website

05/12/22 to 17/02/23 – consult with general public, survey on the DCC website

05/12/22 to 17/02/23 – e-mail out to previous clients of the Housing Solutions service, asking them to complete the online survey. This will help gain opinions from people with lived experience.

As a result of feedback from phase 1 the priorities were updated to:

Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless

Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation

Priority 3: Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (Work with partners to build resilience in people)

Priority 4: Reduce Rough Sleeping

Phase 2

A full consultation has been carried out on the draft version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029, during November / December 2023.

The consultation focussed on issues relating to Homelessness and Rough Sleeping. The County Durham Housing Strategy addressed wider housing issues.

A statement of consultation has been produced and appended to the report (Appendix 4) which details the feedback, our response to this, and a schedule of changes.

Screening Summary

On the basis of the information provided in this equality impact screening (section 1), are you proceeding to a full impact assessment (sections 2&3 of this template)?	Please confirm (Yes/No)
	Yes

Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Emma Regan, Housing Team Leader	Date: 5 June 2024
Equality representative sign off (where required): M Gallagher, E&D Team Leader	Date: 18 November 2022, 5 June 2024

If carrying out a full assessment please proceed to sections two and three.

If not proceeding to full assessment, please ensure your screening record is **attached to any relevant decision-making records or reports**, retain a copy for update where necessary, and forward a copy to equalities@durham.gov.uk

If you are unsure of assessing impact please contact the corporate equalities team for further advice: equalities@durham.gov.uk

Section Two: Data analysis and assessment of impact

Please provide details of impacts for people with different protected characteristics relevant to your screening findings. You need to decide if there is or likely to be a differential impact for some. Highlight the positives e.g. benefits for certain groups and advancement of equality, as well as the negatives e.g. barriers or exclusion of particular groups. Record the evidence you have used to support or explain your conclusions, including any necessary mitigating actions to ensure fair treatment.

Protected Characteristic: Age		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to age?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Whilst homelessness can affect people of all ages presentations from those under 35 make up 55% of the total number. There are issues around affordability of accommodation for young people on low income.	Of the 26,482 presentations between 1 April 2019 and 30 September 2022 main applicant: 16 – 24 years (6031) 25 – 34 years (8528)	Partnership working across all tenures including registered providers, supported accommodation and the Private

<p>Focus is being given to this cohort within the strategy and this includes prevention work, working with Children's services and care leavers to prevent homelessness, and to work with families to try to enable people to stay in their current home where possible.</p>	<p>35 – 44 years (5959) 45 – 54 years (3487) 55 – 64 years (1622) 65+ (855)</p>	<p>Rented Sector, offering financial incentives to landlords to house clients.</p> <p>Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people.</p> <p>Regarding digital exclusion – appointments can be made at Customer Access Points if the customer is unable to communicate via telephone or email. Mobile phones and sim cards can be provided to customers who need them to assist with contact.</p> <p>The creation of a multi-agency homelessness forum which will be inclusive and representative. This will include representatives with lived experience of homelessness.</p>
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Protected Characteristic: Disability		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to disability?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
The strategy prioritises ensuring appropriate support is available to meet the needs of those with	Of the 26,482 presentations between 1 April 2019 and 30	Working with adult care to provide accessible accommodation.

<p>disabilities in securing and sustaining suitable accommodation.</p>	<p>September 2022, 9315 were owed a statutory duty.</p> <p>4742 (main applicant only) recorded a disability* (*a person may have more than one category).</p> <p>Of those owed a duty these were broken down as:</p> <p>1348 Physical ill health and disability</p> <p>3056 History of Mental Health problems</p> <p>338 Learning disability</p>	<p>Commissioning accommodation for those with complex needs, and leaving hospital etc.</p> <p>Specialist Social Workers are to be embedded within the service to provide specialist MH support and adopting a trauma informed approach.</p> <p>Through the Durham County Council housing stock, the amount of accommodation is increasing for both temporary accommodation and general stock. With the stock being under LA control decisions can be made on suitable placements.</p> <p>A trauma informed approach is to be adopted across the service with a training programme for all frontline staff.</p>
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Protected Characteristic: Gender reassignment		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to gender reassignment?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>Details regarding gender reassignment is not collected. The services</p>	<p>Some people may be at risk of homelessness due to additional pressures in relation to their gender</p>	

<p>provided are inclusive to support everyone.</p> <p>Homelessness assessment takes into consideration vulnerability due to violence/ abuse/ threatening behaviour as a result of any gender identity issues.</p>	<p>identity, such as family rejection, abuse or being asked to leave home.</p> <p>Research from Stonewall shows almost 1 in 5 LGBT+ people have experienced homelessness in some point in their lives, rates are higher for trans people, with 25% having experienced homelessness at some point.</p>	
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Protected Characteristic: Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Details regarding marriage and civil partnership is not collected. The services provided are inclusive to support everyone.		

Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy and maternity		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Homeless legislation gives priority to those who are pregnant and those who have children in their care.	Of the 26,482 presentations between 1 April 2019 and 30 September 2022, 571 indicated they were pregnant at the time of presenting	

Protected Characteristic: Race		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to race?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?

<p>Details regarding race is not mandatory. The services provided are inclusive to support everyone.</p> <p>The legislation does not include those who present and have no recourse to public funds. In these cases there are specialist organisations which would be signposted to for support and advice for example The Angelou Centre in Newcastle.</p>	<p>Of the 26,482 presentations between 1 April 2019 and 30 September 2022 the following information was provided for main applicants only:</p> <p>Asian 115</p> <p>Black 153</p> <p>Chinese 6</p> <p>Irish 68</p> <p>Mixed 177</p> <p>White British 22036</p> <p>Other 182</p> <p>Unknown 3745</p>	<p>There is a dedicated humanitarian team, with staff able to assist with language barriers and provide translation and interpreter services.</p> <p>Staff training in addition to the Equality and Diversity training to be explored for awareness.</p>
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Protected Characteristic: Religion or belief		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to religion or belief?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>Details regarding religion or belief is not mandatory. The services provided are inclusive to support everyone.</p>	<p>Of the 26,482 presentations between 1 April 2019 and 30 September 2022 the following information was provided for main applicants only:</p> <p>Buddhist 51</p> <p>Christian 3647</p> <p>Hindu 1</p> <p>Sikh 1</p> <p>Muslim 34</p> <p>None 5193</p> <p>Other 394</p> <p>Prefer not to say 52</p>	<p>Staff training in addition to the Equality and Diversity training to be explored for awareness.</p>

	Unknown 17109	
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Protected Characteristic: Sex		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sex?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Those presenting within the domestic abuse cohort are predominately female.	Of the 3051 presentations from those within the domestic abuse cohort between 1 April 2019 and 30 September 2022, 2,679 were female and 372 were male.	<p>Specialist DA Officers are embedded within the frontline housing team.</p> <p>Work with partners to explore options to assist victims of Domestic Abuse to remain in their home, where it is their wish and is safe to do so.</p> <p>Further work with key partners to establish a night shelter facility which will meet the needs of rough sleepers, including safe spaces for women.</p>

Protected Characteristic: Sexual orientation		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sexual orientation?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>Details regarding sexual orientation is not mandatory. The services provided are inclusive to support everyone.</p> <p>Homelessness assessment takes into consideration vulnerability due to violence/</p>	<p>Of the 26,482 presentations between 1 April 2019 and 30 September 2022 the following information was provided for main applicants only:</p> <p>Bisexual 41</p>	

<p>abuse/ threatening behaviour as a result of sexual orientation.</p>	<p>Gay man 79</p> <p>Gay or lesbian 404</p> <p>Lesbian 67</p> <p>Heterosexual 18861</p> <p>Other 324</p> <p>Unknown / prefer not to say 6706</p> <p>Some LGBT+ people may be at risk of homelessness due to additional pressures in relation to their sexual orientation such as family rejection, abuse or being asked to leave home. Research from Stonewall shows almost 1 in 5 LGBT+ people have experienced homelessness in some point in their lives.</p>	
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Section Three: Conclusion and Review

Summary

Please provide a brief summary of your findings; a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts across the protected characteristics, links to the involvement of different groups and/or public consultation, mitigations and conclusions made.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029, will not have a negative impact across the protected groups.

A detailed analysis of a range of data has been carried out to identify trends in homelessness and rough sleeping. This has been used to identify future demand and gaps in the current service and accommodation provision.

The priorities of the strategy aim to improve how the Local Authority deliver their homelessness and rough sleeping duties. Based on data of demand, need, and feedback from the consultation a positive impact across all protected groups should be achieved.

Will this promote positive relationships between different communities? If so how?

Through the consultation process, and including partners and stakeholders throughout, we have adopted a co-production approach to developing the County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029.

Stakeholder views have been listened to and used to feed into the proposed strategic direction of homelessness and rough sleeping for the next five years.

The creation of a tenant engagement panel to co-design services with people with lived experience to ensure they are accessible and fit for purpose, will further promote positive relationships.

Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescales for implementation	In which plan will the action appear?
A full consultation carried out on the draft version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029	Housing	November and December 2023	Complete
Delivery action plan in place and supported by a delivery steering group.	Adopted by Cabinet 10 July 2024	12 months 24/25	
Light touch annual review to address any policy or funding changes as well as consideration of any significant differences in demand to the service. The delivery plan will be updated accordingly following the annual review.	Housing	June 2025	

Review and connected assessments

Are there any additional or connected equality impact assessments that need to be undertaken? (If yes, provide details)	The County Durham Housing Strategy
When will this assessment be reviewed?	June 2025

Please also insert this date at the front of the template	
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Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Emma Regan, Housing Team Leader	Date: 5 June 2024
Equality representative sign off (where required): Mary Gallagher, E&D Team Leader	Date: 5 June 2024

Please ensure:

- **The findings of this EIA are carefully considered and used to inform any related decisions and policy development**
- **A summary of findings is included within the body of any relevant reports or decision-making records**
- **The EIA is attached to reports or relevant decision-making records and the report Implications Appendix 1 is noted that an EIA has been undertaken**

Please retain a copy for review and update where necessary, and forward a copy to equalities@durham.gov.uk