



Derby City Council

Equality impact assessment form

Directorate – Adults, Health & Housing

Service area – Strategic Housing

**Name of policy, strategy, review or function being
assessed – Homelessness Strategy**

Date of assessment – Thursday 30 October 2014

Signed off by

Cabinet or Personnel Committee's decision

Date published on website

Equality impact assessment – please read this section first before you do the assessment

This is our equality impact assessment form to help you equality check what you are doing when you are about to produce a new policy, review an older one, write a strategy or plan or review your services and functions. In fact you need to do an equality impact assessment whenever a decision is needed that affects people and **before** that decision is made.

So why do we need to do equality impact assessments? Although the law does not require us to do them now, the courts still place significant weight on the existence of some form of documentary evidence of compliance with the **Public Sector Equality Duty** when determining judicial review cases. This method helps us to make our decisions fairly, taking into account any equality implications, so yes we still need to do them.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is part of the Equality Act 2010 and this Duty requires us as a public body to have '**due regard**' to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act. It requires us to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a '**relevant protected characteristic**' and people who don't.

Having 'due regard' means:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where the participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This completed form should be attached to any Chief Officer Group, Cabinet or Personnel Committee report to help elected members make their decisions by taking the equality implications into account. Equality impact assessments **must be done before** decisions are made. Include the Cabinet or Personnel Committee's decision on the front sheet when you know it.

You'll find that doing these assessments will help you to:

- understand your customers' and communities needs
- develop service improvements
- improve service satisfaction
- demonstrate that you have been fair and open and considered equality when working on re-structuring
- make sure you pay due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Don't do the form by yourself, get a small team together and make sure you include key people in the team such as representatives from our Diversity Forums and employee networks and you could invite trade union representatives too – the more knowledge around the table the better. You also need to decide how and who you will consult with to help inform the equality impact assessment. Our Lead on Equality and Diversity can help with useful contacts – we have a team of people who are used to doing these assessments and can help with information on barriers facing particular groups and remedies to overcome these barriers.

You'll need to pull together all the information you can about how what you are assessing affects different groups of people and then examine this information to check whether some people will be negatively or positively affected. Then you'll need to look at ways of lessening any negative effects or making the service more accessible – this is where your assessment team is very useful and you can also use the wider community.

Agree an equality action plan with your assessment team, setting targets for dealing with any negative effects or gaps in information you may have found. Set up a way of monitoring these actions to make sure they are done and include them in your service business plans.

When you have completed the assessment, get it signed by your Head of Service or Service Director and send it to our Lead on Equality and Diversity for checking and to publish on our website. It is a public document so must not contain any jargon and be easy to understand.

Remember, we need to do these assessments as part of our everyday business, so we get our equality responsibilities right and stay within the law – Equality Act 2010.

Equality groups and protected characteristics

These are the equality groups of people we need to think about when we are doing equality impact assessments and these people can be our customers or our employees and job applicants...

- Age equality – the effects on young and older people
- Disability equality – the effects on the whole range of disabled people, including Deaf people, hearing impaired people, visually impaired people, people with mental health issues, people with learning difficulties and people with physical impairments
- Gender reassignment – the effects on trans people
- Marriage and civil partnership equality
- Pregnancy and maternity equality - women who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby, including breast feeding mothers
- Race equality – the effects on minority ethnic communities, including newer communities, gypsies and travellers and the Roma community
- Religion and belief or non-belief equality – the effects on religious and cultural communities, customers and employees
- Sex equality – the effects on both men and women and boys and girls
- Sexual Orientation equality – the effects on lesbians, gay men and bisexual people

In addition, we have decided to look at the effects on families and people on low incomes too as we feel this is very important.

Contact for help

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The form

We use the term 'policy' as shorthand on this form for the full range of policies, practices, plans, reviews, activities and procedures.

Policies will usually fall into three main categories...

- Organisational policies and functions, such as recruitment, complaints procedures, re-structures
- Key decisions such as allocating funding to voluntary organisations, budget setting
- Policies that set criteria or guidelines for others to use, such as criteria about school admissions, procurement methods, disabled facilities grants, on street parking bays

If in doubt - do one! You never know when we may get a legal challenge and someone applies for Judicial Review.

What's the name of the policy you are assessing?

Homelessness Strategy 2015-2019

The assessment team

Team leader's name and job title – Laura Dennis – Housing Strategy & Development Officer

Other team members

| Name | Job title | Organisation | Area of expertise |
|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Cllr Anne MacDonald | Councillor – Chaddesden ward | DCC | City Councillor |
| Janet Warner | | Derby Fibromyalgia Support Group | Planning & access for disabled people; Fibromyalgia |
| Judi Bateman | | Derbyshire Autism Services Group | Planning & access for disabled people; Autism |

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Moira Findlay | | Derbyshire Carers | |
| Carly Saunt | Housing Development Officer | DCC | Housing development; rental sector |
| Steve Barr | Community Engagement Worker | Healthwatch Derbyshire Friends | Equality; diversity |
| Pam Thompson | Engagement Officer – Diverse Communities | DCC | Community engagement; Diversity |
| Jeremy Mason | Principal Housing Strategy Officer | DCC | Housing strategy and policy |
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Step 1 – setting the scene

Make sure you have clear aims and objectives on what you are impact assessing – this way you keep to the purpose of the assessment and are less likely to get side tracked.

1 What are the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy? How does it fit in with the wider aims of the Council and wider Derby Plan? Include here any links to the Council Plan, Derby Plan or your Directorate Service Plan.

Having a Homeless Strategy in place is a statutory requirement for all local authorities. This draft strategy was written between July and October 2014, it has been written following a comprehensive review which considered homeless data collected between 2010 and 2014.

The three key themes of the new strategy are:

1. Create and maintain a city wide framework to promote effective partnership working by all agencies.
2. Maintain and improve measures to prevent homelessness.
3. Help homeless people back into suitable housing and provide support to make this sustainable.

The first theme recognises the importance of a variety of providers working together to tackle and prevent homelessness and how we can all work

together to achieve many of the strategy's objectives. The second theme is about ensuring that prevention remains a key priority despite diminishing resources. The final theme is about providing stability and support for those people who do find themselves homeless to try and prevent it from happening again.

The Council Plan 2014-2015 makes reference to a commitment to reducing homelessness and to increase the housing supply which will be measured by fewer homeless acceptances being recorded and a reduction in the number of households who live in temporary accommodation.

2 Who delivers/will deliver the policy, including any consultation on it and any outside organisations who deliver under procurement arrangements?

The policy is owned by the Head of Strategic Housing Services and delivered by the Strategic Housing Division in close liaison with the Housing Options Centre. The policy will also require close partnership working between the Council and other local stakeholders and providers such as NHS, charities, churches, community groups etc.

3 Who are the main customers, users, partners, employees or groups affected by this proposal?

The main users of this policy will be people in Derby who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Also affected will be service providers and anyone who has an interest in homelessness prevention.

Step 2 – collecting information and assessing impact

4 Who have you consulted and engaged with so far about this policy, and what did they tell you? Who else do you plan to consult with? – tell us here how you did this consultation and how you made it accessible for the equality groups, such as accessible locations, interpreters and translations, accessible documents.

A consultation plan has been developed with Consultation Officers within the Strategic Services. Widespread promotion has taken place via a press release, e-media such as council website (Your City, Your Say), In Touch,

iderby, facebook, twitter – this was to ensure that as large a group of people as possible knew that the consultation was taking place.

Specific events took place with stakeholders to review the current provision of services across the city as well as to review the action plan which forms part of the new strategy.

A separate event was held with service users at Milestone House and Centenary House. This provided the opportunity to hold face-to-face interviews with people who were on that day homeless and their opinions of the Council's service as well as what they felt could be done to improve it. Questionnaires were also sent out to people who had used the Council's homeless service within the last 12 months, their details were provided by the Housing Options Centre.

Attendance at four diversity forums to promote the draft strategy and EIA and to invite comment from representatives there.

Attendance at Strategic Liaison Group to promote the draft strategy and EIA to local registered providers.

The council's standard alternative language translation box was put onto the questionnaires circulated. However the consultation did raise the fact that the information on the website surrounding homelessness was not translatable so was difficult to access if first language was not English. A translation widget has now been incorporated into the website which will make access of information much easier.

We consulted:

- Elected Members
- Overview & Scrutiny Board
- Housing associations
- Charities & support providers including Derby City Mission
- Third sector organisations
- Voluntary sector
- Health and Social Care providers
- Derby Homes
- Council departments including Adult Social Care, Housing, CYP (youth Offending, Leaving Care)
- Advocacy groups
- Members of the public

5 Using the skills and knowledge in your assessment team, and from any consultation you have done, what do you already know about the equality impact of the policy on particular groups? Also, use any other information you know about such as any customer feedback, surveys, national research or data. Indicate by a tick for each equality group whether this is a negative impact, a positive one or if you are not sure

| Equality groups | What do you already know? | No impact | Positive impact | Negative impact | Not sure |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Age | Homelessness affects all age groups, however specific intervention is put in place for the under 18s | | ✓ | | |
| Disability | Ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures and training are in place for staff. Advice and assistance offered. | | ✓ | | |
| Gender reassignment - trans | Ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures and training are in place for staff. Advice and assistance offered. | | ✓ | | |
| Marriage and civil partnership | Ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures and training are in place. Advice and assistance offered. | | ✓ | | |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Provision is made to minimise the use of B&B accommodation for families and to secure them a house. | | ✓ | | |
| Race | Advice and assistance offered. Multi-lingual information provided. | | ✓ | | |
| Religion or belief or none | Advice and assistance offered. Knowledge and awareness of cultural issues needs to be taken into account by staff. | | ✓ | | |
| Sex | Specialised provision is in place to protect those who are victims of domestic violence. Use of female staff where | | ✓ | | |

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|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| | appropriate. | | | | |
| Sexual Orientation | Ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures and training are in place. Advice and assistance offered. | | ✓ | | |
| Families and people on low income | Provision is made to minimise the use of B&B accommodation for families and to secure them a house. | | ✓ | | |

Important - For any of the equality groups you don't have any information about, then make it an equality action at the end of this assessment to find out. This doesn't mean that you can't complete the assessment without the information, but you need to follow up the action and if necessary, review the assessment later. You can get lots of information on reports done from organisations' websites such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Stonewall, Press for Change, Joseph Rowntree Trust and so on. Please don't put down that the impact affects 'everyone the same' – it never does!

6 From the information you have collected, how are you going to lesson any negative impact on any of the equality groups? How are you going to fill any gaps in information you have discovered?

- Information and advice will be distributed more widely to ensure that larger numbers of people have access to it and are therefore aware of their options.
- Members of the Diversity Forums will be invited to be a part of the Homelessness Liaison Forum to enable additional equalities issues input into the delivery of the strategy.
- Increase availability of multi-lingual information to those whose first language is not English.
- We will look to put in place more regular staff training in safeguarding and cultural sensitivity.

Step 3 – deciding on the outcome

7 What outcome does this assessment suggest you take? – You might find more than one applies. Please also tell us why you have come to this decision?

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| Outcome 1 | | No major change needed – the EIA hasn't identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to advance equality have been taken |
| Outcome 2 | ✓ | Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified? |
| Outcome 3 | | Continue the policy despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact • mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts • plans to monitor the actual impact. |
| Outcome 4 | | Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination |

Our Assessment team has agreed Outcome number(s)

Outcome 2

Why did you come to this decision?

It was felt that broadly the strategy was a fair one but the suggested changes would reduce any potential negative impacts on people with protected characteristics and increase inclusivity.

If you have decided on **Outcome 3**, then please tell us here the justification for continuing with the policy. You also need to make sure that there are actions in the Equality Action Plan to lessen the effect of the negative impact. This is really important and may face a legal challenge in the future.

If you have decided on **Outcome 4** then if the proposal continues, without any mitigating actions, it may be likely that we will face a legal challenge and possibly a Judicial Review on the process - it is really important that the equality impact assessment is done thoroughly, as this is what the Judge will consider.

Step 4 – equality action plan – setting targets and monitoring

- 8 Fill in the table with the equality actions you have come up with during the assessment. Indicate how you plan to monitor the equality impact of the proposals, once they have been implemented?**

Equality action plan – setting targets and monitoring

| What are we going to do to advance equality? | How are we going to do it? | When will we do it? | What difference will this make? | Lead officer | Monitoring arrangements |
|--|---|---------------------|---|--------------|---|
| Invite Diversity Forum nominations to attend Homelessness Liaison Forum | Via existing forums. | By January 2015 | Allow decisions to be monitored from the viewpoint of the Diversity Forums and will provide specific expertise. | PT/JM | Regular attendance at the new Homeless Liaison Forum. |
| Ensuring that pertinent contact phone numbers and information are available in multi-lingual format. | Use of translation services | April 2015 | Ensure that more people have access to relevant information in an emergency, regardless of their level of English language acquisition. | | |
| Wider promotion of information and services in a variety of formats. | Leaflets, display screens, social media | April 2015 | Ensure that the information is accessible in the widest variety of ways. | | |
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Make sure you include these actions in your Directorate service business plans