

Charnwood Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment 'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'

Background

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

Legislation- Equality Duty

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions

Step 1 – Introductory information

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| Title of the policy | Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocations Policy |
| Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment | Alison Simmons |
| Date EIA started | August 2017 |
| Date EIA completed | September 2017 |

Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:

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| Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives) |
| The Council's Choice Based Lettings Allocations Policy provides a framework for assessing and prioritising housing need, and determining who will be nominated for housing. It takes into consideration all legal requirements outlined in the Housing Act 1996, Part VI; amendments made under the Homelessness Act 2002; the Fair and Flexible statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities 2009 and the Localism Act 2011. |
| What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them? |
| Residents of Charnwood who are in housing need and are seeking affordable housing. Registered Providers (formerly Housing Associations) and Private Sector Landlords are key stakeholders, in that their supply of housing will form part of the Scheme. |
| Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy? |
| The Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocations Policy Consultation took place between March and September 2017. The Council have held consultation events between March and September 2017 to review the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation and proposed changes to the Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and Private Sector Housing Service Staff Meetings • Lead Member for Strategic and Private Sector Housing • Cabinet Members Briefing • Policy Scrutiny • Homelessness Strategy Steering Group • Statutory and voluntary agencies • Registered Providers Liaison Forum • Housing Management Advisory Board • Housing Register Applicants Workshop |
| In addition an online survey monkey questionnaire has been available for completion and promoted at these events, on the Arbitas Choice Based Lettings website and the Council's website. A letter was sent to all Housing Register applicants to advise them of the survey and invite them to attend the workshop. |
| The consultation took place with a wide range of stakeholder, including representatives from each of the protected characteristics and the Council received 133 responses to the consultation questionnaire. |

Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

- Leicestershire Choice Based Lettings- Statement of Shared Policy EIA (2009)
- Complaints and compliments information received about the Service
- Equalities monitoring data of residents using the Service and or Scheme
- Demographic profile of Charnwood residents

What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

Charnwood has a diverse population and a range of individuals with complex issues and differing housing needs/ requirements access/ have the potential to access the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

Further equalities monitoring may be required in the future. However, at this stage of analysis it is felt the information currently held is sufficient to analyse trends and determine any barriers to individuals accessing Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

Step 5 – Assessing the impact

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

| | Comments |
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| Age | <p>Neutral impact/ positive impact identified</p> <p>If any applicant is under-occupying a Council or Registered Provider property and applying to downsize to smaller accommodation the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individuals with their housing need.</p> <p>If any applicant has succeeded to a Council or Registered Provider tenancy following the death of a relative, but needs to move because they are not eligible for their current property (e.g. because it is too large) the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individual's with their housing need.</p> <p>If any applicant needs to move closer to relatives in order to give or receive assessed care or support and moving would</p> |

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| | <p>prevent significant physical, emotional or financial hardship the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individuals with their housing need.</p> <p>If any applicant has a need for older people sheltered accommodation the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individuals with their housing need.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that applicants 16 -17 years old may require additional support to assist them in maintaining a tenancy and adjusting to independent living.</p> <p>The proposal to introduce a maximum age limit of 35 years for new lets to General Needs bedsits will be taken forward and relates to the Government's plan to limit the amount of Housing Benefit a single person below the age of 35 years can claim to the "single room rate" (currently £59.99 per week in Charnwood) as the rent for these bedsits is within this limit.</p> <p>The number of General Needs Council bedsits is small in comparison with the overall number of flats and bungalows in Charnwood that are suitable for single applicants over the age of 35 and shared accommodation options for single non-students below the age of 35 are very limited within the area.</p> <p>The situation will be monitored to ensure that there continues to be a sufficient level of available affordable properties for applicants over the age of 35.</p> <p>The Council has a number of 1 bedroom bungalows that are reserved for applicants who are over the age of 60 years. The Council will be removing the age restrictions from some of these bungalows and allowing applicants of all ages who have a medical need for a bungalow to bid for them.</p> |
| <p>Disability (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)</p> | <p>Individuals with physical disabilities have the opportunity to live in a Council or Registered Provider property that has significant Disabled Adaptations (e.g. a wheelchair standard property) and therefore the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individuals with their housing need.</p> <p>If any applicant is living in a supported accommodation scheme and is now ready to "move-on" to independent accommodation then the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individuals with their housing need.</p> <p>In terms of specific disabilities the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individual's with their housing need in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If any applicant has specific mobility issues and needs ground floor or level access accommodation. • The applicant has a significant physical or mental health condition that is directly affected by their current accommodation and a move to alternative accommodation would help to ease or resolve their condition. • The applicant has a medical need for an additional |

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| | <p>bedroom for an overnight carer or to accommodate large medical equipment</p> <p>There are slight concerns relating to mental health and learning difficulties. Mitigating action will take place, ensuring that a robust method of assessing people with mental health issues and/or learning difficulties occurs in order to determine if an applicant has the capacity to sustain a tenancy.</p> |
| Gender Reassignment (Transgender) | Neutral impact/ no impact identified. The Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will not discriminate individuals or families based on gender reassignment. |
| Race | Neutral impact/ no impact identified. The Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocations Policy offers more choice about where people wish to live; it will up to the home seeker to identify whether a location is suitable, appropriate or appealing. |
| Religion or Belief (Includes no belief) | Neutral impact/ no impact identified. The Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocations Policy offers more choice about where people wish to live; it will up to the home seeker to identify whether a location is suitable, appropriate or appealing. |
| Sex (Gender) | Neutral impact/ no impact identified. The Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocations Policy offers greater choice, more mobility options and offers greater opportunity for support for male and female home seekers. |
| Sexual Orientation | Neutral impact/ no impact identified. The Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocations Policy will not discriminate individuals or families based on their sexual orientation. |
| Other protected groups (Pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership) | Neutral impact/ no impact identified. The Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocations Policy will not discriminate individuals or families based on these protected characteristics. |
| Other socially excluded groups (Carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee Homelessness communities etc.) | <p>Where applicants are considered homeless the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individuals with their housing need.</p> <p>If any applicant is having difficulty meeting their housing costs and moving to more affordable accommodation to prevent significant financial hardship, the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support individual's with their housing need.</p> <p>If any applicant is suffering harassment, violence or threats of violence or physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support these individual's with their housing need.</p> <p>If any applicant is a "care leaver" or similarly a vulnerable person who has difficulty securing settled accommodation and is ready for independent living, the Choice Based Lettings Housing Allocation Policy will support these individual's with their housing need.</p> |

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

Please note:

- a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action

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| <p>to remedy this immediately.</p> <p>b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.</p> |
| <p>Ensure applicants 16 -17 years old are able to access support to assist them in maintaining a tenancy and adjusting to independent living.</p> <p>Ensure that people currently residing in residential care receive appropriate support in finding suitable accommodation which suits their needs.</p> <p>Ensuring a robust method of assessing people with mental health issues and/or learning difficulties occurs in order to determine if an applicant has the capacity to sustain a tenancy.</p> |
| <p>Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).</p> |
| <p>It is the opinion that the Choice Based Letting Allocation Policy will comply with equality and diversity responsibilities. Where potential barriers are identified at this stage, it is recognised that it will be necessary to plan effectively to ensure adverse impact is not created for any particular communities of interest.</p> <p>We will continue to undertake analysis and monitoring to ensure discrimination and adverse impact does not occur.</p> |

Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review

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| <p>Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complaints and compliments information received about the service ▪ Equalities monitoring data of clients |
| <p>How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.</p> |
| <p>All recommendations made will be addressed in relevant service/ team plans and monitored, as appropriate.</p> |

Step 7- Action Plan

| <p>Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan</p> | | | |
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| Reference Number | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date |
| 01 | Ensure applicants 16-17 years old are able to access support to assist them in maintaining a tenancy and adjusting to independent living. | Housing Needs Manager | 1 st April 2018 |
| 02 | Ensuring a robust method of assessing people with mental health issues and/or learning difficulties occurs in order to determine if an applicant has the capacity to sustain a tenancy. | Housing Needs Manager | 1 st April 2018 |
| 03 | Monitor complaints and compliments information received about the service alongside equalities monitoring data to ensure all barriers/ adverse impacts are removed as appropriate. | Housing Needs Manager | 1 st April 2018 |

Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?

| | Who needs to know (Please tick) | How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's) |
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| Employees | ✓ | The EIA will be attached to the associated Cabinet report for decision making and will then be published on the Charnwood website for all to view. |
| Service users | ✓ | |
| Partners and stakeholders | ✓ | |
| Others | ✓ | |
| To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there? | | |

Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service Head)

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| Please delete as appropriate |
| I agree with this assessment / action plan |
| If disagree, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales: |
| Signed (Service Head): <i>Alison Simmons</i> |
| Date: 29th September 2017 |

Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.

