

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: the initial impact assessment

### 1. Process and guidance

The purpose of an EqIA is to make sure that the council is meeting the needs of all our residents by ensuring we consider how different groups of people may be affected by or experience a proposal in different ways. EqIAs help us to meet our [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and where applicable the [Armed Forces Duty](#)

The council has a two stage EqIA process:

- Stage 1 - the initial impact assessment
- Stage 2 - the full impact assessment.

This form is for use at Stage 1 of the process. This must be completed when undertaking a project, policy change, or service change. It can form part of a business case for change and must be completed and attached to a Project Initiation Document. The findings of the initial impact assessment will determine whether a full impact assessment is needed.

Guidance and tools for council officers can be accessed on the council's [Tackling Inequality Together](#) intranet pages.

Date started:	12.03.2024	
Completed by:	Ruby Shekhawat	
Service:	Economy and Housing	
Project or policy EqIA relates to:	Awaab's Law: Consultation on timescales for repairs in the social rented sectors	
Date EqIA discussed at service team meeting:	27.02.2024	

Conclusion (is a full assessment needed?):	No	
Signed off by (AD):	Rhian Hayes	<i>Rhian Hayes</i>
Sign off date:		

## 2. Summary of the policy, project, or service

This section should be used to summarise the project, policy, or service change (the proposal).

### **What is the purpose of the proposal, what are the aims and expected outcomes, and how does it relate to service plans and the corporate plan?**

To agree on Wokingham Borough Council's response to the Government's consultation on Awaab's Law: timescales for repairs in the social rented sectors.

On 21 December 2020, Awaab Ishak died because of a severe respiratory condition due to prolonged exposure to mould in his home. His parents had complained to their landlord, who not only failed to take action to address the hazards in the Ishak family's home, but in fact blamed the family for the extensive mould in the property. The tragic death of Awaab brought to light the urgent need to eradicate these hazards from social homes and improve standards across the sector. The goal must be to ensure that this tragedy never occurs again, and that all social renters have access to the safe and decent social homes they deserve.

Following the death of Awaab, Manchester Evening News, Shelter and the Ishak family led a campaign for 'Awaab's Law'. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities gave his backing to campaigners' calls for Awaab's Law, and the department has worked carefully through the campaign's recommendations, discussing them with representatives of the Ishak family and campaigners.

On 20 July 2023, Awaab’s Law entered the statute book through Clause 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act. Awaab’s Law effectively inserts into social housing tenancy agreements a term (called an implied term) that will require landlords to comply with new requirements, to be set in detail through secondary legislation. This means all registered providers of social housing (also referred to as ‘social landlords’) will have to meet these requirements and, if they fail to do so, tenants will be able to hold their landlords to account by taking legal action through the courts for a breach of contract.

This consultation seeks views on the specific requirements to be set and how these obligations will impact on residents and landlords. Government is consulting on proposals for:

1. timescales for initial investigations of potential hazards.
2. requirements to be placed upon landlords to provide written summaries of investigation findings.
3. timescales for beginning repair works.
4. timescales for completing repair works.
5. timescales for emergency repairs.
6. the circumstances under which properties should be temporarily decanted to protect residents’ health and safety; and
7. requirements to be placed upon landlords to maintain adequate record keeping throughout repair works.

**How will the proposal be delivered, what governance arrangements are in place and who are the key internal stakeholders?**

The proposal consists of a consultation response, so delivery of this will consist of submitting the response through the online consultation form, once the submission has been agreed through the Individual Executive Member Decision taken by the Executive Member for Housing and Partnerships.

**Who will be affected by the proposal? Think about who it is aimed at and who will deliver it.**

The decision to submit our consultation response will have no impact on those with protected characteristics as there is no guarantee that our consultation response will influence government policy. However, in Section 3 we have detailed how we expect protected groups to be affected if the proposed policy changes were to be implemented.

### 3. Data & Protected Characteristics

This section should be used to set out what data you have gathered to support the initial impact assessment.

The table below sets out the equality groups that need to be considered in the impact assessment. These comprise the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and other priority areas defined by the council.

Age	Armed Forces Communities	Care Experienced People	Disability
Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy/Maternity	Religious belief
Race	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Socio-economic disadvantage

The Armed Forces Act 2021 requires consideration of the [impact on Armed Forces Communities](#) when exercising certain housing, education or healthcare functions (excluding social care). Further guidance can be found [here](#).

**What data and information will be used to help assess the impact of the proposal on different groups of people? A list of useful resources is available for officers on the Council's Tackling Inequality Together intranet pages.**

The information used to understand the impact of the proposal on different groups is the data and experiences provided by WBC officers.

#### 4. Assessing & Scoring Impact

This section should be used to assess the likely impact on each equality group, consider how significant any impacts could be and explain how the data gathered supports the conclusions made.

Scoring impact for equality groups	
Positive impact	The proposal promotes equality of opportunity by meeting needs or addressing existing barriers to participation and/or promotes good community relations
Neutral or no impact	The proposal has no impact or no disproportionate impact.
Low negative	The proposal is likely to negatively impact a small number of people, be of short duration and can easily be resolved.
High negative	The proposal is likely to have a significant negative impact on many people or a severe impact on a smaller number of people.

**Referring to the Scoring table above, please give an impact score for each group, explain what the likely impact will be, and briefly set out how the data supports this conclusion.**

Equality group	Impact score	Impact and supporting data
Age	Positive impact +low	Older individuals may be more susceptible to repair-related issues, particularly mould, due to factors such as weakened immune systems or

	negative impact	<p>pre-existing respiratory conditions. These individuals will benefit from improved safety and living conditions, ensuring they can age in place with dignity. There may be minor disruptions for older individuals during repair works, they can be accommodated in decant property, but these are expected to be short-term and manageable.</p> <p>Young children are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of mould exposure due to their developing immune systems and respiratory systems. Mould exposure in early childhood has been associated with an increased risk of respiratory infections, allergies, and asthma development. Furthermore, young children may lack the awareness or communication skills to recognise and report mould problems, further increasing their risk of exposure. These individuals will benefit from improved safety and living conditions.</p>
Disability	Positive impact+ low negative impact	Individuals with disabilities living in social housing will benefit from improved accessibility and safety standards. However, they can encounter heightened risks during repairs. Sensitivities to mould can exacerbate existing health issues, while mobility challenges may impede access to suitable accommodations during repairs, prolonging exposure to hazards, but efforts can be made to accommodate temporarily (decant) their needs during this time.
Gender reassignment	Neutral/no impact	There is no suggestion that these proposed policy changes would have any impact on this protected characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive impact	Married or civil partnered individuals living in social housing will benefit from improved safety and living conditions, supporting their family units

		Repair works may temporarily disrupt married or civil partnered individuals, but efforts can be made to minimise any inconvenience.
Pregnancy/Maternity	Positive impact +low negative impact	Pregnant individuals can face increased health risks due to exposure to mould toxins. Those individuals or those on maternity leave living in social housing will benefit from safer and more suitable living environments. Repair works may temporarily inconvenience pregnant individuals or those on maternity leave, but efforts can be made to accommodate their needs temporarily (decant property) during this time.
Religious belief	Positive impact	Individuals of various religious beliefs living in social housing will benefit from safer and more inclusive housing environments that respect their religious practices. Repair works may temporarily disrupt individuals' religious practices, but efforts can be made to address any specific needs or concerns.
Race	Positive impact	Individuals from diverse racial backgrounds living in social housing will benefit from improved safety and living conditions, promoting equality and inclusion. Repair works may temporarily inconvenience individuals from diverse racial backgrounds, but efforts can be made to address any specific needs or concerns and ensure equitable treatment.
Sex	Positive impact	The proposal is likely to have a positive impact on individuals of all genders. Improved safety and living conditions in social housing benefit everyone, regardless of sex. Efforts can be made to mitigate any negative effects and ensure that individuals of all genders are supported throughout the process.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral/no impact	There is no suggestion that these proposed policy changes would have any impact on this protected characteristic.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive impact	Socio-economically disadvantaged individuals living in social housing will benefit significantly from the proposal. Improved safety and living conditions will help alleviate some of the burdens associated with poverty and provide a more stable environment for these individuals and families. By ensuring that landlords comply with new requirements, the proposal helps to address existing barriers to safe and decent housing faced by socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Efforts can be made to mitigate any negative effects and ensure that individuals facing economic hardship are supported throughout the process.
Armed Forces Communities	Positive impact	Members of Armed Forces communities who are social renters will benefit from increased safety and improved housing conditions. There may be minor inconveniences during repair works, but these are unlikely to disproportionately affect Armed Forces communities.
Care Experienced People	Positive impact	Care-experienced individuals living in social housing will benefit from safer living environments, supporting their well-being and stability. Repair works may temporarily disrupt individuals who have experienced care, but efforts can be made to accommodate them temporarily.

## 5. Conclusion and next steps.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment if you have identified any groups as having a low or high negative impact.



If no impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must include reference to the initial assessment in any associated reports, and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy, or service change.

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