

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.

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.

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| Date started: | 15/12/2022 |
| Completed by: | Samuel Watt |
| Service: | Economic Development and Growth |
| Project or policy EqIA relates to: | Technical Consultation on consequential changes to homelessness legislation |
| Date EqIA discussed at service team meeting: | 16.12.2022 |
| Conclusion (is a full assessment needed?): | No |
| Signed off by (AD): | Rhian Hayes |
| Sign off date: | 30/12/2022 |

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 Technical consultation on proposed changes to homelessness legislation.

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.

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

If the proposal made by Wokingham Borough Council is taken forwards by the Government, then there will be a largely positive impact on customers with protected characteristics within the Borough as Landlords will have to provide robust reasons for evicting tenants in both the private rented and social housing stock with the proposed removal of Section 21 notices. It should be noted, however, that the Council's response to this consultation will not directly nor definitively cause any changes but the government may consider the Council's views when progressing this change to the homelessness legislation.

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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.

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|------------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Age | Disability | Gender reassignment | Marriage and Civil Partnership | Pregnancy/Maternity |
| Religious belief | Race | Sex | Sexual Orientation | Socio-economic disadvantage |

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 of WBC officers, its private rented sector landlords and social housing landlord partners. in relation to providing rented housing in the Borough. This is the same intelligence which informed the proposal itself. Additionally, more general, widely publicised information relating to the impacts of removing Section 21 notices, fixed-term tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies increases and the rising cost of living, in terms of the groups which statistically it would affect the most, has also been used to help assess the proposal's impact.

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 | People in certain age groups e.g. younger people are more likely to be housed in rented accommodation and this consultation is to seek views on how best to improve tenancy security for this demographic by abolishing Section 21 notices and Assured Shorthold Tenancies. |
| Disability | Positive impact | People with disabilities are more likely to be housed in rented accommodation, especially housing association stock, and this consultation is to seek views on how best to improve tenancy security for this demographic by abolishing Section 21 notices and Assured Shorthold Tenancies. |
| Gender reassignment | Positive impact | LGBT+ people are more likely to be housed in rented accommodation and this consultation is to seek views on how best to improve tenancy security for this demographic by abolishing Section 21 notices and Assured Shorthold Tenancies. |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | Neutral or no impact. | There is no evidence to suggest people in a civil partnership are more likely to be housed in rented accommodation so this consultation response would not likely have any impact on this demographic. |
| Pregnancy/Maternity | Positive impact | Being pregnant can increase the likelihood of someone being housed in rented stock and this consultation is to seek views on how best to improve tenancy security for this demographic by abolishing Section 21 notices and Assured Shorthold Tenancies. |
| Religious belief | Neutral or no impact | There is no evidence to suggest any religious groups are more likely to be housed in rented accommodation so this consultation response would not likely have any impact on this demographic. |

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| Race | Positive impact | People from ethnically diverse backgrounds are more likely to be housed in rented stock and this consultation is to seek views on how best to improve tenancy security for this demographic by abolishing Section 21 notices and Assured Shorthold Tenancies |
| Sex | Neutral or no impact | There is no correlation between gender and the likelihood of being housed in rented accommodation so this consultation response would not likely have any impact on this demographic. |
| Sexual Orientation | Positive impact | LGBT+ people are more likely to be housed in rented accommodation and this consultation is to seek views on how best to improve tenancy security for this demographic by abolishing Section 21 notices and Assured Shorthold Tenancies |
| Socio-economic disadvantage | Positive impact | People who are socio-economically disadvantaged are more likely to be housed in rented stock and this consultation is to seek views on how best to improve tenancy security for this demographic by abolishing Section 21 notices and Assured Shorthold Tenancies. |

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.