

Equality Impact Assessment Template – Stage Two

Name of item being assessed:	Housing Allocations Policy
Version and release date of item:	
Owner of the item being assessed:	Mel Brain
Name of assessor:	Mel Brain
Date of assessment:	

1 What are the main aims of the item?

In West Berkshire there is high demand for a limited supply of housing. As demand outstrips supply, it is necessary to have a Housing Allocations Policy that sets out the Council's approach to the allocation of social housing, under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, through the Common Housing Register. Overall the policy seeks to provide a fair and transparent system for the allocation of social housing in the district; maximise choice for people who have the most urgent need of housing and for anybody who applies for social housing; enable applicants to access housing through a variety of methods, ensuring vulnerable applicants can access the service; enable customers to be kept informed of the progress of their application and the likelihood of them being housed; prevent homelessness.

2 What research will you undertake to inform this assessment?

(for example, who, how and when will you consult? What existing information is available either internally or externally? Are there complaints, comments received that will inform this assessment? Are there any local groups you can talk to? Etc)

Use this space to set out your activity.

The Council published a set of high level proposals for amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy in 2012. This was sent to every applicant on the Common Housing register, statutory and voluntary agencies who may work with people in housing need and to registered Provider who own social housing within West Berkshire. Newsletters were available in the Council offices and the proposals were also published for consultation on the Housing web page and on Consultation Finder. As part of this consultation, respondents were asked to consider whether the proposed amendments would have an affect on anybody as a consequence of their age, gender, disability, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

A second consultation on the draft detailed Housing Allocations Policy is due to be undertaken in 2013. This EIA will be published as part of that consultation, and any comments received will be used to amend the EIA/Policy prior to adoption.

3 What are the results of your research?

Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Age	<p>Young people under the age of 18 can join the Common Housing Register (from the age of 16) but may not be considered for a tenancy unless they have a Guarantor. It is the Registered Provider's own Allocations Policies that actually determines how a young person would be treated if they were top of a shortlist. The Housing Service would work with the young person, and other relevant agencies, to assist them in putting appropriate support in place and/or to consider wider housing options. Referrals can also be made to the multi-agency Young Persons panel.</p> <p>Households who apply to join the register are treated equally without reference to age, however older persons who are aged 55 or older may have the ability to consider additional housing options such as older persons homes and sheltered housing.</p> <p>Under occupation is awarded a high priority where there are a number of bedrooms that are not used and this would largely be a positive measure to older households where their children have left a family sized property.</p> <p>Respondents to the Housing Allocations Policy expressed concern that older applicants may be forced to leave their accommodation if they are under-occupying. This is not the case.</p>	<p>Registered Provider Allocation Policies</p> <p>CHR Data</p> <p>Housing Allocations Policy Consultation 2012</p>
Disability	<p>Applicants who have an illness or who are disabled and whose current housing impacts on their condition, are able to apply for additional medical need points. The new Housing Allocations Policy proposes that instead of receiving points on a scale of 0-100, applicants with a medical need will be given a set award of points. This will disadvantage some applicants who have the higher award of</p>	<p>CHR Data</p> <p>Housing Allocations Policy Consultation 2012</p>

	<p>points, however, it is not a requirement that those with a medical need should be prioritised for housing by their differing levels of their health and these applicants will still receive reasonable preference through the Common Housing Register, in accordance with Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.</p> <p>The policy allows the applicant to provide a self assessment of their medical condition or impairment and explain how this is affected by current housing conditions and how it could be improved by re-housing. Specialist supported accommodation can be accessed through relevant multi-agency panels.</p> <p>The policy seeks to give preference to applicants who need adaptations when an adapted property is advertised.</p>	
Pregnancy	<p>Bedroom spaces are not allocated until a baby is born. This does not prevent a pregnant woman from accessing social housing, or other housing options, and ensure that all households are treated fairly in assessing bedroom need based on current circumstances and household make-up.</p>	CHR Data
Gender	<p>Applicants subject to MAPPAs (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements) will be subject to risk assessment and may be by-passed for properties based on that risk assessment. There are more males subject to MAPPAs than females, and therefore this will impact on men more than women. This negative impact is necessary in order to ensure wider protection of the public.</p> <p>The policy gives priority to households who have dependent children living or expected to live with them on a permanent basis. This is due to the shortage of family sized social rented homes. This may have a negative impact on men who have staying access to children from a previous relationship.</p>	<p>MAPPAs Agendas</p> <p>CHR Data</p>
Further Comments relating to the item:		
<p>Key findings From the EIA it has been concluded that there are a number of positive impacts alongside a few negative impacts.</p> <p>A positive impact would be applied to those with disabilities, who will receive reasonable preference for an allocation of housing and who are able to access specialist supported housing schemes as appropriate. Those applicants who are aged over 50 years may also have the additional option of considering older person accommodation or sheltered housing.</p>		

Applicants for social housing have a choice of the type and location of homes.

The policy recognises and supports households with vulnerability due to health and other factors. There is specific provision to consider special needs through panel arrangements.

Some limited negative impacts may occur. These include age and gender. Currently people under the age of 18 are not normally offered tenancies without a guarantor and the policy may also have a negative impact on applicants subject to MAPPA and men who have staying access to children from a previous relationship.

It is predicted that no impact will be apparent with the equality streams of faith, race or sexual orientation.

Overall, the Housing Allocations Policy should ensure that households with the greatest need will be awarded the highest priority benefiting households living in poor housing conditions and in housing stress.

4 What actions will be taken to address any negative effects?

Action	Owner	By When?	Outcome
Ensure that testing is undertaken to assess the impact of the changes, particularly on medical needs awards, to ensure that applicants most in need are prioritised on the CHR.	Housing Register Supervisor	Prior to adoption	Proposed policy has been robustly tested to ensure that it has no unintended consequences and to ensure that proposals do prioritise those households in greatest housing need.
Ensure that applicants affected by the changes are given clear information and advice on their housing options	Housing Options team Leader	Within 3 months of implementation	Applicants have the necessary information to make informed choices about their housing situation
Ensure that appropriate housing advice is available to 16 and 17 year olds on the most appropriate options for their situation and work closely with other agencies to assist young people in crisis situations	Housing Options Team Leader	Ongoing	Ensure that young people in a housing crisis have their needs met quickly and in the most appropriate way.
Work with MAPPA clients, and appropriate agencies,	Housing Options Team Leader	Ongoing	Minimise risk to the public whilst ensuring that adults who may

to effectively manage risk whilst ensuring that housing needs are addressed.			pose a risk have their housing needs addressed in an effective way.
Monitor the ongoing application of the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that applicants in the greatest housing need are given priority for allocations of accommodation.	Service Manager	Annually	Ensure that the Housing Allocations Policy is not having unintended consequences and is allocating accommodation on the basis of housing need.

5 What was the final outcome and why was this agreed?

(Was the item adjusted, rewritten or unchanged?)

6 What arrangements have you put in place to monitor the impact of this decision?

7 What date is the Equality Impact Assessment due for Review?

Signed:

Date:

Please now forward this completed template to the Principal Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity) for publication on the WBC website.

