

# Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Name of item being assessed:</b>	Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018
<b>Version and release date of item (if applicable):</b>	Version 1.1
<b>Owner of item being assessed:</b>	Mel Brain
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Mel Brain
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2013

**1. What are the main aims of the item?** (What does the item try to achieve?)

In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, West Berkshire Council carried out a review of homelessness in the district and have produced a Strategy arising from the findings. The Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 sets out the Council's long-term strategic approach to tackling, managing and preventing homelessness in west Berkshire.

**2. 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.)

<b>Group Affected</b>	<b>What might be the effect?</b>	<b>Information to support this</b>
Age	<p>Age alone is not a determinant of whether or not a household will be deemed to be in priority need for homelessness assessments, It may, however, be a consideration in determining whether someone is vulnerable and thus in priority need. This can equally apply to households who are particularly young e.g. 16 or 17 years old, as well as to older people. In particular, the Homelessness Review has highlighted that younger (aged 25 and under) families are disproportionately likely to be made homeless as a consequence of being asked to leave home by family and friends. The Homelessness Strategy therefore proposes a number of actions that seek to mitigate against this, providing education and support for young people and additional placements for 16 and 17-year old girls who are pregnant.</p> <p>The Homelessness Review indicates that older people (aged 60+) are less likely to</p>	<p>Homelessness Review P1E Returns Case Files</p>

	<p>become homeless than households of other ages. However, where an older person is threatened with homelessness, the Housing service is usually able to ensure that homelessness is prevented or that alternative settled accommodation is provided, without the need for the households to make a homelessness application. This is because there is a good supply of older persons accommodation in West Berkshire.</p>	
Disability	<p>Disability, whether physical disability, learning disability or mental ill health is a consideration when assessing priority need for accommodation. There is no evidence that households with a disabled member are adversely affected by homelessness: however, many households who experience homelessness or are threatened with homelessness do have experience of mental ill health. The Strategy recognises this and proposes measures to ensure that such households continue to receive housing-related support services, that there is access to appropriate supported housing provision and that we better understand the health needs of households placed in temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>Homelessness Review P1E Returns Case Files</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>There is no evidence that this group is adversely affected by homelessness.</p>	<p>Homelessness Review P1E Returns Case Files</p>
Marriage & Civil partnership	<p>There is no evidence that this group is adversely affected by homelessness.</p>	<p>Homelessness Review P1E Returns Case Files</p>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<p>98% of households who are homeless include a child or pregnant woman. The Homelessness Strategy proposes a number of actions designed to increase supply of family-sized accommodation, offer housing-related support and training and to work more closely with other professionals who may be engaged with such families to ensure that we provide better and more effective services.</p>	<p>Homelessness Review P1E Returns Case Files</p>
Race	<p>The profile of accepted homeless applicants shows a slightly higher</p>	<p>Homelessness Review</p>

	<p>percentage of households who define themselves as coming from a BME background. However, the census data is out-of-date and the percentage is reflective of England and Wales overall. On this basis, it does not currently appear that this group is adversely affected by homelessness. This is an area that will continue to be monitored and will be reviewed once 2011 census releases are available.</p>	<p>P1E Returns Case Files Census</p>
<p>Religion &amp; Belief</p>	<p>There is no evidence that this group is adversely affected by homelessness.</p>	<p>Homelessness Review P1E Returns Case Files</p>
<p>Gender</p>	<p>Statistics show that women are over-represented amongst homelessness acceptances. Women will also be over-represented in the number of households who approach West Berkshire fleeing domestic abuse.</p> <p>The majority of the actions proposed within the Strategy will benefit women who are homeless, including tenancy support and training, closer working between professionals to ensure more effective service delivery, and increased access to accommodation. Domestic Abuse Services have recently been remodelled, providing both refuge accommodation and improved outreach services (including outreach services for men). The Strategy also stresses the importance of continuing to work with MARAC and the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Forum to ensure that appropriate services are delivered across the district, including services for men.</p> <p>Men tend to be under-represented in homelessness acceptances but are more likely to be represented in single person groups such as rough sleepers, ex-service personnel and ex-offenders.</p> <p>The Strategy works within the statutory framework which identifies which groups are to be given priority, However, West</p>	

	<p>Berkshire continues to commission services, including the Two Saints hostel, for non-priority groups which are more likely to be male. The Strategy seeks to continue to offer these services as well as seeking to improve wider homeless services that will benefit non-priority groups as well as priority groups.</p>	
--	--	--

--

**Further comments relating to the item:**

From the EIA it has been concluded that there are a number of positive impacts alongside a few negative impacts.

A positive impact would be applied to women and young people, both of whom are over-represented in homeless households. The Strategy has a number of actions focused on strengthening support and increasing access to suitable accommodation which should benefit households falling within these groups. Those applicants who are aged over 60 years may also have additional options available to them that can prevent or relieve their homelessness without the need for them to make a homelessness application.

Similarly, disabled people, particularly those with mental health issues, should be able to access appropriate housing-related support and, where appropriate, supported housing provision. The Strategy seeks to better understand the health inequalities experienced by homeless households and will aim to build services around this understanding to ensure that people receive services appropriate to their needs.

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 gender. Men are more likely to be under-represented in priority need groups who receive statutory services. However, the Strategy operates within a statutory framework and is not discriminatory. The Strategy seeks to continue offering services to non-priority groups, including the provision of direct-access hostel provision and housing-related support and overall, this group of households should benefit from improved housing options services arising from the Strategy.

It is predicted that no impact will be apparent within the equality streams of faith, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership.

Overall, the Homelessness Strategy seeks to strengthen and develop existing homelessness services for the benefit of both priority and non-priority need groups, ensuring that all households are able to benefit from high-quality housing and homelessness advice services.

<b>3. What actions will be taken to address any negative effects?</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Race monitoring to be reviewed upon 2011 census release	Mel Brain	When release is available	Consideration to be given to whether further consultation with BME groups is needed or

			whether there is a need for specialist services
Continue to monitor trends for faith, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership groups	Mel Brain	Ongoing	To ensure that homelessness services are accessible to and to identify if trends are changing such that specialist services may be required.

**4. What was the final outcome and why was this agreed?**  
 (Was the item adjusted, rewritten or unchanged? Refer to page 15 of *Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision Making* for more information.)  
 Unchanged – the Strategy is a high-level strategic approach with a number of actions that will benefit all strands should they require housing advice or homelessness services.

**5. What arrangements have you put in place to monitor the impact of this decision?**  
 Ongoing monitoring via P1E returns

**6. What date is the Equality Impact Assessment due for Review?**  
 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014

**Name:** Mel Brain

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013