Equality Impact Assessment Form

An Equality Impact Assessment is a way of examining how different communities or groups of people will be affected by a current or proposed service, policy or project. It helps identify ways of removing or reducing any adverse impacts and with developing an action plan for ensuring the service, policy or project has the most positive outcomes for our communities.

**What service, service change, policy or project are you assessing?**

**The Worcestershire Homeless Strategy 2012 -2017**

Please complete Part A and then continue to Part B if required.

**Part A: initial assessment**

**A1. What is the purpose of this service, service change, policy or project?**

This paper provides an assessment of the Worcestershire Homeless Strategy and its likely impact on our equalities duties and specific equality groups within Wychavon.

The strategy itself details how the six local authorities across Worcestershire will develop homeless services and support within the county over the next 5 years. The strategy sets out how Worcestershire will work together to prevent homelessness, tackle to causes of homelessness and provide outcomes for people who are or are at risk of homelessness. It aims to provide a service to all households presenting as homeless whether or not the local authority has a statutory duty or not.

The overall vision is to ensure that “everyone has access to a place they can call home, where they can close their door and feel safe” There are four goals to the strategy:

1) To provide a pathway housing solution for everyone that accesses our service.
2) Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness and its causes.
3) To enable to local authority to take effective action and prevent anyone new to the streets having to sleep out for more than one night.
4) Reduce financial deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness.

**A2. How does it contribute to the priorities and goals in our corporate strategy?**

The strategy contributes to Wychavons’ Corporate strategy in relation to each of its priorities:

- **Strong economy:** To ensure there is sufficient housing stock and suitable accommodation for residents in the local area, encourage training and employment for those being supported through the homelessness process.

- **Strong environment:** Working in partnership to tackle rough sleeping which can sometimes can create area’s within the community where there are pockets anti social behavior.

- **Strong communities:** Creating sustainable communities by engagement with the public to assist with achieving the aims of the strategy. Providing targeted services and support to people who need them most, providing value for money services.
A3. **Will the service, policy or project affect a large proportion of people in Wychavon? If so, how many?**

This strategy will not be applicable to all residents as its focus is on those persons or families who are at risk of homelessness or presenting as ‘homeless’. Out of the total population in the district of 116,900 (2011 census data) this strategy will directly apply to less than 1%. Potentially the strategy could have an impact on all residents as “homelessness” is not restricted to certain characteristics, class or family type. However it is anticipated those that it will directly affect are exceptionally low.

The last rough sleeper count/estimate in Wychavon found there were 8 roughsleepers which was a reduction of 6 on the previous year. Part of the strategy is to ensure that anyone new to the streets will not have more than one night of sleeping rough. Homeless applications have remained on a similar level for the last 2 years, 2011/12 saw 293 homeless applications with 191 persons or families being accepted and 2012/13 there were 292 applications with 162 being accepted.

Although priority is not given in general to single persons or couples who do not have children, a medical need, mental health or a disability the strategy will give greater consideration to the needs of single people. Encouraging engagement with an emphasis on employment, education and training to create sustainable communities.

A4. **Is the service, policy or project a key area of expenditure for us or will it have other major financial implications?** Include savings or reductions to services.

Overall this is not a key area of expenditure as a district council, however we do have a designated budget, which is allocated by central government to prevent and relieve homelessness.

We also use different sources of grant funding to tackle and prevent homeless such as mortgage rescue, hospital discharge funding.

Due to financial pressure on the Local Authority to make saving we are aiming to reduce the use of bed and breakfast by 50%, with the emphasis being more on the preventing of homelessness therefore not needing emergency accommodation.

A5. **Who is likely to be affected by it?** For example: all residents, young people, and people with disabilities.

The strategy will affect residents who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Prior to this strategy certain vulnerable groups have always been given priority however the policy now takes into account the needs of the single homeless.

Characteristics of residents that have used this service in the past include low income families or persons with children, people with disabilities, people with health conditions and young people between 16-18 years old. In the current economic climate the service has seen an increase of other client groups who are struggling financially.
A6. **What evidence have you used to answer question A5?** For example: customer monitoring data, customer profiles, demographic information.

- Homelessness legislation (1996)
- Customer profiles and information compiled by officers.
- Housing register (Home Choice Plus)
- Customer surveys
- P1E

A7. **Please indicate in the table below whether the service, policy or project is likely to have a positive, adverse or neutral impact on each of the groups listed.** Those marked with a * are defined as protected characteristics in the Equality Act.

This strategy aims to have a positive impact on any resident that is homeless or at risk of being homeless. While we are aware that take up of this service may vary depending on factors such as rural/urban location, general awareness of the service or reluctance to approach for advice, overall the strategy aims to have a positive rather than just neutral impact. There is no evidence to suggest that protected characteristics of those individuals that the policy affects will have been impacted in an adverse way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equality group</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Adverse</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender: men/boys*</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender: women/girls*</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender reassignment (transsexual)*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital and civil partnership status *</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy and maternity*</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race and minority ethnic groups*</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion and/or belief*</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation*</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People in rural areas</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People in urban areas</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
A8. Have you already made any changes to remove or reduce any adverse impacts\(^\text{1}\) that you have identified in question A7? If yes, please provide details.

As stated above we are not aware of any adverse impacts associated with this strategy, in fact it has a positive impact on our communities.

We do however constantly review the strategy with our county partners and take into account customer feedback and a variety of data sources from those using the service e.g. P1E data – quarterly report to DCLG, Worcestershire Homelessness Review, Home Choice Plus data and annual rough sleeper counts.

If you have identified adverse impacts on one or more of the equality groups listed in A7 please move on to part B to investigate the equality impacts of the service, policy or project in more detail.

It is good practice to carry out a more detailed assessment if your service, policy or project involves a major change which affects a large number of people, has significant financial implications or you are unsure what impact it will have.

If you decide a more detailed assessment is not needed, please go to part C.

**Part B: detailed assessment**

You may need to refer to research, consultation or other evidence relating to the service, policy or project to complete the more detailed assessment. If this doesn’t exist, you may need to carry out further work before you can continue with the assessment. If possible, please provide hyperlinks for any evidence or supporting information.

**B1. What is the wider context for this service, service change, policy or project?**

In preparation for the strategy there was a variety of consultation exercises carried out. This helped to shape the strategy through developing goals, objectives and actions to respond to the issues which were identified from the evidence gathering and consultation.

- Homelessness review
- Home truths event
- Homeless journey mapping
- Customer and stake holder surveys
- Public consultation

**B2. How can this service, service change, policy or project help us to meet our equalities duties?** For example: by engaging young people, promoting good race relations or targeting services to meet the needs of older people.

\(^1\) An adverse impact is where one or more group or groups of people are put at a disadvantage by the way a particular policy or procedure is carried out. For example, disabled or elderly people, or people living in very isolated rural areas may struggle to use wheelie bins as easily as other people.
The strategy helps us to meet our equalities duties particularly by promoting good services and relations in our communities. This is reflected within the service itself, as it is inclusive to anyone who is at risk of homelessness, with preventative goals to tackle longer term issues and provide a more holistic service for individuals and families. The strategy contributes towards Wychavon’s wider framework for equality and diversity.

B3. **Are there any known equalities issues relating to this service, service change, policy or project that have been raised outside of Wychavon?** For example, by other councils, through national research.

Possible areas here that have been discussed at a county level include the reluctance of individuals from particular equality groups to access this service for example:

- Gypsies and travellers (cultural differences)
- Migrant workers (language barrier)

B4. **Who have you consulted about your service, service change, policy or project and what methods have you used?** Attach a summary of the results or refer to where the evidence can be found. For example: survey results, customer feedback outcomes of consultation exercises.

- Feedback from housing options surveys
- Anyone using the service can also use our compliments or complaints procedure.
- The achievement of the four goals in the strategy will be constantly reviewed to ensure they are on track to be achieved.
- Refer to consultation outcomes.

B5. **Describe each of the adverse impacts that you identified in question A7. Also use the table below to indicate where you need more evidence.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equality group</th>
<th>What is the impact?</th>
<th>Additional evidence needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy &amp; Travellers</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Mixed data regarding this group often due to transient lifestyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant workers</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Often do not engage with the Local Authority and language barriers.</td>
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B6. **Are the adverse impacts justified? If they are, explain in what way.** For example: disproportionate costs, legislative constraints.
There is no evidence to suggest that there are any specific adverse impacts, however there have been examples of legislative restrictions on some individuals who are homeless but have no access to public funds.

The factors listed above are merely areas that we are aware of, that may require further data or analysis. The strategy will highlight and tackle some of these areas.

**What, if anything, will you do to or remove or reduce any adverse impacts of the service, service change, policy or project?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When by</th>
<th>How will this remove or reduce any adverse impacts?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance of take up of service by user groups</td>
<td>Gypsies &amp; Travellers Migrant Workers</td>
<td>On-going through the strategy period.</td>
<td>Promoting the services available, review and improve existing methods of communication, working partnerships with other agencies and charities.</td>
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</table>

**B7. When and how will you assess whether the action taken has resolved or reduced the issues identified?**

The strategy will be reviewed alongside any new data by the Worcestershire Homelessness Group to explore the questions raised above.

**B8. What plans do you have to monitor this particular service, service change, policy or project? In particular how will you assess equality issues in the future?**

There will be an on going review.

**Part C: sign off**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equality Impact Assessment completed by:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Job title</strong></td>
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**Signed off by:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Unit Manager:</th>
<th>Elaine Salter, Housing Services Manager</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
<td>20/09/13</td>
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Please e-mail your completed impact assessment to Rob Mace. We will publish it on the Equality and Diversity pages of our website under Impact Assessments.