

Equality Impact Assessment

**Melton Borough Council Homeless Strategy
2024-2029**

- **Background**

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

- **Legislation- Equality Duty**

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Melton Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation.
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Religion and belief
- ✓ Sex (Gender)
- ✓ Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

- ✓ Direct Discrimination
- ✓ Indirect Discrimination
- ✓ Harassment
- ✓ Victimisation
- ✓ Discrimination by association
- ✓ Discrimination by perception
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
- ✓ Discrimination arising from disability
- ✓ Failing to make reasonable adjustments

Please complete steps 1-9

● **Step 1 – Introductory information**

No.	Item	Details
1.1	Title of the policy	Melton Borough Council Homeless Strategy 2024-2029
1.2	Lead officer and others undertaking this assessment <i>(Check & Challenge Group are part of the sign-off process and not required to be named here)</i>	Rachel Chubb
1.3	Date EIA started	14/03/2024
1.4	Date EIA completed	26/03/2024

● **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed**

No.	Item	Details
2.1	Outline – What is the purpose of this policy? <i>Specify aims and objectives</i>	The strategy informs of the current position and challenges for homelessness across the Borough. It also sets out the priorities and actions that together aim to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping in line with the relevant legislation. Homelessness is not just a term for someone that is rough sleeping, but covers those that are in temporary accommodation, are at risk of losing their home, are in unsuitable accommodation or cannot afford to remain in their current home.
2.2	What specific group(s) is the policy designed to affect / impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?	<p>This is targeted at people who are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With dependent children, Pregnant, Vulnerable due to mental health, old age, physical or mental disability or other special reason Vulnerable as a result of having been a member of His Majesty's regular naval, military or air force Vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence, remanded in custody Care Leavers Victims of Domestic abuse People who have lost their home as a result of an emergency <p>This is to ensure that the services designed to meet the statutory homeless duties are shaped to ensure all groups have access to services and are considered in our approach to preventing homelessness.</p>

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2.3	Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?	Consultation event involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Care services from Leicestershire County Council • Living without Abuse and Freeva – Domestic Abuse Services • MADMAC – Debt advice service • Housing options managers and officers from Oadby & Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire • Rough Sleeping Initiative • The Bridge and Falcon Support Services – Homeless and rough sleeper support • First Response Leicestershire County Council (16/17 year old young people) • Lightbulb – Hospital discharge • Probation • Turning Point - Drug and alcohol misuse service <p>The consultation was in person and involved questions detailing the difficulties faced by this client group accessing housing, what could be achieved within the current constraints faced and what would be an ideal picture with no limitations faced for each group</p>

● **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

No.	Item	Details
3.1	<p>List any existing information/data you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy. Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.</p> <p><i>Data/information such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consultation</i> • <i>Previous EIAs</i> • <i>Demographic Information</i> • <i>Anecdotal and other evidence</i> 	<p>During 2023/24 15% of approaches were non UK nationals 14% of our total approaches were single people under the age of 25 6% of our total approaches were over the age of 65 28% of our total approaches were either pregnant or had children 67% of our total approaches were single households</p> <p>The data above is felt to be proportionate to the make up of the Melton district. The data is taken from the number of total homeless approaches recorded by Melton Borough Council.</p>
3.2	<p>What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data or information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring <i>(please list)</i></p>	<p>We do not record enough information on sexuality and have labelled as “prefer not to say”. This needs to be asked for every customer. This is also the same for religion and so we do not know if we are accommodating a person’s religious needs. We need to make sure that when we use “prefer not to say” this is at the customers request and not because we haven’t asked.</p> <p>We do not record specific disability on the IT system as the Government return does not ask for this. We do record on an individual case in their notes section, but this cannot be captured on a report. However we do check the accommodation we would be using if any specific needs are required and these are checked with the customer.</p> <p>Whilst our priority need category takes into account a person with a physical or mental health disability we do not have the data to suggest if this is one of our most at risk groups. As the data capture increases our approach can be more tailored to each group.</p>

● **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

No.	Item	Details
4.1	<p>Considering the answers given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues?</p> <p>If not explain why.</p>	<p>We have consulted with specific groups who support individual groups. The challenges they have discussed are in the strategy</p>

● **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

Considering any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge, identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision in the table below. Please refer to the general duties on page 2.

Table 5.1

Protected Characteristic	Positive / Negative Impact and Explanation <i>Your findings from available data, consultations, etc should help inform you of potential impact.</i>
Age	In 2023/24 35% of our customers were single under 35 ,meaning accommodation is less affordable for this age group. The strategy has outlined how the council will work towards identifying affordable housing and specifically working with agencies for those who are care leavers under 25 and those facing homelessness aged 16/17.
Disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Visual • Hearing • Learning Disabilities • Mental Health 	Mental health needs are a majority issue for most of our customers. This is explained in the strategy how we will link up services and capture information better to ensure our services and offers are appropriate for our customers needs.
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	The policy will be applied equally amongst the groups and cases dealt with by case by case basis, and so the policy will have a neutral effect on this group.
Race	The policy will be applied equally amongst the groups and cases dealt with by case by case basis, and so the policy will have a neutral effect on this group.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	This would have no effect but as the household would either be homeless from Melton or approaching Melton from another area it would be assumed the circumstances would be the same as where they were made homeless from. It would mean there would be a focus in keeping within the borough and so no detrimental impact would occur by placing out of the borough.
Sex (Gender)	This would have no effect. Homeless priorities are focused on vulnerabilities which would mean typically females may be favoured as they would typically be the main carer for children.
Sexual Orientation	This would have no effect
Other protected groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy & maternity • Marriage & civil partnership 	This would have no effect

Protected Characteristic	Positive / Negative Impact and Explanation <i>Your findings from available data, consultations, etc should help inform you of potential impact.</i>
Other socially excluded groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers • Low literacy • Priority neighbourhoods • Health inequalities • Rural isolation • Asylum seeker and refugee communities • Current and ex-armed HM forces personnel (Veterans) 	<p>The strategy has a section where it focus' on resettlement and asylum seekers as well as current and ex armed forces personnel and their families.</p> <p>There is also a section on how we will work with those with complex needs which will include people with low literacy levels and health issues.</p>

No.	Item	Details
5.2	<p>Where potential barriers and negative impacts have been identified, and/or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.</p> <p><i>If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.</i></p>	<p>The strategy has a section on partnerships which explains how the council will strengthen these to remove barriers to access to services. Strengthening the partnerships will assist those people in hard to reach to groups can benefit from our service and any gaps in service can be reduced.</p>
5.3	<p>Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet the Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity</p> <p><i>(Please refer to the general duties on page 2)</i></p>	<p>The strategy focuses on the priority groups outlined in the Homeless Code of Guidance and how this translates into the needs of the people approaching Melton Borough Council as homeless.</p> <p>The strategy ensures the council has a plan to focus on these priority groups and how the actions over the next 5 years will be dedicated to preventing and resolving their homelessness.</p> <p>The policy does not have a detrimental impact on households. This has a positive impact to improve and define services for those most vulnerable</p>

● **Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation, review**

No.	Item	Details
6.1	<p>Are there processes in place to review the findings of this assessment and make appropriate changes?</p> <p>How will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/negative impact?</p>	<p>Section 8 states that the strategy and associated action plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis and reported to scrutiny committee.</p> <p>Potential barriers and negative impact will be recorded on a quarterly summary for this to be included in the review or sooner if deemed necessary. This will be recorded by the strategic lead for supporting communities.</p>
6.2	<p>How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes?</p> <p>For example, policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems</p>	<p>This will be built into the audit process to ensure the policy still meets the requirements of the cohort and that appropriate accommodation is provided.</p> <p>Recommendations of this assessment will help shape the data gathering and how we shape our process to record data on our customers to ensure all processes are accessible and meet the needs of the client group approaching as homeless.</p>

● **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan. The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan.

Table 7.1

Ref. No.	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1	Changes in funding could mean further cuts to services meaning priorities may have to change	Strategic Lead Supporting Communities	ongoing
2			

● **Step 8 - Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

Table 8.1

	Who needs to know	How will they be informed <i>(We have a legal duty to publish EIAs)</i>
Employees	Housing Options team	Strategic Lead Supporting Communities and directed to EIA on website
Service Users	All residents of Melton Borough	Publish on website. Paper copy available for those with access issues to internet

	Who needs to know	How will they be informed <i>(We have a legal duty to publish EIAs)</i>
Partners & Stakeholders	Agencies supporting our customers. Include DA support services, Leaving Care, Case Management, Rough Sleeping initiative	Publish on website. Paper copy available for those with access issues to internet
Others		

No.	Item	Details
8.2	To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs / concerns are there?	To have the ability to have this translated into Ukrainian/Dari and Pashto because of responsibilities owed to refugees resettled into the borough.

- **Step 9 – Please forward your completed assessment to checkandchallenge@melton.gov.uk for scrutiny and approval**
- **Step 10 - Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service Head) following internal scrutiny by the Check & Challenge group**

I agree with this assessment *(Please delete as appropriate)*

If disagree, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out

Signed:  _____

Date: 24.04.24

Name: Aysha Rahman

Once approved, notify the person who completed the EIA to arrange for publishing on the council's website