

Equality Impact Assessment

Domestic Abuse Policy

- **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

Furthermore, in April 2024, Melton Borough Council approved a motion to treat individuals who are **Care Leavers and/or have experience of care** as if it were a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

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	Domestic Abuse Policy - resident/service-user policy
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>	Lead officer: Strategic Lead - Supporting Communities.
1.3	Date EIA started	04/09/2026
1.4	Date EIA completed	04/09/2026

● **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 purpose of the Domestic Abuse Policy is to set out Melton Borough Council's approach to supporting residents and service users affected by domestic abuse. The policy aims to ensure that disclosures are responded to safely, consistently, sensitively and without judgement; that victims and survivors, including children, are signposted or referred to appropriate support; and that the Council works effectively with statutory, voluntary and specialist partners to reduce harm, manage risk and promote safety. The policy supports compliance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, safeguarding duties and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
2.2	What specific group(s) is the policy designed to affect / impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?	The policy is designed to affect residents and service users who are experiencing, have experienced, or are at risk of domestic abuse, including children and young people recognised as victims in their own right where they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. It also affects residents who may disclose abuse through housing, community safety, homelessness, customer services, benefits, safeguarding or other Council contact routes. The intended outcome is earlier identification of domestic abuse, safer and more appropriate responses, improved access to specialist advice and support, reduced risk of repeat harm, and a clearer, survivor-centred approach across Council services.
2.3	Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?	Public consultation in September 2026. The policy should be informed by engagement with relevant internal services such as Housing, Community Safety, Safeguarding, Customer Services and Communities, and by local partnership arrangements including domestic abuse, safeguarding and community safety partners. Where possible, specialist domestic abuse services and survivor voice should inform implementation and review, with care taken not to compromise confidentiality or safety.

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

No.	Item	Details
3.1	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. <i>Data/information such as:</i> • <i>Consultation</i> • <i>Previous EIAs</i> • <i>Demographic Information</i> • <i>Anecdotal and other evidence</i>	Relevant information includes national statutory guidance on the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which recognises that domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of sex, gender reassignment, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background, and highlights the importance of intersectionality and different barriers to accessing support. Local information may include domestic abuse referral pathways, safeguarding referrals, housing and homelessness case data, community safety information, MARAC(Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) or partnership information where available, complaints or feedback, and learning from domestic homicide reviews or safeguarding reviews. Data gaps should be reviewed because domestic abuse is often under-reported and sensitive information may not be consistently captured across services. Homeless Approaches due to Domestic Abuse 2024-2026 2026 data only up to 17.09.26 Year 2024 – 26 Females, 7 males, totalling 33 people Year 2025 – 36 Females, 11 males, totalling 47 people Year 2026 – 51 Females, 9 males, totalling 60 people Over the three years that 113 females, 27 males, totalling 140 Ethnic Origin and number of approaches: White British - 114 Asian/Asian British Indian - 4 White Other - 5 White Irish - 3 Mixed Other - 3 Black – African - 2 Asian – Indian - 2 Asian – Pakistani - 2 Black – British - 2 Black/Black British African - 1 Mixed White and Black Caribbean - 1 Prefer Not To Say - 1 Not Asked for this Person - 1 Total – 140 people Housing register data is inconsistent as there isn't a specific question that says applying due to Domestic Abuse or assessed as fleeing Domestic Abuse. With the register it's either stated they are looking for a move due to violence or harassment and is considered as a welfare need to move and assessed as a high need as applying due to Domestic Abuse or a priority need if a main duty is accepted. Due to this gap in data we are considering options to improve how we capture this information for future reporting purposes.

3.2	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>	The available information indicates that domestic abuse can affect people across all protected characteristics, but barriers to disclosure and support may be higher for some groups due to fear, stigma, communication needs, disability-related dependence, immigration concerns, rural isolation, cultural or faith pressures, digital exclusion, poverty, caring responsibilities or previous negative experiences of services. Monitoring should therefore include, where safe and appropriate, protected characteristic data, referral routes, outcomes, accessibility needs, repeat presentations, use of interpreters or communication support, and feedback from residents, service users and partners. Any monitoring must be proportionate, trauma-informed and mindful of confidentiality and safety.
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● **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

No.	Item	Details
4.1	Considering the answers given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not explain why.	Yes. Further engagement should be considered with specialist domestic abuse services, safeguarding partners, housing and homelessness services, community safety partners, voluntary and community sector organisations, and groups representing residents who may face additional barriers to support. Consultation should be proportionate and safe, avoiding any approach that could identify victims or increase risk. The voices of survivors of domestic abuse should be used where available through established, safe mechanisms.

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	Positive impact anticipated. Domestic abuse can affect adults of all ages, and children may also be victims where they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The policy should support age-appropriate responses, safeguarding referrals and access to appropriate support. Potential barriers include young people not recognising abuse, older victims being less likely to disclose, dependence on family members or carers, and digital exclusion. Mitigation should include staff awareness, accessible routes to disclosure and referral to specialist support.
Disability - Physical - Visual - Hearing - Learning Disabilities - Mental Health	Positive impact anticipated, with potential barriers if reasonable adjustments are not embedded. Disabled residents may face increased barriers where they rely on the perpetrator for care, communication, transport, finances or access to services. The policy should ensure reasonable adjustments, accessible information, alternative communication methods, advocacy, safe enquiry and partnership working with specialist services. Staff should consider physical, sensory, learning disability, neurodiversity and mental health needs when assessing risk and support.
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	Positive impact anticipated if responses are inclusive and respectful. Transgender residents may experience domestic abuse alongside threats of outing, identity-based abuse, control of access to medication or support, or fear of discrimination when seeking help. The policy should make clear that support is available regardless of gender identity and that staff will use respectful language, maintain confidentiality and refer to appropriate specialist support where needed.

Protected Characteristic	Positive / Negative Impact and Explanation <i>Your findings from available data, consultations, etc should help inform you of potential impact.</i>
Race	Positive impact anticipated, with a need to address barriers linked to language, culture, racism, distrust of services, immigration concerns or lack of awareness of rights and support. The policy should support access to interpreters, culturally competent responses, clear information about confidentiality and risk, and referral to appropriate specialist services. Staff should avoid assumptions and consider intersectional risks, including honour-based abuse, forced marriage and immigration-related abuse where relevant.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	Positive impact anticipated. Abuse may include coercion linked to faith, belief, family or community expectations, and some residents may feel unable to disclose due to stigma or fear of exclusion. The policy should ensure non-judgemental support, confidentiality, safe referral routes and awareness of faith-related abuse without stereotyping any community or belief group.
Sex (Gender)	Positive impact anticipated. Domestic abuse disproportionately affects women, but men can also be victims, and all victims should receive a safe and appropriate response. The policy should recognise gendered patterns of abuse while ensuring access to support for all residents and service users. Staff should consider risk, coercive control, sexual abuse, economic abuse and the needs of children without making assumptions based on sex.
Sexual Orientation	Positive impact anticipated if services are visibly inclusive. Lesbian, gay and bisexual residents may experience identity-based abuse, threats of outing, isolation from support networks or concern that services will not understand their experience. The policy should ensure inclusive language, confidentiality, awareness of same-sex relationship abuse and referral to appropriate specialist support where needed.
Other protected groups • Pregnancy & maternity • Marriage & civil partnership	Positive impact anticipated. Pregnancy and maternity can increase risk or complexity where abuse escalates during pregnancy or where a survivor has additional health, housing or financial needs. Marriage and civil partnership status must not affect access to support, and forced marriage or abuse by wider family members should be recognised where relevant. The policy should ensure safeguarding, referral pathways and trauma-informed support for parents and children.
Care Leavers &/or Experience of Care (Adopted as a motion by Melton Borough Council in April 2024)	Positive impact anticipated. Care leavers and people with experience of care may have additional vulnerabilities linked to trauma, unstable housing, limited family support, financial hardship or mistrust of services. The policy should ensure staff consider these factors sensitively and provide supported referral pathways, including links with housing, safeguarding and community support where appropriate.
Other socially excluded groups • Carers • Low literacy • Priority neighbourhoods • Health inequalities • Rural isolation • Asylum seeker and refugee communities • Current and ex-armed HM forces personnel (Veterans)	Positive impact anticipated, with specific attention needed for residents who may be socially excluded or less able to access support. This includes carers, people with low literacy, residents in rural areas or priority neighbourhoods, people experiencing poverty or health inequalities, refugees and asylum seekers, and veterans. Barriers may include transport, digital access, confidentiality in small communities, language, financial control, fear of authorities or limited knowledge of services. The policy should support accessible information, multiple contact routes, partnership referrals and safe communication planning.

No.	Item	Details
5.2	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. <i>If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.</i> <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>	Negative impacts are not intended, but barriers may arise if staff are not confident in identifying domestic abuse, if information is not accessible, if referral pathways are unclear, or if monitoring does not capture diverse needs. Mitigation should include staff awareness and training, clear referral and safeguarding pathways, accessible formats and interpretation, reasonable adjustments, safe enquiry and confidentiality procedures, partnership working with specialist domestic abuse services, and regular review of data and feedback. Where gaps are identified, they should be added to the action plan and monitored through the policy review process.
5.3	Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet the Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity <i>(Please refer to the general duties on page 2)</i>	Overall, the policy is expected to have a positive equality impact by improving consistency, safety and accessibility of the Council's response to domestic abuse for residents and service users. It supports the Council's duties to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by recognising that domestic abuse can affect people across all protected characteristics and that some groups face additional barriers to disclosure and support. The policy will meet equality and diversity responsibilities, provided that implementation includes staff awareness, accessible communication, reasonable adjustments, partnership working, safe monitoring and periodic review.

● Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation, review

No.	Item	Details
6.1	Are there processes in place to review the findings of this assessment and make appropriate changes? How will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/negative impact?	Yes. The findings should be reviewed through the policy review cycle, safeguarding and community safety arrangements, service performance monitoring, complaints and feedback, and relevant partnership forums. Monitoring should consider referral numbers, referral routes, outcomes, repeat contact, accessibility needs, use of interpreters or reasonable adjustments, staff training completion and any equality-related concerns. Any emerging barriers or negative impacts should be escalated and added to the action plan.
6.2	How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? For example, policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems	Recommendations should be built into service planning, policy review, safeguarding practice, community safety planning, staff training programmes and partnership work. The EIA should be revisited when the policy is reviewed, when legislation or statutory guidance changes, or when monitoring, consultation or case learning identifies new equality issues. Actions should be tracked by the lead officer and relevant service managers.

- **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	Confirm consultation undertaken and record any feedback from internal services, partners and specialist domestic abuse organisations.	Strategic Lead - Supporting Communities	September 2026
2	Ensure resident-facing information is available in accessible formats and promotes safe routes to disclose domestic abuse.	Strategic Lead - Supporting Communities	Already available
3	Confirm staff awareness/training approach for relevant frontline services and include domestic abuse referral pathways in service procedures.	Strategic Lead - Supporting Communities	December 2026

- **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 (We have a legal duty to publish EIAs)
Employees	All employees	Strategic Lead Supporting Communities and directed to EIA on website
Service Users		Publish on website. Paper copy available for those with access issues to internet
Partners & Stakeholders		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?	Communication should be safe, accessible and trauma-informed. Information should be available in plain English and, where required, alternative formats, translation, interpretation, large print or other communication support. Staff should consider digital exclusion, safe contact preferences, confidentiality risks, rural isolation, low literacy and the need for discreet routes to access help. Online information should not be the only route to support.

- **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 / disagree 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: 29/09/2026

Name: Laura Swift

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