

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

Disability	Age	Sex (gender)
Gender reassignment	Marriage/civil partnership	Pregnancy/maternity
Race	Sexual orientation	Religion/belief

By law we must have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

In effect, this means that we need to ensure that our policies and services are fair, equitable and proportionate and where possible mitigate against any adverse impacts on people from the different protected characteristics.

In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the impact of living in a **rural area** as part of this assessment. Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law, but for an organisation such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people's experience of a policy or service.

The Rural-Urban definition, defines the rurality of very small census based geographies. Census Output Areas forming settlements with populations of over 10,000 (which are urban), while the remainder are defined as one of three rural types: *town and fringe, village or hamlet and dispersed*.

Details	
Service or policy title	Babergh & Mid Suffolk Amendments to the Choice Based Lettings Allocations Policy
Lead officer <i>(responsible for the policy or service/function)</i>	Heather Tucker, Corporate Manager Housing Solutions
Officers carrying out the EQIA <i>(at least one must have done EQIA training and it is recommended that an officer responsible for the policy or service/function is involved in completion)</i>	Heather Tucker
Is this new or a revision? <i>(If revision state when previous EQIA undertaken)</i>	New
Is this the first time this policy or function has been assessed?	Yes (Updated Policy). Original Policy assessed in 2008/9.
Date of completing this EQIA	April 2021

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Description
<p>What exactly is proposed? <i>(Describe the service/policy and the changes that are being planned)</i></p> <p>The Allocations Policy is used to assess applications for social housing and sets out the criteria, which should be used in the allocation of social housing.</p> <p>Changes are required to the currently allocations policy. Some are related to legislative changes, such as legislation related to the UK leaving the European Union and some amendments include clarifying wording in the policy so that key decisions are made fairly and consistently by all Gateway Local Authorities.</p> <p>Some of the changes include: -</p> <p>Disregarding local connection criteria for spouses and civil partners who are required to leave accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following a breakdown in their relationship with their Service spouse or partner;</p> <p>Clarification on how properties in rural parts of the Gateway may be restricted so that only applicants with a specific type of local connection are eligible for allocation of these properties; and</p> <p>Clarification that when completing financial assessments on households to ascertain whether they can meet their own housing need, will now include all adult members of the household, not just the main applicant's income.</p>
<p>Why? <i>(Give reasons why these changes are being introduced)</i></p> <p>These changes are required to the Allocations Policy because of either legislative changes; such as legislation related to the UK leaving the European Union and some amendments include clarifying wording in the policy so that key decisions are made fairly and consistently by all Gateway Local Authorities.</p>
<p>What will the effect of the changes be? <i>(Describe which people, communities, localities etc. will be affected by the changes)</i></p> <p>The changes ensure the Local Authorities involved in the Gateway to Homechoice system meet all legislative requirements and that key decisions are made fairly and consistently by all officers using the policy.</p>
<p>How will it be implemented? <i>(Describe the decision making process, timescales, process for implementation)</i></p>

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All Councils who form part of the Gateway to Homechoice Partnership will be presenting the proposed changes to Elected Members for approval.
When is it due to start? <i>(Planned start of new/revised policy/service)</i>
1 st July 2021
Any other relevant details
None

Data about the population
What is the demographic profile or make up of the community you are serving? <i>(A brief overview of quantitative data used and qualitative research undertaken, including customer surveys and focus groups, plus links to reports, local or national data that you have used, suggested sources of information can be found at the end of this document)</i>
The Allocations Policy covers any application made from a resident of the Districts, who is requesting assistance with accessing social housing.
What is the profile or make up of your service users by protected characteristics? <i>(Where this data is available. If it is not currently available state any plans to collect this in future)</i>
BMSDC Districts Population Data
Age
Babergh:
- 16 years or under: 18.14%;
- 16 to 64 years: 60.48%;
- 65 years and over: 21.38%
Mid Suffolk:
- 16 years or under: 18.43%;
- 16 to 64 years: 61.44%;
- 65 years and over: 20.13%

Implications for communities and workforce	
Disability	
What is the impact on people with a disability (including children with additional needs) and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	There is no direct impact on anyone who is disabled. The policy details how applications from disabled persons will be considered and dealt with.

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How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Age	
What is the impact on people of different ages and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	Anyone age 16 plus can legally make a Social Housing Application.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Sex (gender)	
What is the impact on people of different genders and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The CBL Allocations Policy, does not take this into consideration when assessing or allocating housing. Any person of any gender is able to make an application for Social Housing.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Gender reassignment	
What is the impact on people who have undergone gender reassignment (i.e. transgender people) and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The CBL Allocations Policy, does not take this into consideration when assessing or allocating housing. Any person aged 16 plus is able to make an application for social housing.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Marriage/civil partnership	

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What is the impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The CBL Allocations Policy, does not take this into consideration when assessing or allocating housing. Any person aged 16 plus is able to make an application for social housing.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Pregnancy/maternity	
What is the impact on people who are pregnant women or those with a young child and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	Any person aged 16 plus is able to make an application for social housing.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Race	
What is the impact on people from different races or ethnic groups and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The CBL Allocations Policy, does not take this into consideration when assessing or allocating housing. Any person aged 16 plus is able to make an application for social housing.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Sexual orientation	
What is the impact on people according to their sexual orientation and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The CBL Allocations Policy, does not take this into consideration when assessing or allocating housing. Any person aged 16 plus is able to make an application for social housing.

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How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A
Religion/belief	
What is the impact on people according to their religion or belief and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The CBL Allocations Policy, does not take this into consideration when assessing or allocating housing. Any person aged 16 plus is able to make an application for social housing.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A

Rurality	
Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law: but for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people's experience of a policy or service.	
What is the impact on people according to whether they live in an urban or rural environment and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The CBL Allocations Policy enables individuals to choose where they wish to live, so they are not prevented from living in certain areas. The only restriction relates to s106 sites, which are determined as part of the planning process and where an applicant needs to meet the strict local needs criteria.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	N/A
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	N/A

Making Decisions	
Having completed this equality impact assessment indicate which decision is recommended to be taken.	
Should the policy or service be implemented as the correct course of action?	Yes

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Should the policy or service be amended as suggested by the report so that mitigating actions are taken to address an adverse or negative impact on any characteristic?	No
Should the policy or service be reviewed and revised more significantly to take into account its impact on different groups?	No
Should the policy or service not be actioned as there are too many negative impacts?	No

Monitoring Impact

Assessing the impact on equality is an ongoing process that does not end once a policy or service had been agreed or implemented.	
How frequently will the policy or service be reviewed?	The Policy is regularly reviewed, especially as new legislation is released.
Who will be involved?	Housing Solutions, Members
Will there need to be an action plan completed for any amendments?	No
What further evidence or consultation will be needed to check that the policy or service is working well?	No

Completion

Authors signature	Heather Tucker
Date of completion	28 th April 2021

Additional sources of data can be found on the following links:

<http://www.suffolkobservatory.info/Default.aspx>

<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

<http://suffolkcf.org.uk/publications/hidden-needs-2016/>

<https://www.nao.org.uk/>

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