

# Equality Impact Assessment

Homelessness Strategy 2015 to 2020



<b>Name of assessor</b>	<b>Alison Wilks</b>
<b>Strategic Management Lead</b>	<b>Rachel O'Reilly</b>
<b>Date of assessment</b>	<b>4 December 2014</b>
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	<b>No</b>

*Please note that guidance (revised in March 2014) for completing this template is available on the intranet. This template was also revised in March 2014.*

## **Section 1: Introduction and background (see p.10 of the guidance)**

**Please describe your service or function. This should include:**

- **The aims and scope**
- **The main beneficiaries or users**
- **The main equality, accessibility, social exclusion issues and barriers, and the 'protected characteristics'<sup>1</sup> they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every protected characteristic)**

**If this EIA is part of a project it is important to focus on the service or policy the project aims to review or improve.**

The Council is required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to have a Homelessness Strategy. The strategy sets out the Council's services to prevent and address homelessness. It also sets out actions to improve the service and fill gaps in the service. To inform the strategy a review is first undertaken on the levels of homelessness in the area and identifies the local services available specifically for the homeless. The 2014 review provides analysis on homelessness in Mole Valley and the actions taken to prevent and tackle homelessness. It also provides analysis on the ethnicity of those who approach the Council as homeless, of which the majority are white British reflecting the demographics of the area.

**Now describe how this fits into the Council's Corporate Priorities, Sustainable Community Strategy or other local, regional or national plans and priorities.**

The strategy fits with the Council's priority on access to services. The homelessness service is available during working hours and out of hours in emergencies. Customers can make contact in person, by phone and in writing. There is also an on-line housing options tool that customers can use at any time. Interviews generally take place at the Council's offices, however, if this is problematic they are carried out where the person is staying or other mutually convenient location.

**If you are not carrying out an equality impact assessment, briefly summarise**

<sup>1</sup> More information and definition of protected characteristics can be found [here](#)

reasons why you have reached this conclusion, the evidence for this and the nature of any stakeholder verification of your conclusion.

N/a

## Section 2: Analysis and assessment (see pp. 10-13 of the guidance)

Given available information, what is the actual or likely impact on minority, disadvantaged, vulnerable and socially excluded groups?

Indicate for each 'protected characteristics' whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, a mixture of both or no impact.

Protected characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Age	x			The aim of the strategy is to prevent homelessness where possible and provide accommodation when required. The most vulnerable are protected by the homelessness legislation. Anyone can apply as homeless if they are over 16. Families with children or expecting a child are protected by the homelessness legislation. The review and strategy provide information on services already provided for the homeless and those services that are planned to fill gaps
Disability	x			The homelessness legislation protects people with disabilities in that the Council must assess whether they are vulnerable and in priority need under the legislation.
Gender reassignment	x			Services for the homeless are provided regardless of gender reassignment. The legislation protects those who are considered to be vulnerable and in priority need.
Marriage and civil partnership			x	Services for the homeless are provided regardless of marital and partnership

				status. Single people and couples may not be protected by the homelessness legislation if they are found not to be vulnerable and in priority need. However MVDC provides free housing advice and options service and offers preventions measures for this group. It is also working towards the No Second Night Out priority for those who are rough sleeping.
Pregnancy and maternity	x			Families expecting a child are protected by the homelessness legislation.
Race			x	Services for the homeless are provided regardless of race. Monitoring shows that the majority of people who approach the Council as homeless are white British
Religion or belief			x	Services for the homeless are provided regardless of religion or belief
Sex			x	Services for the homeless are provided regardless of sex
Sexual orientation			x	Services for the homeless are provided regardless of sexual orientation. The legislation protects those who are considered to be vulnerable and in priority need.
<b>Other aspects to consider</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Carers	x			Fulltime carers, subject to assessment, will be considered as part of a homeless person's household.
Rural/urban issues			x	Where people are not able to come to the Council's offices because of transport difficulties MVDC staff will visit them. However, it is unlikely that the Council can guarantee to house those who become homeless in rural areas in the same area, this is because of the

				shortage of affordable homes and private rented accommodation in MVDC and particularly in rural areas. However, this also applies generally, as it is difficult to guarantee to any housing applicant that they will be housed in the area of their preference because of the shortage of affordable homes.
HR issues (how will staff with protected characteristics be affected?)				N/a

**What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts? Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified, and is it lawful?**

Customers are negatively impacted if they apply as homeless and the Council makes a negative decision. In these cases customers have the right of review to the Council followed by review in the County Court.

**Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made? Who are the beneficiaries? How have they benefited?**

The aim of the strategy is to improve the Council's homelessness service. Improvements will be made by achieving the National Practitioner Standard for homelessness services.

### **Section 3: Evidence gathering and fact-finding** (see p.14 of the guidance)

**What evidence is available to support your views above? Please include:**

- A summary of the available evidence
- Identification of where there are gaps in the evidence (this may identify a need for more evidence in the action plan)
- What information is currently captured with respect to usage and take up of services.
- What the current situation is in relation to equality and diversity monitoring (where relevant)

Detailed statistics to support the Housing Strategy are contained in the Homelessness Review 2014. Gaps in services are identified in the review and carried through into the strategy.

**How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment? Who are they, and what is their view?**

The strategy and review have been sent to partners for comment.

**Recommendations**

**Please summarise the main recommendations arising from the assessment. NB If it is impossible to diminish negative impacts to an acceptable or even lawful level the recommendation should be that the proposal or the relevant part of it should not proceed.**

The Homelessness Strategy Action plan covers the gaps in service and service improvements required to meet the National Practitioner Standard for Homelessness Services.

**Section 4: Action Plan** (see pp.15-16 of the guidance)

Actions needed to implement the EIA recommendations

Issue	Action	Expected outcome	Who	Deadline for action

**Sign off**

<b>Who will be responsible for reviewing this EIA?</b>	Alison Wilks
<b>Review date(s) i.e. when will this EIA be reviewed – see p.9 of guidance</b>	2020
<b>Strategic Management Lead signed off</b>	Rachel O'Reilly

- Signed off electronic version to be kept in your team for review
- Electronic copy to be forwarded to the Policy and Performance Team for publishing