

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (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.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223 457046.

Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking. For advice on consulting on equality impacts, please contact Graham Saint, Strategy Officer, (graham.saint@cambridge.gov.uk or 01223 457044).

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| 1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service |
| Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-26 |

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| 2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available) |
| To follow when strategy is approved. |

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| 3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? |
| The purpose of the strategy is to map out how Cambridge City Council intends to deliver the following objectives over the next 5 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevent people from becoming homeless;• Help people who unavoidably become homeless to secure suitable accommodation;• Minimise rough sleeping, and• Ensure fair outcomes for all citizens. |

4. Responsible service

Housing Advice Service

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Residents
- Visitors
- Staff

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

- People who find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness in the Cambridge city.
- People who are not homeless or threatened with homelessness, but who have applied or wish to apply for social housing.
- People rough sleeping.
- People in Cambridge and from elsewhere experiencing domestic abuse or harassment.
- Staff working in Cambridge City Council's Housing Advice Service;
- Neighbouring local authorities;
- Police officers in the city, and those working in roles focusing on antisocial behaviour on the streets of the city.
- Residents, workers and visitors to the city, who will be impacted by a reduction in street life and begging.
- Existing tenants in social housing;
- Private sector landlords in the city and surrounding areas.

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- New
- Major change
- Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)

- Yes
- No

If 'Yes' please provide details below:

- Contracted and non-contracted agencies, including voluntary agencies, providing support to single homeless people, rough sleepers, and people experiencing domestic abuse or harassment (e.g. Wintercomfort, Change Grow Live (the

Cambridge Street Outreach Team), It Takes a City, Jimmy's Cambridge and the NHS-led Access Surgery.

- Partner registered housing providers.
- Physical and mental health services.
- Cambridgeshire County Council adult and children's social care.
- Cambridge City Council environmental health service.
- Cambridge City Council safer communities service.
- Cambridge City Council revenue and benefit service.

8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?

Scheduled to be presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee 19th January 2021.

9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

Detailed reports about the characteristics of homeless households in Cambridge City Council have been generated from two main sources:

- Locata (The Home-Link partnership's core case management system) and
- InForm (the system used by a range of agencies to record the needs of and interactions with single homeless people in the sub-region).

These have been compared with reports about (for example) the characteristics of applicants to the housing register, and data about the characteristics of the population of the district (from sources such as this: <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/>).

We have consulted with service users in surveys and by focus group.

We have consulted extensively with partner organisations.

10. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Looking at the 1,377 individuals who are part of households that have been formally assessed as being already homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days (in the 18-month period 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2020), people under 45 years of age seem to be disproportionately affected. People aged 25-44 represent 25% of the population of Cambridgeshire, yet 42% of those that are part of a homeless application to the City are within this bracket. Of those single people who have been verified as sleeping rough in the City, 58% were aged 25-44.

People over 45 represent 45% of the population of Cambridgeshire, yet only 15% of those making formal homeless applications to Cambridge City Council are over 45.

This means that measures which concentrate on preventing or relieving homelessness among younger people are likely to have the greatest positive impact. This strategy proposes focusing on early interventions, particularly for people whose family or friends can no longer accommodate them (which are usually younger people). There are also proposals to strengthen schemes that encourage applicants to improve their earning potential, whilst also improving access to housing - such as the HB+ scheme.

However, the over-45s make up 38% of verified rough sleepers (36% being between 45 and 64). The wide range of measures aimed at preventing rough sleeping and enhancing support services will all positively impact people in middle age groups, as well as younger people.

Families with children (or households expecting a child) automatically attract 'priority need' status under homeless legislation, meaning that there is a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to them if they are eligible and homeless. 21% of the individuals within homeless applicants' households were children aged 14 or under (compared with 18% of the population of Cambridgeshire). Measures to address reliance on temporary and emergency accommodation, and to reduce the duration of stays in this type of accommodation will all have a positive impact on school age children.

(b) Disability

Section 6 of the Equality act 2010 states that "(1)A person (P) has a disability if—

(a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and

(b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

According to Government data, disabled people now make up 22% of the UK population. Census data suggests that around 13% of residents in Cambridge have a long-term activity-limiting illness. Looking at the 945 applicants that have been formally assessed as being already homeless or

threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days in the 18-month period 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2020, 46% have a support need relating to mental ill health, a learning disability, or physical ill-health & disability. This shows that people with a disability are more than twice as prevalent among those who become homeless. Any measures which successfully prevent or relieve homelessness will therefore positively impact this group.

The private rented sector tends to be less flexible in accommodating people with physical or mental impairments, which makes this sector very difficult for many homeless people to access. This limits the housing options available to this group. Social and affordable housing is highly sought after to meet the needs of homeless households who have limited choices. In 2011 (according to the Census) around 24% of individuals living in social housing in Cambridge had a long-term health problem or disability. Nationally 50% of households in the social-rented sector include someone with a long-term illness or disability.

The numbers of homeless people that are being assisted into social housing may have a detrimental impact on existing social housing tenants who are vulnerable due to poor physical or mental health. In areas of dense social housing there is likely to be disproportionate stress on health services.

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that families with disabled members are more likely to be in poverty than those with no disabled person in the family. This also limits their housing options, and results in a disproportionate representation in social housing.

Staff members with responsibilities for assessing, supporting and sourcing accommodation for applicants with complex needs could be exposed to mental health problems themselves. In addition to providing support through the performance management process, the City Council provides an independent and confidential support service for City Council employees, PAM Assist. Officers can call the service whenever this is required.

(c) Gender reassignment

Transgender people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and be victims of hate crime. Stonewall estimated that 2 in 5 trans people (40%) nationally have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months.

Transgender hate crime accounted for 2% of hate crimes recorded nationally in 2017/18.

In the 30 months between 1st April 2018 and 30th September 2020, 17 transgender individuals have formed part of households that have sought assistance from Cambridge City Council's Housing Advice Service. 9 have gone on to become homeless or threatened with homelessness. In most cases gender reassignment has played a part in the loss or threatened loss of the applicant's last settled home.

It is highly likely that persons with this characteristic will be positively affected by a strategy of sourcing suitable settled accommodation. There is likely to be a lower risk of hate crime through abuse and/or assault whilst in settled accommodation, and readier access to an ongoing support service that will ensure that harassment and abuse is not tolerated.

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

No positive or negative effects resulting from marital or civil partnership status have been identified as likely to result as a consequence of this strategy, which proposes no changes in this area.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnant women are awarded priority status by statute when presenting as homeless. The strategy proposes no changes in this area and consequently there are no negative or positive effects resulting from it.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

The strategy proposes that more work needs to be done in order to understand emerging information about the differential experience of homelessness, rough sleeping, and access to advice and social housing across ethnic and national groups. It is possible that the effects of the Covid pandemic may increase the complexity of the experience and further complicate our understanding of it.

It is, of course, the aim of current policy and practice to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination due to race, ethnicity, colour or nationality, and it is considered that this strategy will have a neutral impact at worst, but ideally will further strengthen non-discriminatory practice and our ability to better identify the various ways discrimination may happen. Complexity concerning this protected characteristic arises because both nationally and locally the experience of homelessness, rough sleeping and access to good quality housing tends to follow patterns related to the relative economic prosperity of different ethnic and national groups. Evidence of economic differentiation between different racial, ethnic and national groups has emerged quite strongly in recent decades,

as has generational change within groups, adding to complexity and making it difficult to generalise about race and access to housing.

An example of differentiation between groups is that Cambridge's two largest non-white groups, Indian and Chinese, rarely present to the Council as homeless and are very rarely found to be rough sleeping. These groups are also underrepresented as applicants for social housing, relative to their assumed proportion in the local population. Conversely, and as would be expected, ethnic groups tending to have lower average incomes and higher levels of economic inactivity tend disproportionately to seek housing advice (although even here there is complexity with some south Asians being substantial local landlords). It seems likely that these trends have an economic rather than a racial origin, but race, ethnicity and nationality may overlay economic advantage or disadvantage in a way we need to try to better understand if we are to promote greater equality.

It is not currently possible to say whether citizens of EEA countries are disproportionately presenting as homeless, or seeking social housing, given the paucity of good current information as to the proportion of such people in the local population, but in the current year almost one-fifth to date of applications to join the housing register have been made by people where the head of household identified as 'White other' (mainly European) and around 15 percent of all lettings was made to people in this category. It will be easier to analyse this when the first results of the 2021 census are known, but again there will be complexities as it is not known what the effects of the UK's exit from the EU might have on the medium and longer-term housing prospect of EEA citizens.

Regarding rough sleeping, at around 20 percent of the intake, EEA citizens were seemingly disproportionately represented in the 2020 effort to provide emergency Covid-safe accommodation. The Covid effort has provided an opportunity to work intensively with this group and it is expected that the disproportion will reduce as a consequence, pointing the way to what can be achieved to equalise outcomes when appropriate intensive work is carried out.

The homelessness and rough sleeper strategy contains an action to analyse the practical consequences of our homelessness and housing allocation policies. This is expected to shed light on many of the unknowns referenced here, potentially leading to further actions within the five-year plan.

(g) Religion or belief

No positive or negative effects resulting from a person's religion or belief has been identified as likely because of this strategy.

(h) Sex

58% of social rented homes nationally are headed by a female. Lone parent households are also more likely to be headed by women, again many of whom are on low incomes. For example, 24% of

social housing households in England are lone parent households. In separated families women are more likely to have responsibilities for any children, and pregnancy is a factor conferring priority status under the homelessness legislation.

Rough sleeping is more common amongst men than women; with typically over 80 percent of local rough sleepers being male. Our strategy aims to significantly reduce rough sleeping in terms of number and duration. However, the strategy has identified that not enough is known about female rough sleepers and the potentially different ways in which street homelessness impacts on them relative to men. Our strategy commits us to finding exploring this further.

(i) Sexual orientation

It is estimated that 1 in 5 LGBTQ+ people have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the last 12 months (source: Stonewall). A strategy which seeks to assist people who are vulnerably housed, or who want to escape an exposed, street-based lifestyle is designed to mitigate the risks posed to people in this group and is likely to have a positive effect. A full consultation exercise has been conducted prior to implementation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and no participants have highlighted issues relating to possible effects on the LGBTQ+ community. Nevertheless, analysis will be continued during the first 2 years of the strategy, to ensure that no negative effects are emerging.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on low income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty

It is too early to assess the impact of Covid 19 on homelessness and rough sleeping but early indications are that due mainly to the projected increase in unemployment, people living in privately-rented accommodation may be at greatest risk followed by people who, prior to the pandemic, were able only to marginally afford to pay a mortgage. This strategy aims to anticipate these possibilities, supporting more people, more actively, to retain a home at risk.

11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqlA accordingly.)

This strategy contains a comprehensive action plan and monitoring process which has been strongly informed throughout by considerations of equality, particularly relating to housing unaffordability. A date for completion has been agreed for each action.

12. Do you have any additional comments?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: James McWilliams, Manager – Housing Advice.

Date of EqlA sign off: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: [Click here to enter text.](#)

All EqlAs need to be sent to Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer. Ctrl + click on the button below to send this (you will need to attach the form to the email):

[Send form](#)