

Equality Impact Assessment [version 2.12]



Title: Outcomes of the Central Additional Licensing Scheme	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please state]	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Already exists / review <input type="checkbox"/> Changing
Directorate: Growth and Regeneration	Lead Officer name: Tom Gilchrist
Service Area: Private Housing and Accessible Homes	Lead Officer role: Service Manager Private Housing and Accessible Homes

Step 1: What do we want to do?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to assist decision makers in understanding the impact of proposals as part of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Detailed guidance to support completion can be found here [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com).

This assessment should be started at the beginning of the process by someone with a good knowledge of the proposal and service area, and sufficient influence over the proposal. It is good practice to take a team approach to completing the equality impact assessment. Please contact the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) early for advice and feedback.

1.1 What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this proposal?

Briefly explain the purpose of the proposal and why it is needed. Describe who it is aimed at and the intended aims / outcomes. Where known also summarise the key actions you plan to undertake. Please use plain English, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Equality Impact Assessments are viewed by a wide range of people including decision-makers and the wider public.

The original proposal in 2019 was to designate an additional (for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)) licensing scheme to 12 wards namely: Central, Cotham, Clifton, Clifton Down, Hotwells & Harbourside, Redland, Ashley, Bishopston & Ashley Down, Easton, Lawrence Hill, Southville and Windmill Hill in order to improve housing conditions and property management. See below for further details.

This applied to all privately rented properties where there are 3 or more unrelated people living together and sharing some facilities like a bathroom or kitchen. There is already a national mandatory scheme that covers HMOs with 5 or more people. There are a number of exemptions to additional licensing and these include local authority owned or leased property, properties owned by Registered Providers and certain student accommodation.

The council recognised the increasing need for good quality private rented accommodation in the city and the positive impact it has for those who choose this option. However, there are also those who are not in a position of choice and private rented accommodation is the only option they have available to them. With the reduction in council owned housing stock and the limited number of units available from social lettings the demand for housing in this sector has grown and the supply of private rented housing is at a premium. Therefore, we must be mindful of those who are vulnerable or with limited/ no choice, accepting sub-standard accommodation. Many of these vulnerable people live in HMOs as this is the cheapest option for them.

The Building Research Establishment (BRE) undertook a report for us on the stock condition of the private housing sector in Bristol. They reported that "HMOs in the private rented sector in Bristol are generally in poorer condition than non-HMOs. The levels of category 1 hazards are notably higher for HMOs (22% compared to 13% for non-HMOs), especially for fall hazards (15% compared to 5%). Levels of disrepair are also higher for HMOs (9% compared to 6% for non-HMOs)". The report also highlighted the wards with the highest concentration of HMOs and levels of disrepair and/or poor management.

Licensing has a number of significant advantages compared with other initiatives to deal with issues of unsatisfactory property condition and poor management and other activities directly attributed to the private rented sector.

The additional powers of licensing declarations give local authorities more practical options to work proactively with landlords and agents, rather than just responding to tenant complaints. By declaring these areas, tenants also have more security if they complain about their accommodation. Many tenants do not know their rights, what conditions they should expect or realise that they can make a complaint about their property or landlord so a great number of properties in this sector do not come to the attention of the local authority.

Under a licensing scheme, a number of licensing conditions will be set for both the property standard and also for good management practice. As part of the scheme, we provided advice on the necessary improvements required to bring the property up to standard and enforced when the landlords do not comply with the licensing standards or failed to apply for a licence.

Once a scheme has been declared, it is illegal for a landlord or agent to let a property without a licence or to evict tenants under section 21 if the property is not licensed.

There were a number of successful outcomes from the scheme, leading to improvements to housing conditions for private rented tenants. However because tenants move on and we do not collect equalities data from them, it is not easy to measure their impact in relation to equalities.

This EqIA is to accompany the report that is reviewing how the licensing scheme went. The Licensing scheme itself had its own EqIA – this EqIA is for the reporting of the scheme only. This scheme has now ended and any new schemes are subject to their own EqIAs.

1.2 Who will the proposal have the potential to affect?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bristol City Council workforce	<input type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> The wider community
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioned services	<input type="checkbox"/> City partners / Stakeholder organisations	
Additional comments:		

1.3 Will the proposal have an equality impact?

Could the proposal affect access levels of representation or participation in a service, or does it have the potential to change e.g. quality of life: health, education, or standard of living etc.?

If 'No' explain why you are sure there will be no equality impact, then skip steps 2-4 and request review by Equality and Inclusion Team.

If 'Yes' complete the rest of this assessment, or if you plan to complete the assessment at a later stage please state this clearly here and request review by the Equality and Inclusion Team.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	[please select]
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This report will be completed internally by Bristol City Council Officers. The report will not have an equalities impact as it a report reviewing the HMO licensing scheme only and is not related to an extension of the scheme or a new scheme. The report is stating how the scheme has gone and what the outcomes have been.

Step 5: Review

The Equality and Inclusion Team need at least five working days to comment and feedback on your EqIA. EqIAs should only be marked as reviewed when they provide sufficient information for decision-makers on the equalities

impact of the proposal. Please seek feedback and review from the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) before requesting sign off from your Director¹.

Equality and Inclusion Team Review: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>	Director Sign-Off: Fiona Lester, Interim Director Housing and Landlord Services 
Date: 20/02/2025	Date: 21/02/2025

¹ Review by the Equality and Inclusion Team confirms there is sufficient analysis for decision makers to consider the likely equality impacts at this stage. This is not an endorsement or approval of the proposal.