

## Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)



Name of proposal	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24
Directorate and Service Area	Communities (Housing Options)
Name of Lead Officer	Graham Jones Dave Clarke

### Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

#### 1.1 What is the proposal?

To update the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 with a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy covering the period 2019-24. Local Authorities are required to produce and publish a preventing Homelessness Strategy at least every five years in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002.

### Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

#### 2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

The updated strategy will be produced alongside a comprehensive Homelessness Review document, which brings together key data and statistics relating to homelessness and rough sleeping in Bristol during the past five years. In brief, however:

- The most common cause of statutory homelessness over the past five years has been termination of assured shorthold accommodation closely followed by parents or other relatives not willing or able to accommodate.

- The main category for identifying priority need among statutory homeless over the past five years has consistently been because the household includes dependent children. This is unlikely to change with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA).
- The 25-44 age groups makes up the largest cohort of households accepted as statutorily homeless in Bristol. This group have also seen the largest increase in numbers over the last five years.
- Lone parent households headed by a female account for the majority of homelessness acceptances. In 2017/18 around 51% of statutorily homeless households who presented to the Homelessness Prevention Service were lone parent households headed by a female'
- Couples with or expecting children are a group where we have also seen significant increase. In each case there is insufficient detail to give an indication of the ethnicity of these households.
- There has been a significant increase in the numbers of households that have been provided with temporary accommodation in the last few years. The number of households living in temporary accommodation (TA) in Bristol in March 2012 was 160. On the 30th June 2017 this figure was 585. This is a 265% increase and has had a significant impact on the service delivery plans of the Housing Options Team.
- Bristol consistently reports one of the highest numbers of homelessness preventions and reliefs nationally.
- The national rough sleeper count in November 2017 identified that, compared to the rest of England, the Bristol rough sleeping population had higher than average numbers of women and non-EU nationals. It also identified a slightly higher than average number in the 18-25 age group.
- One of the key issues identified for action under priority 4 in the strategy (the priority aimed at improving equality and diversity) is a focus on young people. It is recognised that young people are increasingly disadvantaged by the combined impact of high rents, low incomes, welfare reform and limited housing options.

## 2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

Data collected for the homelessness review indicates that there are gaps in existing ethnicity data, with ethnicity not always stated or recorded. From what data there is, indicates that BME homelessness applicants are over-represented compared to their relative proportion in the Bristol Community as a whole. For example, between 30-40% of homelessness acceptances between 2012 and 2018 were from BME households, even though 'non-white British'

households comprise around 22% of Bristol's population.

We also know that there are gaps in our data relating to sexual orientation.

We know that there are higher than average numbers of women and non-EU nationals represented in the Bristol rough sleeping population, but we do not currently know enough about the reasons why. From our discussions with organisations such as Next Link and One25 we know that women who are street homeless are more likely to have complex needs (sex working/dependency on drugs/alcohol/domestic abuse). We also know that current hostel provision in the city may be inappropriate and/or unavailable to women who are street homeless.

In general, we acknowledge that there are gaps in our knowledge about the future demands on homelessness services as it affects a range of equalities groups and will be looking to improve the range of equalities data we gather, both as a local authority and through the homelessness services we commission.

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

The public consultation garnered views from The Early Intervention & Preventing Homelessness Challenge Group (EI&PHCG) – a multi-agency steering group for the strategy also includes a representative with lived experience of homelessness to ensure that service user issues are represented in the strategy and accompanying action plan.

Prior to the launch of the consultation period we also engaged with a range of stakeholders, including organisations which represent equalities groups. Stakeholders included

- National Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel (MHCLG)
- National Housing Federation
- NHS Commissioning Group
- The Voice and Influence Partnership
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Task and Finish Group
- 1625 Independent People
- Next Link Domestic Abuse Services
- One25
- Women's commissioned pathway for homelessness prevention
- Bristol Refugee Rights

- Bristol Refugee Forum and
- The Care Forum
- Golden Key
- Next Link
- Wildgoose Crisis Centre Ministries
- Streetwise

### Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

The proposal is to refresh the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy and associated action plan has a specific priority to deliver 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all Services' so it is not expected that the proposal will have potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

It is not anticipated that the revised strategy will have potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics. However we are aware of existing issues for equalities groups in temporary accommodation<sup>1</sup>, for example, which we will consider when devising any actions relating to temporary accommodation.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

The strategy and action plan aim to address the issues of rough sleeping and homelessness. There is a specific priority in the strategy to 'Delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all our services'. Its focus is to ensure that homelessness services are accessible and effective for all our citizens and also appropriate for groups in the community who may be disproportionately vulnerable to homelessness (with specific services where required). The implementation of the strategy and the associated action plan will therefore be of benefit for people with protected characteristics.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

One of the key objectives under the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' priority is

<sup>1</sup> See also Equality Impact Assessment for [Preventing Homelessness Accommodation Pathways](#)

to ensure that our services will adapt in order to reduce disadvantage in response to trends and possible gaps in service delivery identified by reviewing the data we collect.

The action plan includes specific actions targeted at equalities groups who, according to the homelessness review data, may be disproportionately affected by homelessness – i.e. young people, people with mental health issues, pregnant women, BME communities, women at risk of Domestic Violence and people identifying as LGBT.

#### **Step 4: So what?**

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

##### **4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?**

One of the key priorities identified in the strategy is 'Delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all our services'. It is recognised that there are gaps in the data that we currently collect and one of the identified actions in the action plan is to improve the collection and use of our data to provide targeted support for groups who are most likely to be at risk of homelessness.

We are also looking to improve the ways in which we include people with complex needs and mental health issues in the design and delivery of our services. We will work closely with the [Voice and Influence Partnership](#) to help us deliver inclusive 'co-designed' services.

There is an emphasis in the strategy for expanding our work with people who have lived experience of homelessness, so we can better shape and design our services with their voices at the centre of our approach.

##### **4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?**

A number of the actions identified revolve around improving the information we gather about homeless people in Bristol. We will also be seeking to improve the ways in which we include people with complex needs and mental health issues in the design and delivery of our services. We will also ensure that actions arising from the strategy are informed by the experiences of people with lived experience of homelessness.

##### **4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving**

forward?

Consultation responses formed priority actions to be taken forward. The most popular actions identified in the survey were:

- Provide more move on accommodation for people sleeping rough (182 responses)
- Reduce the numbers in Temporary Accommodation through prevention work and range of more affordable options (166 responses)
- Increasing the supply of affordable homes, and ensuring that the right homes are delivered to meet housing needs (164 responses)
- Build on existing links with health services (145 responses)
- Review and where needed change the range of supported accommodation options available (100 responses)

The revised strategy will be accompanied by an annually updated action plan with a number of measurable actions under each key priority. The annual action plan will form the basis for how progress against the refreshed strategy is monitored by central government as well as by the Council.

Service Director Sign-Off: 	Equalities Officer Sign Off: Cherene Whitfield
Date: 15 August 2019	Date: 15 August 2019