

Colchester Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

Section 1: screening stage

Name of policy, service or strategy to be assessed:

- Colchester's Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018

1. What is the main purpose of the policy, service or strategy?

- To set out how the Council and its partner organisations will prevent and reduce homelessness in Colchester

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- Tenancy Sustainment; Welfare Reform; Health and Homelessness; Culture change and education; Rough Sleepers

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment?

- This strategy replaces the previous Homelessness Strategy 2008-13. In particular, this new strategy addresses Welfare Reform changes, the relationship between health and homelessness and the importance of managing expectations. This strategy also includes a section on rough sleepers in response to local information and data.

4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?

- Homeless people; People threatened by homelessness; Partner organisations

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy, service or strategy?

- Prevent and reduce homelessness; better health outcomes for homeless people; behaviour change - better understanding of housing options and managing expectations (organisations and customers).

6. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below:

- Voluntary sector working with homeless, Colchester Borough Homes, Strategic Housing, Essex County Council, Customer Service Centre.

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations¹, which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy, service or strategy upon customers or staff?

- Questionnaires and Focus Group information

The key messages which came out of the above are:

- The people that responded to the questionnaire and attended the focus groups were mainly white British and between the age of 36-59 years
- The main reason for becoming homeless was friend/family eviction and relationship breakdown
- In order to lead a more settled life, people most need help with emotional and mental health problems and managing a tenancy
- The main problem for people who do not have a settled home is finding employment
- The main health problems are depression and mental health
- The help and support provided by the voluntary sector agencies in Colchester was much appreciated by homeless people
- There is no where for homeless people to go during a large part of the day
- There is a general lack of understanding of welfare benefits and homelessness law

If so please provide details below and include a link to the document or source where available.

8. How does the policy, service or strategy help to further or facilitate our 'general duty'² to:

(a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

(b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'³ and those who do not?⁴

¹Click on [surveys or consultations](#) for more information. The Council's surveys and consultations include 'equality monitoring information' to help us identify any particular concerns or views expressed by any particular group or 'protected characteristic'. It can also help us to assess how representative of our customers the respondent group is.

² These 3 points summarise the 'general duty' as it applies to public sector organisations in the Equality Act 2010

(c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?⁵

Please complete the following table in order to identify how the policy, practice or strategy furthers the aim of the 'general duty':

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
Age	Older people (60+)	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	The strategy seeks to help protect this group from harassment. For example, an outreach service will assist rough sleepers into accommodation.	This group is particularly affected by homelessness – and the strategy seeks to advance equality of opportunity for this group and combat disadvantage.	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
Disability	Physical	The strategy may help protect this group from harassment through, for example, signposting vulnerable groups to support services, information and advice.	This group is particularly affected by homelessness – and the strategy seeks to advance equality of opportunity for this group and combat disadvantage.	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.

³ The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

⁴ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

⁵ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
	Sensory	The strategy may help protect this group from harassment through, for example, signposting vulnerable groups to support services, information and advice.	This group is particularly affected by homelessness – and the strategy seeks to advance equality of opportunity for this group and combat disadvantage.	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
	Learning	The strategy may help protect this group from harassment through, for example, signposting vulnerable groups to support services, information and advice.	This group is particularly affected by homelessness – and the strategy seeks to advance equality of opportunity for this group and combat disadvantage.	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
	Mental health issues	The strategy may help protect this group from harassment through, for example, signposting vulnerable groups to support services, information and advice.	This group is particularly affected by homelessness – and the strategy seeks to advance equality of opportunity for this group and combat disadvantage.	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
	Other – <i>please specify</i>			The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
Ethnicity ⁶	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
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	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.

⁶ National Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British), African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British), White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed), British, Irish, Other White (White), Chinese, Other (Other Ethnic Group).

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
Language	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
Pregnancy and Maternity	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
Religion or Belief	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
Sex	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.
Sexual Orientation	None identified	None identified	None identified	The Council will work closely with partner agencies to help tackle prejudice and promote

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
				understanding which can benefit all groups.
Marriage and Civil Partnership ⁷	People who are single, married or in a civil partnership	None identified	not applicable	not applicable

9. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate impacts. Please indicate in the table below whether the policy, service or strategy is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the 'protected characteristics'.

Whereas this strategy benefits all 'protected characteristics', it concentrates particularly upon addressing disadvantage experienced by certain groups such as younger people and people with disabilities. For this reason the strategy is viewed as particularly benefiting these groups as identified in the table below. No negative impacts have been identified.

Include reference to any relevant consultation, data or information.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)		None identified		None identified
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	X	Education and information on homeless issues		None identified
Disability	Physical	X	Working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations in Colchester that work with homeless people with disabilities – for example currently this includes the April Centre, Beacon House and Supported Housing schemes.		None identified

⁷ Our legal duty in respect of 'marriage or civil partnership' extends only to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
	Sensory	X	Working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations in Colchester that work with homeless people with disabilities – for example currently this includes the April Centre, Beacon House and Supported Housing schemes.		None identified
	Learning	X	Working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations in Colchester that work with homeless people with disabilities – for example currently this includes the April Centre, Beacon House and Supported Housing schemes.		None identified
	Mental health issues	X	Working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations in Colchester that work with homeless people with disabilities – for example currently this includes the April Centre, Beacon House and Supported Housing schemes.		None identified
	<i>Other – please specify</i>				
Ethnicity	White		None identified		None identified
	Black		None identified		None identified
	Chinese		None identified		None identified
	Mixed Ethnic Origin		None identified		None identified
	Gypsies/ Travellers		None identified		None identified
	<i>Other – please state</i>				
Language	English not first language		None identified		None identified
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks		None identified		None identified

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)		None identified		None identified
Sex	Men		None identified		None identified
	Women		None identified		None identified
	Transsexual / gender reassignment		None identified		None identified
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian		None identified		None identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are single, married or in a civil partnership		None identified		None identified

10. Could the policy, service or strategy unlawfully discriminate⁸ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly?

- No

11. If you have identified any negative impacts above, have you been able to minimise or remove them, and if so, how?

N/A

⁸ The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic' unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim.

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment – screening stage

12. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
No likely negative impacts have been identified and this has been justified with reference to information, data, surveys or consultations. X	Sign off screening and finish.
Likely negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
Likely negative impacts were identified but have not been minimised or removed. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

13. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- Karen Paton, Housing Strategy Officer

14. Date of completion:

- December 2016

15. Date for update or review of this screening:

- December 2019 (or when the strategy is reviewed and rewritten).