

Full Equality Impact Assessment

For a policy, project, service or other decision that is new, changing or under review

What is being assessed?		Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024			
Lead Assessor	Penny Harris			Assessment team	Hannah Morris Alison Baggott
Start date	September 2019	End date	September 2024		
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	September 2020				

Who may be affected by it?	<p>Users of our Housing Options and Housing Supply Team</p> <p>Households that are in our Emergency and Temporary Accommodation</p> <p>Professional Stakeholders and those in our Co-operative Communities</p>
What are the key aims of it?	<p>The key aims of the Strategy are to reduce Homelessness and Rough Sleeping within Stevenage, through prevention and relief duties as per the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17).</p> <p>Under the Homelessness Act 2002 every Local Authority is required to develop a Homelessness Strategy and following the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the publication of the Rough Sleeper initiative the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government have instructed Local Authorities to update their strategies and publish online by the 31 December 2019.</p> <p>The three aims in the Strategy are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention and Relief of Homelessness Provision of Accommodation Support for Homeless Household

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	Current Corporate policy on Equality and Diversity	Promote equal opportunities	Current Corporate policy on Equality and Diversity	Encourage good relations	Current Corporate policy on Equality and Diversity

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<p>We have used data/information available both locally and nationally, assessments are up to-date. Information relating to the different groups have been reviewed. Development of this Strategy follows the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17) and the publication of the Governments Rough Sleeper Initiative and is referenced against the Homelessness code of guidance. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities</p> <p>The following has contributed to the Strategy and Eq1A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of P1E submissions over the last 5 years. (P1E data was the national homelessness performance return, since the implementation of the HRA17, this has been replaced by H-CLIC) Information included in these submissions are relating to Preventions and Relief of homeless, number of those that become homeless, the reason for homelessness, ethnicity of those that become homeless and whether there are support needs. • Information relating to Housing Options service data on those that have approached the Council for Housing Advice or actually homeless, published within our own KPI's reporting system – In Phase • Review of data relating to population increases with Hertfordshire 'Herts Insight' • Consultation with professional stakeholders and residents that are in our Temporary Accommodation or residing in the Stevenage Haven. • A review of published strategies around the UK as well as within Hertfordshire • Desktop review of the previous Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020
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<p>In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?</p>	<p>As a Local Authority we need to monitor and assess the impact of the Strategy in terms of homeless applicants generally, during the homeless presentation a vulnerability assessment is completed thus ensuring that there is no indirect discrimination contrary to our public sector equality duty.</p>
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Evidence and impact assessment

Explain the potential impact and opportunities it could have for people in terms of the following characteristics, where applicable:

Age					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
<p>Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment</p>		<p>Any vulnerable applicant aged over 55 may benefit from the availability of Independent Living properties this has enabled some homelessness to be prevented through an offer under part 6. This is monitored in relation to the availability of these properties.</p> <p>Our independent Living team are committed to support residents within their own home to live independently, with the development of the Housing Older People Strategy further options will be explored</p>			
<p>What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?</p>	<p>Support is provided to those of all ages who are housed within our Emergency and Temporary Accommodation</p>	<p>What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)</p>			

Disability					
e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness					
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		<p>Facts and Statistics published by Mind indicate that 1-4 people will experience a mental health problem each year, these range from Anxiety, Depression, Phobias, OCD, PTSD etc, every seven years Mind run a survey measure the number of people who have different types of mental health. The most recent survey was published in 2016. As the reporting on HCLIC becomes available we will be able to monitor better the number of approaches we receive from those that have support needs in this area, the homelessness forum which meets every two months brings together those who work within mental health services as well as those who work with the homeless.</p> <p>Work continues with HCC and we will shortly have available units in a new development where those with specific disabilities will be able live as independently as possible in order to lead normal lives.</p> <p>Training continues to be provided to staff on the effects of disabilities has – such as depression recent suicide awareness training has recently taken place.</p>			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Publish with Specialist Support Service how the new units provided at Gresley Way are providing independent living to the residents		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Analysis of information that will be submitted via HCLIC on the numbers and types of support those approaching the service have/require	

Gender reassignment					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		<p>Within the last year we have not had any service data to show that there would be any impact on this group. Staff do have an awareness of this particular group and as with any other group will ensure that no group is disadvantaged.</p>			

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
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Marriage or civil partnership			
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		Any individual approaching the Housing Options team for advice and indicate that there might be implications relating to their rights in relation to a marriage or civil partnership will be signposted to legal advice – usually via the Citizen Advice Service	
Unequal impact	None		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Pregnancy & maternity			
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		Legislation protects those who present as pregnant and are classed as priority need if presenting as homeless. Individuals will be provided with Interim Accommodation and support is provided by our Tenancy Support team which includes assistance in applying for any maternity benefits that are available.	
Unequal impact	None		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Race					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		This strategy will be for all those living within Stevenage, including BME groups. There is no evidence that shows that this group is disproportionately represented in terms of the homelessness acceptances.			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?				What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Religion or belief					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The strategy is for all within Stevenage irrespective of religion or beliefs. When working with individuals consideration is taken on whether shared accommodation is suitable and where it is not we will provide self-contained interim accommodation.			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?				What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Sex					
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		<p>Although the Strategy does not refer to domestic abuse specifically, the Housing Options team work closely with the Council's Community Safety team and the Police. Where required and available we will ensure clients are offered Refuge places and if required recommend out of area placements if the client is at risk within Stevenage.</p> <p>While data shows that the majority of approaches are from women, the team are aware that men can also be at risk of domestic abuse and the same consideration should be given to them as well as women.</p>			

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Availability and location of any male refuge places
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Sexual orientation e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The strategy will be for all communities within Stevenage irrespective of sexual orientation			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Socio-economic¹ e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement					
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		<p>A barrier highlighted by the consultation with both professionals as well as clients of the service related to the continued effects of Welfare Reform, this relates to the benefit cap and the Local Housing Allowance. The strategy recognises this and we ensure that an affordability assessment is completed with all clients whether their homelessness will be discharged into the Private Sector or not.</p> <p>We also continue to support all clients with Debt Advice and Support relating to this and assist with applications for any unclaimed benefits as well as discretionary housing payments</p>			

¹Although non-statutory, the council has chosen to implement the Socio-Economic Duty and so decision-makers should use their discretion to consider the impact on people with a socio-economic disadvantage.

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
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Other – Joint Housing Protocol					
please feel free to consider the potential impact on people in any other contexts					
Positive impact	Yes	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The strategy refers to the Hertfordshire Joint Housing Protocol, it shows the close working relationship between all 10 Hertfordshire districts and promotes the pathway between housing and care leavers. It shows a housing pathway for care leavers and the support available. HCC are currently employing a housing professional to work with care leavers who end up sleeping rough			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Continued funding in relation to Educations in schools. This is carried out by Herts Young Homeless		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Impact of specialist housing professional working with care leavers sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough	

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Staff?	<p>Staff have raised concerns relating to the length of time it now takes to resolve a homelessness case – particularly relating to the changes highlighted in the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 in completing personal housing plans – all seen as a good thing, due to the increase in cases levels it has an impact.</p> <p>Staff have also welcomed the ability to discharge the Council's duty into the</p>	Residents?	<p>Consultation was taken with community those who have used our service and currently in the Council's interim accommodation and those residing into the single persons hostel 'Stevenage Haven' findings of this consultation are referred to in the strategy</p>
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	<p>Private Sector and where affordable properties are available.</p> <p>Also concerns raised about not having enough interim accommodation for those presenting as homeless and the increased use of Hotel accommodation. This is addressed within the Strategy.</p>		
<p>Voluntary & community sector?</p>	<p>Consultation took place by a on line survey in May/June 2019. Results of this survey are shown in the strategy</p>	<p>Partners?</p>	<p>Over 30% responded to the online survey sent on in May/June 2019. The survey asked what priorities and what barriers there were to reduce/prevent homelessness in Stevenage.</p> <p>The top 4 priorities and top 3 barriers are shown within the strategy and inform the action plan.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with partners and meet them regularly.</p> <p>Meetings held relate to the following</p> <p>CAB – service provision liaison</p> <p>Homelessness Forum – partners across the borough meet, these include those working in the mental health and drug/alcohol, Police and Probation.</p> <p>Joint Housing Protocol task and finish groups which includes care leavers.</p> <p>Housing Supply team hold a Landlord Forum where we liaise with Private Sector</p>

			Landlords to ensure clear communication and support is provided. Joint working with Stevenage Haven to secure a pathway to move on where required
Other stakeholders?			

Overall conclusion & future activity

Explain the overall findings of the assessment and reasons for outcome (please choose one) :			
1. No inequality, inclusion issues or opportunities to further improve have been identified			
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made		
	2b. Continue as planned	x	
	2c. Stop and remove		

Detail the actions that are needed as a result of this assessment and how they will help to remove discrimination & harassment, promote equal opportunities and / or encourage good relations :				
Action	Will this help to remove, promote and / or encourage?	Responsible officer	Deadline	How will this be embedded as business as usual?
Improve statistical reporting tools to enable more information relating to advice and support given to those presenting as threatened with homelessness relating to all groups.	This will ensure that we have data on any groups and that there is not direct/indirect discrimination to any particular group	Operations Manager and Housing Options Manager	December 2019	Will become part of the normal monitoring processes

<p>Update all policies and procedures relating to Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation ensuring that out of area placements is included. Allocation Policy- review to ensure does not discriminate against those in protected groups but also that may have had a criminal history</p>	<p>Promote confidence in both staff members and the public that the correct decisions are made and do not directly or indirectly discriminate.</p>	<p>Housing Options/Supply Manager Lettings and Temporary Accommodation Manager</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Through policy implementation be corporate policy</p>
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Approved by Assistant Director - Jaine Cresser
Date: August 2019

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk