



HRA Fees and Charges 2025/26

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

April 2025 - April 2026

Date created	October 2024
Approved by	Cabinet
Owner	Nadia Capuano
Version	1
Author	Nadia Capuano Head of Commercial
Business Unit and Team	Finance

Please [click this link](#) to find the EqIA guidance toolkit for support in completing the following form.

For translations, braille or large print versions of this document please email equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

Does this policy, project, service, or other decision need an EqIA?

Title:	HRA Fees and Charges 2025/26	
Please answer Yes or No to the following questions:		
Does it affect staff, service users or the wider community?		Yes
Has it been identified as being important to particular groups of people?		Yes
Does it or could it potentially affect different groups of people differently (unequal)?		Yes
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities or exclusion issues?		No
Will it have an impact on how other organisations operate?		No
Is there potential for it to cause controversy or affect the council's reputation as a public service provider?		Yes

Where a positive impact is likely, will this help to:	
Remove discrimination and harassment?	No
Promote equal opportunities?	No
Encourage good relations?	No

If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of the above questions you should carry out an EqIA.

Or if you answered 'No' to all of the questions and decide that your activity doesn't need an EqIA you must explain below why it has no relevance to equality and diversity.

You should reference the information you used to support your decision below and seek approval from your Assistant Director before confirming this by sending this page to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

I determine that no EqIA is needed to inform the decision on the .

Name of assessor:

Decision approved by:

Role:

Role: Assistant Director

Date:

Date:

Equality Impact Assessment Form

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

What is being assessed?		Fees and Charges Proposals 2025/26 General Fund			
Lead Assessor	Nadia Capuano			Assessment team	Nadia Capuano
Start date	April 2025	End date	April 2026		Karen Long
When will the EqIA be reviewed? (Typically every 2 years)	October 2025				Keith Reynoldson
					Brian Moldon

Who may be affected by the proposed project?	Stevenage Council tenants, leaseholders and general residents.
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	To assess the impact of the proposed changes to fees and charges 2025/26 on Stevenage Council tenants, leaseholders and general residents.

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	For specialist support charges, anybody on housing benefit and on the fairer charging scheme pays a lower rate than the standard £19.65.	Promote equal opportunities	For most of the charges where applicable, all residents ranging from private to council tenants are charged the same.	Encourage good relations	The fees are transparent to service users and are listed clearly on the SBC website. A letter notifying any increase is sent out at least 28 days before the change in line with

					rent notification letters.
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What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<p>Demand data</p> <p>Service usage statistics from internal databases such as NEC reports</p> <p>Benchmarking with other local authorities and other providers</p>
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	<p>The impact of the fees and charges increases on households has been thoroughly evaluated. The average price increase across the HRA fees is 3.2%, which is marginally above the inflation rate of 2.2% in August 2024.</p> <p>In Specialist Support, where the most vulnerable individuals reside, price increases have been controlled in real terms. For the daily rental of guest bedrooms and flats, prices have risen by 40p to 80p, laundry prices by 10p, and room hire by 19p per hour. The most significant increase in this area is for a lock change, at an increase of £3.15, which is expected to be an infrequent service.</p> <p>For general needs tenants and leaseholders, the smallest fee increase is 5p for management fees, with the majority of fee increases being under 75p. The largest increase in this category is again for the occasional call-out charge for a lock change, at £5.18.</p> <p>Leaseholder charges pertain to residents with a mortgage, with most services related to solicitors' enquiries, deeds, notices, and lease extensions, which are unavoidable and one-off fees for legal work. The most substantial increase is £25.98 for legal fees when extending a lease, with the majority of charges being less than £10.</p> <p>Leaseholder alterations and tenant alterations apply to leaseholders and tenants with sufficient income or savings to pay for major and minor alterations, with fee increases charged accordingly for each type of alteration. The highest fee in this section is the £33.44 increase for the reinstatement of any unauthorised major works carried out. The largest fee increase for Tenant's Retrospective Charges is the £14.69 increase for inspecting any work costing £5,000 or more.</p> <p>For all Care Connect 24/7 services, prices have been frozen after benchmarking against competitors.</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	Price freeze for Care Connect 24/7 customers	Negative impact		Unequal impact	<p>The residents that are charged a support charge are predominantly older and disabled people as this accommodation is for people over 55 years old or for people with a disability.</p> <p>Conversely however, the costs are currently subsidised for those in receipt of housing benefit or fairer charging by the wider tenant population, who have a younger age profile and do not benefit from the service.</p>

<p>Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment</p>	<p>To inform the HRA fee increase decision, service usage/demand statistics from internal databases have been used including the age profile of independent/flexicare housing residents. Benchmarking of service costs and prices and guidance from the Commercial and Insourcing Executive Working Group have influenced this decision.</p> <p>The price freeze for Care Connect 24/7 should positively impact all customers as they will not pay increased prices for the usage of all the services that fall underneath the Care Connect 24/7 umbrella.</p> <p>It is a requirement for residents living in older persons accommodation to receive support services, however there are disability and pension benefits that help with the additional cost of being disabled or older. Pension credit, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance are available for older and/or disabled residents that require extra help with care needs or regular supervision. These benefits can be used to pay for support charges.</p>		
<p>What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?</p>	<p>The biggest fee increases will be for infrequent services such as lock changes and leaseholder services, whilst everyday services have had a nominal increase as mentioned in the above sections.</p>	<p>What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)</p>	

<p>Disability e.g., physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness</p>					
<p>Positive impact</p>		<p>Negative impact</p>		<p>Unequal impact</p>	<p>The residents that are charged a support charge are predominantly older and disabled people as this accommodation is for people over 55 years old or for people with a disability.</p>
<p>Please evidence the data and information</p>	<p>To inform the HRA fee increase decision, usage and demand statistics have been utilised. In addition, Northgate reports on disability profile for independent/flexicare residents have been analysed.</p>				

you used to support this assessment	Disabled residents that require help with the additional cost of being disabled qualify for benefits such as the Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance. These can help pay for support charges.		
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	The biggest fee increases will be for infrequently used services such as lock changes and leasehold services, whilst everyday services have had a nominal increase as mentioned in the above sections.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	Northgate data relating to tenants with a disability is currently being updated through tenancy audits and contact with tenants. This information is disclosed at the tenant's discretion so some tenants may not provide it. We have introduced a support services module on Northgate where we collate more data on disability for those receiving the specialist support service and this will inform future EQIAs.

Gender Reassignment					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	No impacts identified.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Marriage or Civil Partnership					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information	No impacts identified.				

you used to support this assessment			
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		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	No impacts identified.				
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		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	No impacts identified.				
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		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	No impacts identified.				
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		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	No impacts identified.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Sexual Orientation e.g., straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information	No impacts identified.				

you used to support this assessment			
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		Negative impact	Any HRA fee increases could negatively affect residents in a lower socio-economic standing as they will have a lower amount of funds to pay for any price increases.	Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	<p>To inform the HRA fee increase decision, usage and demand statistics have been utilised. In addition, Northgate reports on socio-economic standing i.e. those on benefits have been analysed.</p> <p>The impact on households has been thoroughly evaluated. The average price increase across the HRA fees is 3.2%, which is marginally above the inflation rate of 2.2% in August 2024.</p> <p>A large proportion of the HRA charges such as alternation charges and leaseholder charges should not affect those in lower socio-economic conditions, as they will either not have a mortgage or enough funds to do alterations to properties. Where leaseholders are requesting a service from us, these charges cover our legal costs and they</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.

would be paying a charge like any other homeowner would have to. These charges would be expected as part of owning a leasehold property.

In Specialist Support, where the most vulnerable individuals reside, the prices to provide the services have been carefully monitored and analysed and the price increases have been thoughtfully applied keeping in mind the service users. For the daily rental of guest bedrooms and flats, prices have risen by 40p to 80p, laundry prices by 10p, and room hire by 19p per hour. The most significant increase in this area is for a lock change, at £3.15, which is expected to be an infrequent service.

The same thought process used for specialist support has been applied to general needs tenants and leaseholders. The smallest fee increase is 5p for management fees, with the majority of fee increases being under 75p. The largest increase in this category is again for the occasional call-out charge for a lock change, at £5.18.

For Care Connect 24/7 not all customers are necessarily socially disadvantaged.

In addition to the benefits mentioned previously that are available for disabled and older residents, there are housing benefits and council tax reductions available to residents in a socio-economic standing that will help pay for the HRA fees should they use the relevant services.

<p>What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?</p>	<p>The biggest fee increases will be for infrequent services such as lock changes and leaseholder services, whilst everyday services have had a nominal increase as mentioned in the above sections.</p> <p>For Care Connect 24/7 there are different levels of service with different fees available to use.</p>	<p>What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)</p>	
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<p align="center">Additional Considerations</p> <p align="center">Please outline any other potential impact on people in any other contexts</p>					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information	No impacts identified.				

you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?	Discussions with the Housing and HRA Finance team when analysing usage / demand statistics as well as consideration of future costs when considering HRA fee increases.	Residents?	
Voluntary & community sector?		Partners?	
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	The impact on households has been thoroughly evaluated. The average price increase across the HRA fees is 3.2%, which is marginally above the inflation rate of 2.2% in August 2024. Price rises are expected to be in line with income and benefit payment rises.
	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?
Monitor the usage, demand and feedback of the services.	This is to ensure fair charging of service and users that require the services can still access and afford the services.	Karen Long	August 2025	Internal databases and reports will be monitored to review any changes and to inform any future decisions.

Approved by Assistant Director / Strategic Director: **Brian Moldon**

Date: **9th September 2024**