Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2025-2030

# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

October 2026 Review

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|---|---|
| **Date created** | September 2026 |
| **Approved by** | Cabinet |
| **Owner** | Sarah Pateman |
| **Version** | 2 |
| **Author** | William Peters<br>Rough Sleeper Team & Housing First Manager |
| **Business Unit and Team** | Rough Sleeper Team<br>Community Advice and Support |

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: | Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024-2029 |
|---|---|
| **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)? | No |
| Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities or exclusion issues? | Yes |
| Will it have an impact on how other organisations operate? | Yes |
| Is there potential for it to cause controversy or affect the council's reputation as a public service provider? | No |

| **Where a positive impact is likely, will this help to:** | |
|---|---|
| Remove discrimination and harassment? | Yes |
| Promote equal opportunities? | Yes |
| Encourage good relations? | Yes |

**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:

Role: Will Peters

Date:

Decision approved by:

Role: Kerry Clifford

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?** | Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2025-2030 | | | | |
| Lead Assessor | Sarah Pateman | | | Assessment team | William Peters<br>Community Advice and Support |
| Start date | July 2025 | End date | July 2030 | | |
| When will the EqIA be reviewed? (Typically every 2 years) | November 2027 | | | | |

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| Who may be affected by the proposed project? | Users of our Housing Options and Next Step Lets Team<br>Households that are in our Emergency and Temporary Accommodation<br>Professional Stakeholders and those in our Co-operative Communities |
| What are the key aims of the proposed project? | 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).<br><br>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<br><br>The four aims in the Strategy are set out as:<br>Prevention and Relief of Homelessness<br>Provision of Accommodation<br>Housing Development<br>Support for Homeless Household. |

What **positive measures** are in place (if any) to help **fulfil our legislative duties** to:

| | | | | | |
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| Remove discrimination & harassment | SBC is a third party reporting centre for hate crime / discrimination and actively encouraging more organisations to sign up as third party reporting centres to reach the wider community. | Promote equal opportunities | The service priorities aim to promote equalities through partnership working to ensure that all Stevenage resident have equal opportunity access services. | Encourage good relations | Engagement with a wide range of residents, community safety partners and Housing Services. Developing relationships with vulnerable/marginalised groups through targeted outreach. |

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| What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment? | We have used data/information available both locally and nationally, assessments are up to-date.<br><br>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.<br><br>The following has contributed to the Strategy and Eq1A<br><br>• 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.<br>• Information relating to Housing Options service data on those that have approached the Council<br>• for Housing Advice or actually homeless, published within our own KPI's reporting system – In Phase<br>• Review of data relating to population increases with Hertfordshire 'Herts Insight'<br>• Consultation with professional stakeholders and residents that are in our Temporary Accommodation or residing in the Stevenage Haven.<br>• A review of published strategies around the UK as well as within Hertfordshire<br>• Desktop review of the current Homelessness Strategy 2025-2030 |

| | |
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| | • Regular reviews of customer satisfaction surveys<br>• Dip sampling to ensure all clients being supported appropriately in relation to their need |

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| In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make? | 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. |

## 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 |
| Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment | 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.<br><br>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. | | | | |
| What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion? | Support is provided to those of all aged who are housed within our Emergency and Temporary Accommodation. | | What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page) | | |

| 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 | Facts and Statistics published by Mind indicate that 1in 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. 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Training continues to be provided to staff on the effects of disabilities has – such as depression recent suicide awareness training has recently taken place. | | | | |
| 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 | 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 groups will ensure that no group is disadvantaged. | | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 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) | |

| Marriage or Civil Partnership | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive impact | None | Negative impact | None | Unequal impact | None |
| Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment | 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 groups will ensure that no group is disadvantaged. | | | | |
| 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 | None | Negative impact | None | Unequal 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. | | | | |
| 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 | None | Negative impact | None | Unequal impact | None |
| Please evidence the data and information | 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. | | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| you used to support this assessment | 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Housing Futures accommodation has a female only House of Multiple Occupancy style property | | |
| 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 |

| **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-economic[1]

**e.g., low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users,**

[1]Although 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.

| 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 | 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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. | | | | |
| What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion? | | | What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page) | | |

| Additional Considerations – Joint Housing Protocol<br>Please outline any other 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 Education 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 | |

# Consultation Findings

**Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff? | Staff reported that working with partners is the key to problem solving and providing support to residents. | Residents? | Residents are consulted with at various opportunities through surveys. This allows us to adapt to resident needs. |
| Voluntary & community sector? | Voluntary Sectors agree that in order to make a difference it is essential that we work co-operatively, and information is shared regularly. | Partners? | Partners agree that in order to make a difference it is essential that we work co-operatively, and information is shared regularly. |
| 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 | As below |
| | 2b. Continue as planned | |
| | 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 2026 | Will become part of the normal monitoring processes |
| Update all policies and procedures relating to Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation ensuring that out of area placement is included. | Promote confidence in both staff members and the public that the correct decisions are made and do not direct or indirectly discriminate. | Housing Options Manager, Allocations Manager and Temporary Accommodation Manager. | March 2027 | Through Policy Implementation and reviews. |
| Allocations Policy review to ensure that it does not discriminate against those in protected groups but also that may have had a criminal history. | Promote confidence in both staff members and the public that the correct decisions are made and do not direct or indirectly discriminate. | Housing Options Manager and Allocations Manager | March 2027 | Through Policy Implementation and reviews. |

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

**Date: November 2026**

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk for critical friend feedback and for final submittance with the associated project.