

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

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Members of the assessment team:	Andrew Billany, Fiona Brown
Date assessment started:	January 2021
Date of completion:	21 May 2021
Version Number:	2

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	√
New or proposed	
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	
Both of the above	√

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

The strategy will:

- Describe homelessness and rough sleeping
- Explain Dorset Council's public law duties in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Provide a single plan to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the Dorset Council area for the period 2021 to 2026
- Provide information in the form of description and data evidence in national and local context

- **Consider levels of homelessness; preventing homelessness; securing accommodation; providing support and resources**
- **Provides a framework of accountability and delivery arrangements**
- **Identify and explain objectives and outcomes**
- **Include an action plan to deliver the objectives**

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Due to Local Government Reorganisation to form Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council a new Dorset Council Homelessness Strategy is required.

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.

Prior to the formation of Dorset Council, the relevant district and borough authorities each had homeless strategies all of which are now expired.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

Dorset Council commissioned Neil Morland Housing & Co. Consultants who carried out a review of the current homeless service.

The review included benchmarking homelessness in the Dorset Council area with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area; The South of England; All of England and All of England with London. Data sources included:

- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCL)
- Department for Work and Pensions
- STRIVE evaluation: Final Report
- ICF Consulting
- Fair Chance Fund: Final Report
- Alma Economics 2019 Homelessness: Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Community Performance quarterly release March 2019. Ministry of Justice
- The Conservative and Unionist Party, Manifesto 2019
- Heriot Watt University
- Homeless Link
- London Assembly Housing Committee (September 2017), Hidden Homelessness in London

- Office of National Statistics 2011 Census
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2010)
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Professor Glen Bramley & Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick – Homelessness in the UK 2017
- Housing Studies Journal
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), Sustainable Communities: settled homes, changing lives, London, UK
- National Housing Federation
- Dorset CCG

*This list is not exhaustive.

The review considered:

- Levels of homelessness
- Activities for preventing homelessness
- Activities for securing accommodation
- Activities for providing support
- The resources available to deliver the above activities.

Consultation was carried out by Neil Morland & Housing Co. (see later section 3) as part of the review.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

Elected members, stakeholders, service users and employees are committed to tackling homelessness in Dorset. There has been broad agreement that social rented housing is the preferred housing tenure due to security and cost. There was also agreement from the review findings that the number of single people with mental and physical ill-health who are finding themselves homeless is increasing and more support to prevent and relieve homelessness is needed generally.

Levels of homelessness

24% of children living in Dorset are living in poverty, at risk of homelessness and the repeat cycle of poverty. This is a reduction of 5% compared to 2018/19 and is lower than the national average and the lowest of the benchmarking group.

The proportion of working age (16 to 64) unemployed in Dorset is the lowest in the benchmarking group. Those in employment is lower than all England but higher than BCP and South West. Those self-employed is the highest of the benchmarking group.

An increasing number of single adults with poor mental or physical health becoming homeless as well as those with drug and alcohol problems.

An average of 30 new initial assessments were carried out each week; 90% of these assessments were owed a homeless duty following the initial assessment; the number of main duties accepted reduced from 448 in 2017/18 to 405 in 2019/20 following the national trend.

95.6% of main applicants are recorded as white British, 4.4% as Black and Minority Ethnic; 22% were recorded as 'Ethnic Group Not Stated'.

The aged group for main applicants with the highest number of accepted prevention or relief duties is 25 to 44.

The number of decisions resulting in an acceptance as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need has increased by 26% in 2019/20 and is 61% of all decisions of the 5-year period reviewed.

The number of households with dependent children owed a main duty fell by 24% in 2019/20.

The number of households with no dependent children owed a main duty with mental health problems has risen at 53 cases in 2019/20.

The number of households with priority need due to physical disability or ill-health was the third highest at 37 cases in 2019/20.

The number of households with priority need due to domestic violence or abuse reduced by 50% to 5 households between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The top two reasons for loss of last settled home in Dorset is the termination of assured shorthold tenancy and family or friends no longer able to accommodate.

76% of outcomes for those owed a main duty is the offer and acceptance of a social rented home.

Dorset has the lowest number of rough sleepers compared to the benchmark group most of whom are single males.

Households with dependent children are most likely to approach at a prevention or relief stage. Single households are most likely to approach when they are already homeless.

Preventing Homelessness

There is a good range of commissioned and non-commissioned activities to prevent homelessness.

The route to housing for offenders released from secure estates needs clarification.

There is a strong provision for Armed Forces and former Armed Forces personnel who become homeless.

The top 3 types of household in Dorset recorded as being owed a prevention duty are single parent families with dependent children; single adult males; and single adult females.

The top 3 types of household in Dorset recorded as being a relief duty are single adult males; single adult females; and single parent families.

The top 3 age ranges of those main applicants owed either a prevention or relief duty is 25-34 years; 18-24 years; and 35-44 years.

The top 2 reasons recorded for households owed a prevention duty is the end of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold followed by family or friends no longer able to accommodate.

The top 2 reasons recorded for households owed a relief duty is family or friends no longer able to accommodate followed by non-violent relationship breakdown with partner.

Most households owed a prevention duty were living with family or friends at the time of their application.

Most households owed a relief duty were of no fixed abode at the time of their application.

Dorset is the lowest of the benchmark group in terms of successful relief activity per thousand.

The most common reason for the ending of prevention duty (35%) is new accommodation secured for at least 6 months.

The most common reason for the ending of relief duty (138 households) is that 56 days elapsed.

31% of referrals were under the new Duty to Refer mostly from non-public authorities e.g. Citizens Advice and Social Landlords.

The most commonly recorded main prevention activity for 2019/20 was negotiation and mediation/advocacy work to prevent eviction.

The number of intentionally homeless households is low compared to the number where the main homelessness duty has been accepted.

Further investigation is required to mitigate rough sleepers migrating between Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council areas (BCP).

Activities for securing accommodation

Dorset Council has access to a portfolio of 224 units of temporary accommodation (as at February 2021) including accommodation adapted for people with physical disability.

Additionally, bed and breakfast accommodation is used to provide temporary accommodation.

The number of households per thousand placed into temporary accommodation by Dorset Council is lower than all the benchmarking group except South West.

The number of households with children in temporary accommodation is higher in Dorset than BCP and South West but lower than England and All England.

The type of temporary accommodation used by Dorset in order of high to low 2019/20 is:

- Bed & breakfast hotels (including shared annexes)
- Private Sector leased by authority or social landlord
- Local authority or social landlord stock
- Any other type of temporary accommodation (including private landlord and not known)
- Hostels (including reception centres, emergency units and refuges)
- Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, self-contained

43% of Dorset homeless households as at 31.3.2020 were in temporary accommodation outside the Dorset Council area.

74% of households ended their main homeless duty due to an offer of social rented accommodation.

Successful activity to secure accommodation in the order of high to low is:

- Activities of Dorset Council Housing Solutions Team
- Financial support from Dorset Council
- Information and advice

Private rented sector accommodation is nationally the second most common method to relieve homelessness.

Financial assistance to help prevent or relieve homelessness in 2018/19 (latest data available) is:

- £41,855 – Rent Bond
- £87,950 – Rent Deposit
- £126,368 – Rent in Advance

Dorset has 182,677 homes and 12.3% are socially rented.

In 2019 there were 5223 households registered with Dorset Council for an allocation of social rented housing.

The number of new lettings of social housing has declined from 1636 in 2016/17 to 1469 in 2018/19.

3.15% of the 2019/20 housing register stated in their application they are at risk of homelessness, are homeless or have been identified as such during their assessment.

1 Bedroom properties are the most common size property required, then 2 bedrooms then 3 or more bedrooms.

Activities for providing support

Almost half the households owed a homelessness duty in 2019/20 have at least one support need.

Over (644)70% of the households owed a homeless duty with support needs had more than one support need in 2019/20.

Although there has been a reduction in Dorset from 2018/19 to 2019/20 the total number of households with support needs per one thousand is higher than BCP.

The most common support need is due to mental health followed by physical health and disability and the third most common support need is due to domestic abuse.

Resources available to deliver the above activities

Dorset had an award of £225,777 from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Homelessness Reduction Act Grant 2020-21 to help fund new burdens from the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Dorset had an award of £442,352 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2020-21 to spend on preventing homelessness and assisting those who are homeless.

Dorset had an award of £472,470 Rough Sleeper Initiative 2020-21 funding to support or create street outreach services, secure hostel and shelter type accommodation and deliver specialist support to rough sleepers to help them remain off the streets.

Dorset had an award of £624,000 Next Steps Accommodation Programme Revenue funding 2020-21. This is for interim accommodation and support for those rough sleepers accommodated during the pandemic.

Dorset had an award of £1,556,730 Next Steps Accommodation Programme Capital Funding 2020-21. This is to bring forward long term move-on accommodation.

Dorset works with several commissioned and non-commissioned providers to deliver a range of activities and support.

70% of respondents to the public consultation either agreed or partially agreed with the strategy proposals.

Respondents agreed with the need to provide

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

As part of the external review of the homeless service Neil Morland and Housing Co. carried out stakeholder interviews with internal services including:

- Dorset Council's Housing Service
- Adult Social Care Service
- Children's Services

Stakeholder interviews were offered to all our partner organisations. 8 external partner organisations took part including:

- Social landlords
- Public Authorities such as Armed Forces, Prisons, Police and NHS
- Voluntary Organisations such as not for profit groups, community and faith groups for example those providing outreach and support and homelessness advice

Stakeholder interviews were offered to our service users and 30 took part including:

- 4 Statutory Homeless Households– owed a duty by a local authority
- 0 Single Homeless Households – living in supported accommodation
- 2 Street Homeless Households – sleeping rough
- 2 Hidden Homeless Households – sofa surfing with family or friends
- 6 Households living in current home but at risk of losing it
- 13 Households now living in settled accommodation but previously homeless in one of the above situations

- 3 Other households who did not meet the above definition.

*In the above description 'Household' can mean an individual or more than one individual.

A public consultation started on 22 March 2021 and ended on 7 May 2021. Any individual or organisation could responses and 106 responses were received. The response from residents was reasonably representative of the Dorset population.

There was an uneven balance between males and females with 57% from females and 37% from males. Responses came from a wide range of ages but 48% came from respondents aged 65 or older. This compares to only 29% of the population being in this age band in the wider Dorset population. With 88% of the respondents saying their ethnic group was White British this is fairly typical of the wider population. Responses from disabled people were above average at 6.5% of responses compared to a Dorset figure of 5% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.

There were 17 organisational responses with 11 of them providing an official organisational response.

The responses indicate overall good support for the strategy with confirmation that health, wellbeing, money and employment factors ranking as influential factors people are concerned about. Other respondents highlight the lack of accommodation and financial resources to tackle this matter as concerning. One respondent mentioned support for LGBT households was not specifically mentioned in the draft. A new action has been added to review the support and challenges faced by households with protected characteristics.

Dorset Council communications team used social media, Dorset Council website, focussed emails, e-newsletters and general media sources to promote the public consultation. We promoted the consultation with organisations working locally with people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

During the development of the strategy and action plan two workshops were held with members of the Dorset Council People and Health Overview Committee, plus additional Dorset Council councillors including People and Health Scrutiny members, the Portfolio Holders for Adult Services and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Neil Morland & Co. Housing Consultants and Dorset Council Housing Service.

During the workshops, details about the structure of the review were discussed. Results of the review were received and discussed. Options were discussed and agreed to identify the strategy objectives and future actions.

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

On the Dorset Council website and where appropriate as part of future working groups to deliver the agreed objectives.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqlA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqlA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqlA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	√
An EqlA is not required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqlA because:

Name: Sharon Attwater Job Title: Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance
Date: 21 May 2021

Please send a copy of this document to [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#)

Next Steps:

- The EqlA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Communications and if in agreement, your EqlA will be signed off.
- If not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqlA, to get a better understanding.

Part 4: Analysing the impact

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against

Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Choose impact from the list above</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	All ages. Positive
Please provide details:	Identified activity to work to tackle future levels of homelessness amongst young people from age 6 via education routes; recognises those age groups most commonly affected from current data and seeks to improve understanding and options tailored to each age group; review joint working for care leavers and other young people; align the work of early help and adolescent services with homeless services.

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	Positive
Does this affect a specific disability group?	It is not restrictive but recognises those households with physical, emotional and mental health disabilities as groups who require tailored responses to tackle homelessness more effectively.
Please provide details:	Action plan includes specific work to explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes; to consider the location of services and map to need including accessibility; review hospital discharge policy; review housing supply in regard to accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs; complete a supported housing needs gap analysis

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.

Pregnancy and maternity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear

	that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Race and Ethnicity:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The service seeks to ensure these households can fully participate in the homeless service. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Religion or belief:	Neutral
Please provide details:	The action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics. Consideration will be given to the findings of the review although no specific requirements were identified in the review.
Sexual orientation:	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Sex (consider both men and women):	Positive
Please provide details:	Data did not illustrate any significant requirements that are not captured in the activities identified to tackle homelessness in the wider context. The strategy is clear that all homelessness is serious and seeks to support any household to prevent homelessness. The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Actions include review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Marriage or civil partnership:	Neutral

Please provide details:	The action plan includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics. Relationship breakdown is a recognised factor that can lead to homelessness. Consideration will be given to the findings of the review although no specific requirements were identified in the review.
Carers:	Positive
Please provide details:	The action plan includes numerous activities to enhance prevention work for people who may be at risk of homelessness. This work seeks to support the household. Working with those who care for others to prevent their homelessness would be included but it is not specifically focussed on this group alone. Action includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.
Rural isolation:	Positive
Please provide details:	The actions include mapping access to services and support, improving the outcomes or removing barriers and identifying reasons for homelessness this includes those households in rural isolation.
Single parent families:	Positive
Please provide details:	The activities to tackle homelessness considers the reasons for single parent homelessness, the events that trigger approaches to the service and the associated reasons. The strategy seeks to improve outcomes for these households and identifies joint work with Dorset Council Children's Services and other external organisations that can be carried out.
Social & economic deprivation:	Positive
Please provide details:	The impact of social and economic deprivation is recognised as a factor in causing homelessness. Locally focussed actions are identified to better tackle homelessness for households in this specific group.
Armed Forces communities	Positive
Please provide details:	There is recognition these households experience different factors that impact on homelessness. The current support and routes to support for these households is acknowledged and actions are identified to strengthen this.

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Age	Review joint working for care leavers and other young people; align the work of early help and adolescent services with homeless services; develop awareness training for school settings; analyse and invest in measures to ensure housing is suitable to need.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention and Advice Service Manager for Housing Solutions Service Manager for Housing Standards	March 2022
Disability	Explore early homelessness prevention and support options for those with poor health outcomes; consider the location of services and map to need including accessibility; review hospital discharge policy; review housing supply of accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs; complete a supported housing needs gap analysis	Service Manager for Housing Strategy Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Housing Advice	2022
Gender	Action plan seeks to review current challenges and support	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Pregnancy	The public law duty in relation to the use of bed and breakfast for households with pregnant women or children is limited to 6 weeks. Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022

Race & Ethnicity	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Religion or belief	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Sexual Orientation	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Sex	Action plan includes review of challenges and support available.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	2022
Carers	The action plan includes numerous activities to enhance prevention work for people who may be at risk of homelessness. This work seeks to support the household. Working with those who care for others to prevent their homelessness would be included but it is not specifically focussed on this group alone. Action includes review of challenges and support available to households with protected characteristics.	Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention & Advice	TBA
Rural Isolation	Map access to services and support, improving the outcomes or removing barriers and identifying reasons for homelessness this includes those households in rural isolation.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2022
Single Parent Families	Action beginning in wards with the highest levels of child poverty seeking out and targeting households in or at risk of poverty to develop and embed early, proactive homelessness prevention and support. Make available information and support across the area at natural locations such as schools, DWP, supermarkets and GP surgeries.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2026

Social & Economic Deprivation	Action beginning in wards with the highest levels of child poverty seeking out and targeting households in or at risk of poverty to develop and embed early, proactive homelessness prevention and support.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2026
Armed Forces	A review of homelessness prevention activities and ways of identifying these households to raise awareness of and refer to specialist support available.	Service Manager for Housing Strategy	2022

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Sharon Attwater	Date:	21 May 2021
Equality Lead:	Susan Ward-Rice	Date:	27 May 2021
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:	Rick Parry	Date:	27 May 2021

Next Steps:

- Please send this draft EqIA to: [Diversity & inclusion Officer](#)
- The report author will be invited to an Equality & Diversity Action Group (these are held monthly - dates are available on the intranet)
- The Equality & Diversity Action Group will review the EqIA and you may be asked to make some alterations
- EqIAs are signed off and published
- The report author is responsible for ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.