



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

Discretionary Housing Payment review of existing policy

1. Initial information:

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Discretionary Housing Payments Policy

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

Review of policy, project, strategy, project or service

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that a consistent approach is taken when applications for Discretionary Housing Payments are considered.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

The Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 give Councils discretion to award Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to help those claimants who receive either Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and who need further assistance with their housing costs.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g. national statistics, employee data):

Information collated from Dorset Council Statistics website:

- State of Dorset Report (May 2021) providing headline information on a number of topics including deprivation, diversity, health & wellbeing
- The core functions of the Revenues & Benefits Service are to collect Council Tax and Business Rates and to pay Housing Benefit, Local Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payments. In order to do this the service holds a vast amount of personal data about its customers, including household composition, age, disabilities, income and capital. As this is a discretionary scheme, which requires an application, any additional information and data required to enable an informed decision to be made will be acquired through the application process.

7. What did this tell you?

Information from the above reports and data is useful in highlighting the main areas of deprivation and how this compares nationally. The State of Dorset report also provides useful information on ethnicity and the main areas people of ethnic minorities tend to live.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

No formal consultation however the views of staff have been taken into consideration.

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

We do not believe so. Providing the scheme is adequately publicised and accessible by all, any further information will be obtained as part of the application process.

Is an EQIA required? Yes

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

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.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Positive impact	This policy does not specifically affect any particular age bracket. As a consequence of age it may be that the earning capacity of some people is limited and this may be taken into account when awarding a DHP. The impact of having to move home if a DHP were not to be awarded would also be taken into consideration, perhaps more so for elderly people.
Disability	Positive impact	Disability and ill health is a factor taken into consideration when determining a discretionary discount. As a result of the disability/ill health it is possible that the applicant's income will be limited, and in certain cases their expenditure may be higher (e.g. higher heating bills, adaptations required). The impact of the disability/ill health will also be taken into account in cases where the applicant may have to move home if a DHP were not to be awarded.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral impact	Although there is not enough data regarding this protected characteristic group gender reassignment or gender identity is not a factor that is taken into consideration when determining a discretionary discount.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral impact	Whether someone is married or not is not a factor taken into

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		consideration when determining a discretionary housing payment
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive impact	The requirement for suitable housing for expectant parents and those with young children is a factor that would be taken into consideration when determining an application for a DHP.
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral impact	The race or ethnicity of an applicant is not something that is taken into account when determining an application for a DHP. However it is important that the application process is accessible for people whose first language is not English e.g. access to interpreter services and/or information available in other languages.
Religion and belief	Neutral impact	Religion and belief are not factors taken into consideration when determining a discretionary discount.
Sex (consider men and women)	Neutral impact	Sex is not a factor taken into consideration when determining a DHP.
Sexual orientation	Neutral impact	Whilst we do not have sufficient data regarding sexual orientation it is not a factor taken into consideration when determining a discretionary discount.
People with caring responsibilities	Positive impact	Being a carer may result in having a limited income and/or increased expenditure which would be a factor taken into account. If a carer were to be faced with moving home, or being made homeless, which meant that they could no longer carry out their caring role, then this would also be taken into consideration when determining a DHP.
Rural isolation	Positive impact	Rural isolation may be a factor taken into account when

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		determining a DHP, particularly if it meant that access to things like doctors' surgeries, schools, employment etc. could present significant problems.
Socio-economic deprivation	Positive impact	Low income and high housing costs are a significant factor taken into account when determining a DHP.
Single parents	Positive impact	As a result of being a single parent it is possible that the earning potential is limited, or non-existent in some cases, and at the same time expenditure may be high. The need to secure, or retain, suitable housing would also be a factor taken into consideration when determining a DHP.
Armed forces communities	Neutral impact	Whether or not someone is in the military (or a veteran) is not specifically a factor taken into consideration when determining a DHP.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
	No Actions required		

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Pat Lane

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Pat Lane, Katie Hale

Date of completion: 18 September 2023

Version Number: 2

EqIA review date: September 2026

Inclusion Champion Sign Off:

Equality Lead Sign Off: