



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the [Dorset Council style guide](#) and also use the [accessibility checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible, please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council [website](#)

Before completing this form, please refer to the [supporting guidance](#). The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#).

1. Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

2. This is a review of an existing Policy
3. This is an external Policy affecting residents.
4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy sets out the discretionary and mandatory financial assistance Dorset Council offers to eligible residents in Dorset to improve or adapt their property. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 enables Councils (where they publish a policy) to provide a range of housing assistance. The types of assistance include adapting properties for disabled people, bringing empty property back into use, improving energy efficiency and bringing homes up to the Decent Homes Standard.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal.

This policy will replace the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy approved by Council in November 2020. There are two new grants proposed in this current revision which require further approval by Council to become active. These grants are aimed at helping disabled people move to a more suitable home and to provide energy efficiency and heating improvements to disabled people.

More information about DFGs can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants>

The Dorset Accessible Homes Service (DAHS) deliver a wide range of services to help older, vulnerable and disabled people to live at home safely <https://www.millbrook-healthcare.co.uk/contact-us/service-centre-locations/home-improvement-agency-services/dorset-hia/>

More information about the Healthy Homes Dorset Scheme is here: <https://www.healthyhomesdorset.org.uk/>

Loans: Dorset Council works in partnership with Lendology CIC a Community Interest Company (CIC) and other councils in the South West to provide a range of loan products. More information can be found at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/loans-from-lendology-cic>

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 about the housing stock in Dorset is primarily from historical stock condition surveys carried out in the former district and borough council areas of Dorset, National EPC data sets, the English House Condition Survey and Census data.

7. What did this tell you?

In the UK, the English House Condition Survey (2022) shows that on average 15% of households failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. It is estimated from local stock condition surveys that in some areas this rises to as much as 36% of homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard. That is where there is either a category 1 hazard, it is in disrepair, levels of thermal conform are poor and /or the property is lacking in modern facilities. Information is also held on those properties that have lodged an EPC certificate as part of a residential letting process or when they were sold. Modelling of the housing stock in Dorset show that 6.8% of properties are highly likely to have a Category 1 hazard for “Excess Cold” (i.e. are poorly insulated or lack a suitable heating system) and 5.7% are highly likely to be suffering from serious damp and mould.

Empty Homes: It is estimated that as many as 3.1% of the housing stock may be empty at any one time. Some of these properties may come back onto the market or be used within 6 months however without intervention some will remain empty for many years. Financial assistance is an important tool in the range of services and options the Council offers to help the owners of empty property bring them back into use.

The need for assistance is informed by the condition of local housing stock, the need for reducing non decent homes, removing hazards, improving energy efficiency and making homes more sustainable.

The assistance set out in this policy directly impacts on the health and wellbeing of residents. Census data (2021) shows that 6.1% of the population of Dorset identify as being in an ethnic minority, lower than the national average. This means that it is particularly important to recognise that minority groups may find it difficult to access services, be more isolated and potentially have less support than in other areas. The link between some minority ethnic groups and deprivation may mean that some of these groups are more likely to live in cold homes leading to excess winter deaths.

Disability and people on benefits:

In England 17.1% of people disclosed having a disability (Census 2021) however in Dorset that figure was 19.3%, whilst historical stock condition surveys, (which involve physical surveying of a sample of properties) estimated that 21% of all households have one or more person with an illness or disability. Residents who have a disability and on low income are more likely to be living in poorly insulated and lesser quality property. Targeting resources at people on a lower income and disability targets the resources at those in most need.

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

Continued engagement occurs with both internal partners and stakeholders supporting some of this assistance in this policy and external delivery partners.

Internal Stakeholders:

Portfolio Holder and other Councillors

Adult and Housing Directorate (relevant senior managers)

Adults Commissioning (responsible for commissioning the Dorset Accessible Homes Service)

Growth and Economic Regeneration (responsible for commissioning Healthy Homes Dorset)

External Stakeholders:

Ridgewater Energy Ltd – Council’s provider for Healthy Homes Dorset

Dorset Accessible Homes service provided by Millbrook Health Care Ltd

Lendology Community Investment Company

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

No; the policy is periodically reviewed as new information about housing stock, need and funding opportunities become available to ensure that:

1. It continues to comply with legislation, guidance and case law.
2. That no service user or group of service users are unfairly treated or excluded
3. Existing approved budgets are not exceeded.

The Council can take advantage of new sources of finance and opportunities that arise from time to time.

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqIA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqIA, please answer the following question:

This policy does require a EqIA because it has a wide impact on many residents in Dorset.

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	People of all ages benefit from improvements to their domestic property. Some assistance is targeted directly or indirectly at certain age groups for example, disabled facilities grants are taken up by older persons due to poor mobility in old age and children with disabilities. The range of private sector housing assistance in this policy improves the conditions, access and environmental performance of homes. The assistance is available to all domestic property types including park homes.
Disability	Positive Impact	Assistance in this policy improves the lives of people in all disability groups. It is targeted at those on lower income via a nationally prescribed and mandatory test of financial resources. Help and advice on adapting homes for those able to pay is also provided. Disabled Facilities Grants and loans, handy-van services allow disabled people to remain safely in their homes, avoiding significant care costs and hospital treatments improving life outcomes and well-being. Assistance is also provided to help a disabled person move to a more suitable home.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people who change gender identity to access the financial assistance in this policy.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people who are married or in civil partnerships in this policy.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people who are pregnant to access financial assistance in this policy.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people whatever their race or ethnic group.
Religion and belief	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people whatever their belief or religion.
Sex (consider men and women)	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people whatever their sex.
Sexual orientation	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people whatever their sexual orientation.
People with caring responsibilities	Positive Impact	The assistance in this policy allows disabled people to remain safely in their homes. This assistance directly improves the care setting and significantly supports carers who are providing valuable care and support to disabled people.
Rural isolation	Positive Impact	Improving access to property for disabled people improves their ability to live and remain active within their local communities including rural settings.
Socio-economic deprivation	Positive Impact	The range of private sector housing assistance in this policy improves the conditions, access and environmental performance of homes. Reducing the cost of heating and improving health through better housing conditions directly impact on reducing fuel poverty and improving health outcomes. Assistance is generally targeted at those on lower income.
Single parents	Positive Impact	The range of private sector housing assistance in this policy improves the conditions, access and environmental performance of homes. The assistance is available to all domestic property types. Improving housing conditions is known to improve mental wellbeing and contributes to the cohesion of families including single parent families.
Armed forces communities	Positive Impact	Discretionary powers are included within the policy to extend eligibility so that military personnel and their families can benefit from the assistance offered by the Council.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

This policy has positive impacts to several of the protected characteristics groups, there are no negative impacts. For some protected characteristics groups there is no assessed significant impact.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required because of this EqlA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by	Who to sign off completion
Communication of the assistance to the public	<p>Communication Plan Communication plan required to publicise the assistance available to residents of Dorset and ensure that all equality groups are addressed within the plan. Large print version available upon request Policy to be published on the Council's website. Targeted communication of aspects of this policy to be promoted to encourage take up to target groups.</p>	Service Manager Housing Standards Communications & Engagement Officer	October 2025	Head of Service Housing Standards
Changes in legislation, funding streams and new opportunities	<p>Review of policy Formal policy reviewed after 3 years, consideration of the assistance provided and its effectiveness. The policy may be reviewed annually to include new grant or finance available.</p>	Service Manager Housing Standards	Annually upon date of approval and as necessary	Head of Service Housing Standards

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqlA: Richard Conway

EqIA Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy V2

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Richard Conway

Date of completion: 18th October 2024

Version Number: V2

EqIA review date:18.10.2024

Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palfremen-Kay

Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.
- EqIA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)