



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

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. Initial information
Placement Policy

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

New Policy

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

Both internal and external

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

Dorset Council has a statutory duty to secure accommodation in order to meet the obligations imposed by the Housing Act 1996 as amended. This policy aims to give staff and applicants an oversight as to how properties are matched with applicants taking into account statutory guidance in relation to suitability of accommodation.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

In 2024 an audit was undertaken by SWAP in relation to the properties managed by the Housing Solutions Team. The scope of the audit included the following:

- Supply of temporary accommodation
- Voids process and Health and Safety compliance
- Rent collection process
- Budgeting and forecasting
- Monitoring performance and KPIs
- Placing applicants in temporary accommodation including requirements and forecasting
- Leaving temporary accommodation and temporary to permanent accommodation.

The report noted that some of the policies devised by Housing Solutions remained in draft state and that work needed to be undertaken to ensure that they were completed and the requisite approval obtained. In their words

“these policies are crucial for strengthening the operational framework by providing clear guidelines for procurement, policy management and tenant allocation, thereby ensuring comprehensive risk management, compliance, excellence and a culture of transparency and accountability”.

Three specific policies were cited as requiring adoption, Voids, Placement and Sourcing of Temporary Accommodation.

Evidence gathering and engagement

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

Primarily reference has been made to the Housing Software System, Huume, which records the number of households that approach Dorset Council as homeless and are placed into temporary accommodation. Data has been assessed for the calendar year 2025 to provide a fuller picture regarding the breakdown of applicant types, age, sex etc.

Reference has also been made to census data 2021.

7. What did this tell you?

This is detailed in the tables below.

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

- Housing Management teams
- Housing advice and homelessness teams
- Accommodation with support teams
- Community safety teams
- Housing standards teams
- Housing strategy and performance teams
- Housing register and lettings teams

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

No.

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, strategy, project or service does not require a EqIA because (provide details):

Yes. Homelessness can be experienced by any member of society and at any age. Although an applicant must be a minimum of 16 years of age before an application may be accepted by the local housing authority there are clearly a large proportion of homeless households who are assisted due to the very fact that they comprise of families with dependent children.

There are specific pieces of legislation as well as government departmental issued advice which govern the type of accommodation that certain households can be placed in as well as the length of time. The EqIA gives an opportunity to consider the needs of all applicants and not just specified cohorts.

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	• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	• protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	• no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	• not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age Older people Children under the age of 18 years. Young People aged 18-25 years	Neutral	Data has been taken from households placed in temporary accommodation in 2025 as this would provide significant data for a whole year Of the 684 individual households placed 106 were aged 55 plus. This age was selected due to the fact that a lot of older persons housing advertised via Dorset Council Home Choice is eligible for occupation by applicants aged 55 years and over. 193 households had dependent children. Households with dependent children are regarded as being in priority need under the Housing Act 1996 as amended and therefore accommodation must be secured. Dorset Council is striving to eliminate the use on Bed and Breakfast for all households but the focus should always be on Families With Children due to the fact it is unlawful to accommodate in B&B for longer than six weeks. However there still remains significant concerns and research into the effect of time spent in temporary accommodation for children due to change in location resulting in change in schooling. The policy details the factors for officer to take into account when matching applicants against units of available accommodation to try and mitigate any level of disruption as much as possible. England's Homeless Children: The crisis in temporary accommodation Children growing up in B&Bs – new data shows the full story Children's Commissioner for England Homeless applicants aged 18 plus may struggle to source and secure their own accommodation due to a number of factors. The first being that if they are not self sufficient in their income they are often subjected to lower welfare benefit rates, in particular regarding amounts paid under Local Housing Allowance (LHA). This amount is applicable to the age of 35 years unless explicitly exempt for a specified reason. This makes securing permanent accommodation for this age group harder. This is also amplified by the fact that the supported accommodation within Dorset for young people is primarily focussed on those aged 16 and regarded as Looked After Children and therefore the older age range is not considered.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Disability	Neutral	Of the 684 households placed in temporary accommodation: • 176 households declared that their support need was a physical disability. • 49 declared a learning disability as their support need • 305 stated that they had a history of mental health problems. The wording for the support need reflects the information that is captured and reported to central government as part of the quarterly statistical return on homelessness – HCLIC. Given that a history of mental health issues will cover a broad spectrum it is anticipated that only a small number of applicants would be classified or classify themselves as having a disability as a result of a mental health diagnosis. Overall the indication is that the majority of applicants applying to us as homeless do not identify as having a disability. Although some applicants have not declared information to us, this would not indicate that applicants with a disability constitute a particularly high number of households. Where households have indicated a disability and associated needs such as a need to receive care or specialist medical treatment, this may result in an assessment of needing to remain in or immediately around the vicinity they approached from. This would in any event be a requisite in assessing the suitability of the accommodation for the household. Therefore the impact is deemed as neutral.
Care Experience	Neutral	Care experienced young people are recognised within homelessness legislation and national guidance as a group requiring particular consideration. The Placement Policy does not create additional entitlements but ensures that officers take account of pathway plans, professional advice and individual needs when making placement decisions. This includes having particular regard as to the suitability of accommodation and the fact that the Code of Guidance stipulates that B&B accommodation will not be regarded as suitable for Care Leavers. As the policy formalises existing practice rather than introducing new provisions, the impact is considered neutral.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral	Whilst the housing management system only records the gender of the primary applicant officers will be alerted to those households that contain a member who has or is transitioning and record details appropriately. This could make a difference to the number of bedrooms that the household require.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		Transgender customers may be particularly at risk of housing crisis and homelessness arising from transphobic reaction by family, neighbours and members of the local community. None of the schemes used by Dorset Council are designated as gender specific. In schemes which share facilities such as bathrooms these are gender neutral. In April 2025, the UK Supreme Court ruled that for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, the term “woman” refers to biological sex. The practical implications of this ruling are that services designated as women only or men-only must now apply those categories by biological sex. However, the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty continue to provide protection against discrimination to those who identify as transgender or non binary. Dorset Council will work closely and compassionately with all homeless applicants who identify as transgender or non binary, taking personal risk and safeguarding considerations into account, to ensure they are offered accommodation which is non-discriminatory, safe, and suitable to their needs.
Marriage or civil partnership	Unclear	Although households of more than one person are asked to explain how they are related to other household members those in a relationship are listed on the system as partner. No distinction is made as to whether the relationship has a distinct legal status. Therefore no evidence has been identified to suggest the policy would disadvantage these groups as the data collection limitations mean impacts cannot be fully quantified. However as long as Dorset Council are satisfied under the legislation that the couple are indeed to be regarded as a household then accommodation would be sourced.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	As with households with dependent children pregnancy is a priority need category in its own right. A household that comprises either solely or as a household member that is pregnant is not permitted to remain in emergency B&B accommodation for longer than six weeks.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		Recent amendments made to the Code of Guidance regarding suitability ensure that any property identified must have room for a cot. There is no data available as to whether there is any impact on maternity directly. Households that include a pregnant person are already afforded additional protection under homelessness legislation and suitability requirements. The Placement Policy does not alter these rights but provides a framework to ensure they are consistently applied when matching households to temporary accommodation. The policy therefore supports compliance with existing statutory duties and is assessed as having a neutral impact.
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral	It is not mandatory for applicants to declare their ethnic background. Of the 684 households placed the captured information is as follows 416 – White background 248 – did not complete 12 – Mixed ethnicity 2 – Black background 1 – Gypsy/Irish Traveller The percentage of white applicants is considerably lower than the figure recorded by the 2021 Census of 97.1%, How life has changed in Dorset: Census 2021 If, and of course this is only an if, if the 248 who failed to answer were all of white background then this would mirror. The remaining ethnic groups combined total 2.19% roughly in line with the census figure of 2.6%. Dorset has a small population of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. Due to potentially perceived prejudices the exact figure is not known. 1 applicant in 2025 declared themselves as Gypsy/Irish Traveller. Whilst there are two sites managed by Dorset Council which rent pitches these do not form part of the temporary accommodation available within this policy. There is all likelihood that a homeless presentation from a member of this group may therefore be offered traditional style bricks and mortar in the first instance as temporary accommodation. However guidance would be sought in the

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		first instance from the council's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer It is important to note that this data is taken from the number of households that were placed into temporary accommodation. Placement will occur irrespective of race or ethnic background provided the applicant meets the statutory requirements for placement.
Religion and belief	Unclear	There is limited data within Dorset's housing management system as to whether applicants of a particular faith or religion as well as those who express no belief, experience difficulties in obtaining any longer term accommodation. For those applicants who have expressed or stipulated the need for a place of worship this will be considered accordingly regarding placement near said provision. Faith based support services will also be considered as part of the access to support network where there is an established history. There is an absence of places of worship for some religions across the wider Dorset area. Unless the household is new to the area then they are likely to have experienced a need to travel to a designated place.
Sex (consider men and women)	Neutral	Currently there are no schemes in operation as temporary accommodation which are designated for one sex only. Where a scheme has shared facilities such as kitchen, living room and bathroom than the general make up of the current residents including their sex may become a factor. It may not be considered appropriate for instance to place one woman in a scheme where she would be the only woman and vice versa. It is recognised that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women. Those applicants who have approached as homeless due to fleeing domestic abuse will be carefully assessed before placement taking into account other residents even in schemes where there are no shared facilities save a communal entrance. In April 2025, the UK Supreme Court ruled that for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, the term "woman" refers to biological sex. The practical implications of this ruling are that services designated as women only or men-only must now apply those categories by biological sex. However, the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty continue to provide protection against discrimination to those who identify as transgender or non binary. Dorset Council will work closely and compassionately with all homeless

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		applicants who identify as transgender or non binary, taking personal risk and safeguarding considerations into account, to ensure they are offered accommodation which is non-discriminatory, safe, and suitable to their needs.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Only the sexual orientation of the primary applicant is recorded by the case management system so no data is available regarding wider household members. Whilst no accommodation is specifically set aside for member of the LGBTQ+ community there are no barriers which would prevent a household from being considered for a unit of accommodation based simply on their sexual preferences. Risk assessments would be undertaken for anyone being placed in temporary accommodation who presented a risk of sexual harm to others irrespective of their sexual orientation.
People with caring responsibilities	Neutral	The Placement Policy recognises that some households may need to provide or receive care from family members or support networks. When assessing the suitability of accommodation, officers will consider the location of accommodation in relation to those caring arrangements. Whilst this helps ensure caring responsibilities are appropriately considered, the policy does not confer additional priority or create new rights beyond those already contained within homelessness legislation and guidance. The impact is therefore assessed as neutral.
Rural isolation	Positive	When considering the suitability of accommodation for a homeless household location and access to transport is one of the key considerations. Due to the need to have the most flexible accommodation units of TA will be sourced in urban areas rather than a village setting.
Socio-economic deprivation	Neutral	The Placement Policy supports low-income households without the means to resolve their own housing situation by offering access to emergency accommodation for those groups who qualify for it. Employment status will be taken into consideration when determining priority for in-district placements, ensuring users can maintain existing employment where appropriate. Homeless applicants will be supported to make claims for Housing Benefit, if they are eligible to do so, to ensure the costs of temporary accommodation are covered. Households in temporary accommodation are often linked up with dedicated tenancy sustainment. The purpose of which is

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		to assist applicants to maximise their income by claiming additional welfare benefits or to assist with reducing expenditure . Some households may be impacted as a result of benefit cap. Again these households would be linked in with tenancy sustainment to maximise income. There will be a new Rent Setting policy in due course which will also offer protection to these households by ensuring the amounts charged are in line with the relevant local housing allowance figures.
Single parents	Neutral	Single Parents are the largest applicant type accommodated according to national homelessness statistics. Statutory Homelessness England Time Series 202512.ods Nationally at the end of Q3, 31 December 2025 33% of households accommodated in temporary accommodation were single female parents and 3% were single male. The aim of the placement policy is to identify longer term accommodation that will be suitable for the parent and their children taking into account all the necessary factors such as location and affordability. This is true whether the parent was single or co-parenting in a combined household.
Armed forces communities	Neutral	The Council upholds the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure veterans are not disadvantaged by their service and works closely with veteran-focused projects Weymouth that provides advocacy and support. Additional support, advocacy, and signposting are available through organisations such as the Royal British Legion and SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, and Families Association).

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Overall, the Placement Policy is assessed as having largely neutral impacts across most protected characteristics, with a positive impact for those affected by rural isolation. The policy is designed to ensure that temporary accommodation placements are made fairly, safely and in accordance with statutory homelessness duties, while taking individual needs and vulnerabilities into account.

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
Monitoring of equality impacts following implementation of the Placement Policy.	Annual review of placement outcome data by protected characteristic where data is available.	Head of Housing Solutions.	Ongoing.
Policy review.	Review the Placement Policy and EqIA at the next scheduled policy review or sooner if there are legislative or service changes.	Head of Housing Solutions.	October 2029 unless required to do so sooner.

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Miriam Smith

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Louise Turner

Date of completion: 8 July 2026

Version Number: 1

EqIA review date:

Equality Lead Sign Off:

Next Steps:

- the EqlA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement 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.
- EqlA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

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