



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

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

Void Policy – Housing Management

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:

This policy outlines the Council's approach to managing voids across its Temporary Accommodation (TA) and wider housing portfolio, including hostels, supported and specialist housing, shared accommodation, and self-contained units.

This policy supports Dorset Council's commitment to:

- delivering safe, clean, and secure accommodation
- insuring legal and regulatory compliance
- achieving value for money and efficient use of available housing stock
- applying a transparent and consistent approach to working

Dorset Council's Voids Policy establishes a consistent and strategic approach to managing empty housing across its portfolio. It ensures that when properties become vacant, they are recovered, inspected, repaired, and re-let efficiently while meeting all legal, safety, and quality standards.

The policy is designed to minimise void turnaround times, reduce rental income loss, and support the Council's statutory duties - by making suitable accommodation available as quickly as possible. It emphasises providing safe, clean, compliant homes and adopting a person-centred approach that takes into account vulnerability, accessibility, and household needs.

The policy applies to all council-managed, leased, and partner-provided housing and covers the full voids process from tenancy termination and inspection through to repair, compliance checks, and re-letting. It is underpinned by key legislation and regulatory standards.

Through defined lettable standards, categorisation of void types, and robust performance indicators, Dorset Council aims to ensure consistency, accountability,

and value for money while continuously improving services through monitoring, reporting, and feedback.

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”.

Evidence gathering and engagement

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

- delivery on the ‘Our Council Plan 2024-2029’ proposal
- internal performance data on void turnaround times and re-let times
- consultation with the Assets and Property team at Dorset Council, and their processes and proposed policies, with a focus on repair and call out
- typical response times to void works and how these are raised and reported internally (process)
- homelessness and temporary accommodation demand data
- national housing and regulatory standards

- relevant legislation including housing and health and safety requirements
- analysed Dorset Council homeless data, held on our Housing Register (Internal systems – specifically Huume at time of writing)

7. What did this tell you?

The evidence highlights a clear need to improve access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing, particularly for vulnerable residents and those at risk of homelessness. Demand for suitable Temporary Accommodation can at times exceeds supply (For example unforeseen social and external impacts), and delays in bringing empty properties back into use can have a direct impact on households in need.

The Council Plan 2024 - 2029 reinforces and identifies housing as a cornerstone of a fairer and more prosperous Dorset, with a need to improve access for local people, reduce inequalities, and support inclusive communities. The evidence shows that inefficiencies in void management can contribute to barriers in accessing housing, particularly for those already facing disadvantage.

This approach will also support the Council's longer-term aim to reduce and, where possible, eliminate the use of nightly paid accommodation, commonly referred to as bed and breakfast accommodation. This type of accommodation is often unsuitable for longer-term occupation. Under UK legislation and statutory guidance, households with dependent children or pregnant women should not be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks, except in emergency circumstances. Improving void turnaround times will help ensure that more appropriate and stable accommodation can be provided within this timeframe, or supersede it entirely.

The findings also highlight pressures across a range of specialist housing pathways, including those linked to supported housing, entrenched or repeat rough sleeping, and other targeted housing strategies. These groups often require accommodation that is suitable, safe, and available at the right time. Delays in re-letting or inconsistencies in property standards can impact the ability to respond effectively to these needs and may contribute to poorer outcomes.

In addition, the evidence supports the importance of partnership working. Delivering efficient void management requires coordination across housing, assets and property teams, support services, other internal teams, and external partners. This reflects the Council Plan principle that better outcomes are achieved by working together across services and with wider partners.

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
- Asset and repairs teams

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

Further monitoring data will be collected following implementation to assess performance across different groups, particularly around void turnover times, costs and average time voids are sat with contractors for work completion. Ongoing service user feedback may also help inform future revisions.

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):

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	Neutral	The policy applies consistently across all age groups and aims to ensure vacant properties are returned to use as quickly as possible. This may improve access to accommodation generally; however, no specific positive or negative impact on people because of age has been identified.
Disability	Positive	The policy includes consideration of accessibility and suitability, supporting disabled residents by ensuring properties are safe and appropriate. Mitigation: ensure reasonable adjustments and adaptations are prioritised.
Care Experience	Positive	Care-experienced young people can be disproportionately affected by housing instability and homelessness. By reducing void turnaround times and increasing the availability of suitable accommodation, the policy may help improve access to housing opportunities for care leavers and other care-experienced residents who require support when moving

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		into independent accommodation.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral	The policy applies equally to all residents regardless of gender identity. No specific positive or negative impacts have been identified. The consistent and transparent management of void properties helps ensure fair access to accommodation opportunities.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	No specific impact identified.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Timely re-letting supports households requiring accommodation, with regards to families not being able to spend longer than 6 weeks in emergency accommodation with shared facilities (emergency accommodation), as per current legislation
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral	No specific impact identified.
Religion and belief	Neutral	No specific impact identified.
Sex (consider men and women)	Neutral	Policy applies equally to all genders.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Policy applies equally to all genders.
People with caring responsibilities	Positive	Improved access to suitable housing supports those with caring responsibilities.
Rural isolation	Positive	Efficient use of available housing stock can improve access in rural areas. Mitigation: continue monitoring availability and location suitability.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Socio-economic deprivation	Positive	Supports quicker access to housing for those in financial hardship or homelessness – also supports accommodation options away from often unaffordable nightly charged emergency options.
Single parents	Neutral	Faster rehousing supports stability for single parent households. Avoids emergency placements and breaches of legislative responsibility - families not being able to spend longer than 6 weeks in emergency accommodation with shared facilities (emergency accommodation). However any parent with dependent children will benefit from a move into self contained accommodation irrespective of any relationship they are in.
Armed forces communities	Neutral	No specific impact identified, although access to housing is supported through general improvements.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Overall, the Voids Policy has a positive impact across most groups by improving access to safe, suitable housing and reducing waiting times. No significant negative impacts have been identified. The policy promotes fairness, transparency, and consistency, while recognising the need to consider individual needs such as disability, vulnerability, and household circumstances.

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 equality impacts of the Voids Policy	Monitor void turnaround times, re-let times and accommodation outcomes to identify any disproportionate impacts on protected groups and vulnerable households where data is available.	Housing Management Team	Ongoing – quarterly review
Accessibility and disability considerations	Ensure reasonable adjustments, aids and adaptations are considered as part of the void process where required to meet residents' needs.	Housing Management and Assets Teams	Ongoing
Care-experienced residents and vulnerable households	Monitor housing outcomes and access to accommodation for care leavers and other vulnerable groups to ensure the policy supports timely access to suitable accommodation.	Housing Management Team	Ongoing
Rural accommodation availability	Review availability and suitability of housing stock across rural communities to identify any barriers to access.	Housing Management Team	Annual review
Policy review	Review the EqIA alongside the next scheduled review of the Voids Policy or sooner if there are significant legislative, service or operational changes	Housing Management Team	October 2029 unless required to do so sooner.

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Sheena Browne

Officers involved in completing the EqlA: Sheena Browne

Date of completion: 30.06.2026

Version Number: 1

EqlA 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](#)