

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Before completing this form, please refer to the supporting guidance documents which can be found on the equality page of the intranet. The page also provides the name of your Corporate Equality Group member should you need any additional advice.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a planning tool that enable us to build equality into mainstream processes by helping us to:

- consider the equality implications of our policies (this includes criteria, practices, functions or services - essentially everything we do) on different groups of employees, service users, residents, contractors and visitors
- identify the actions we need to take to improve outcomes for people who experience discrimination and disadvantage
- fulfil our commitment to public service.

The level of detail included in each EIA should be proportionate to the scale and significance of its potential impact on the people with protected characteristics.

**This assessment may be published on the Authority’s website as part of a Council or Cabinet Report. It can also be requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and can be used as evidence in complaint or legal proceedings.**

### Proposal details

<b>1. Name of the policy or process being assessed</b>	North Tyneside Lettings Policy	
<b>2. Version of this EIA</b> (e.g. a new EIA = 1)	1	
<b>3. Date EIA created</b>	09/12/2021	
	Name	Service or organisation
<b>4. Principal author of this EIA</b>	Rachael Sanderson	Housing, Property & Construction
<b>5. Others involved in writing this EIA</b> <i>EIAs should not be completed by a sole author. Think about key stakeholders and others who can support the process and bring different ideas and perspectives to the discussion.</i>	Paul Worth – Senior Manager – Housing Operations Liz Archer – Housing Options Manager	Environment, Housing & Leisure Environment, Housing & Leisure

**6. What is the purpose of your proposal, who should it benefit and what outcomes should be achieved?**

Proposed minor changes to North Tyneside Council’s Lettings Policy.

The Lettings Policy sets out the way in which Council Housing is allocated. North Tyneside Council’s Lettings Policy was reviewed in 2019, it is good practice to review the letting policy every two years in order to respond to policy changes and the local housing market.

There were a total of 4 significant changes made as part of the 2019 Lettings Policy review, all work well and since then no significant legislative changes have come into play, the current policy fulfils our responsibility to all of our tenants to ensure people are living in accommodation most suitable to their needs, to rehouse those in the most housing need, and to let homes in the most efficient and effective way. Key considerations as part of the 2021 review:-

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – the requirements of the Act are met by the existing Policy.
- EU nationals – following a change in status for EEA citizens, it has been confirmed that this is covered by current policy.
- Ineligibility due to Rent Arrears considering current climate, met by existing Policy.
- The inclusion of Armed Forces families, met by the existing Policy.

**7. Does this proposal contribute to the achievement of the Authority’s public sector equality duty? Will your proposal:**

*Write your answers in the table*

Aim	Answer: Yes, No, or N/A	If yes, how?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment	Yes	No evidence of discrimination has been found previously but this EIA will help us to verify that lettings are fair and equitable.
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Yes	The Lettings Policy aims to ensure that applicants receive the correct priority for housing in line with their needs.

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Yes	The Tyne and Wear Homes process allocates homes to people from all communities and backgrounds in North Tyneside. Procedures are in place to ensure any prejudices that may be encountered are addressed; this will help foster good relations.
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## Evidence Gathering and Engagement

### 8. What evidence has been used for this assessment?

Engagement activities undertaken include meeting with Portfolio Lead and Members.

### 9.a Have you carried out any engagement in relation to this proposal?

	√
Yes - please complete 9b	√
No	

9.b Engagement activity undertaken	With	When
Meeting with Portfolio Lead	Councillor Cox	30/09/2021
Meeting with Housing Sub Committee	Members	11/10/2021

### 9. Is there any information you don't have?

	√	Please explain why this information is not currently available
Yes - please list in section A of the action plan at Q13		
No	√	

## Analysis by protected characteristic

	A	B	C
<b>11. Protected characteristic</b>	<b>Does this proposal and how it will be implemented have the <u>potential</u> to impact on people with this characteristic?</b> (Answer – Yes or No)	<b>If ‘Yes’ would the <u>potential</u> impact be positive or negative?</b> (Answer – positive or negative)	<b>Please describe the <u>potential</u> impact and the evidence (including that given in Q8 and 9) you have used</b>
<b>All Characteristics</b>			
<b>Sex</b> – male or female	No		There is no specific impact to sex for this strategy. The letting of properties will be in accordance with our policy and there is no reason to believe that the proposals would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of their sex.
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – largely relates to employment, but also to some aspects of service delivery e.g. for breastfeeding women	No		We have no reason to believe that the proposals would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of pregnancy and maternity.

<p><b>Age</b> – people of different ages, including young and old</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The aim of the policy is to ensure best use is made of housing stock in North Tyneside.</p> <p>Some properties do have an age restriction to be eligible to reside in them. This will be considered when letting a home in accordance with this policy.</p> <p>The equity/savings of people aged over 60 who apply for North Tyneside Living properties (older person's accommodation) has been set against the average price of similar older persons accommodation in the borough. This figure will be reviewed on an annual basis and is currently incorporated in the Lettings Policy.</p>
<p><b>Disability</b> – including those with visual, audio (BSL speakers and hard of hearing), mobility, physical, mental health issues, learning, multiple and unseen disabilities</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The aim of the policy is to ensure best use is made of housing stock in North Tyneside and housing needs are met. This includes properties for people with a disability who may require additional support including adaptations.</p> <p>The letting of properties will be in accordance with this policy.</p> <p>The policy can be made available in a range of formats for people to access, including audio, large print, easy read, BSL video, web based or a paper copy can be sent to them.</p> <p>Vulnerable customers may find it difficult to bid for a home or understand how the Homefinder process works.</p> <p>Contact for the service is widely promoted. In the majority of circumstances, customers usually arrange support to directly access the system via friends, family and support services. Where there is no support available, the Homefinder Team can help register customers over the telephone. Autobids are available, where required, or details of adverts and placing bids can again be arranged with the team over the phone or by visiting a Customer</p>

			<p>First Centre.</p> <p>Safeguards are put in place to ensure that offers are suitable. The implementation of this is carefully monitored, including making use of information about protected characteristics and reviewing procedures.</p> <p>The current policy allows that for applicants with a priority homeless status to be made a direct offer of accommodation rather than being able to bid for available homes. In processing a direct offer, the needs of the customer are taken into account, in identifying a suitable property.</p> <p>Armed Forces personnel leaving Service Family Accommodation, following the death of their spouse or partner or where a serving member or former member of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of being in the forces are noted in the policy in line with the Armed Forces guidance.</p>
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b> - includes trans, non-binary and those people who do not identify with or reject gender labels</p>	Yes	Positive	<p>The policy allows for applicants' accounts to be suspended for a period of six months where they have rejected three or more offers over a twelve month period, including those who are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, some areas /properties may not feel safe and therefore they may be detrimentally impacted by this measure. It is therefore important that safeguards are put in place to ensure that offers are suitable. The implementation of this is carefully monitored, including making use of information about protected characteristics and reviewing procedures.</p>
<p><b>Race</b> – includes a person's nationality, colour, language, culture and geographic origin</p>	Yes	Positive	<p>The proposed policy change allows for applicants accounts to be suspended for a period of six months where they have refused three or more offers over a twelve month period. Safeguards are put in place to ensure that offers are suitable</p>

			<p>and that the proposal is sensitively implemented, particularly with regard to minority groups. The implementation of this proposal is carefully monitored, including making use of information about protected characteristics.</p> <p>The policy can be made available in a range of formats, including key community languages. A paper copy can be sent to a household if requested.</p>
<p><b>Religion or belief</b> – includes those with no religion or belief</p>	Yes	Positive	<p>The Lettings Policy and procedure is sensitive to the needs and requirements of applicants who are suffering from harassment and hate crime as a result of their religion or faith.</p>
<p><b>Sexual orientation</b> – includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight people</p>	No	N/A	<p>We have no reason to believe that the policy would have any greater or lessereffect on people on account of sexual orientation.</p>

<b>Marriage and civil partnership status</b> - not single, co-habiting, widowed or divorced– only relates to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment	No	N/A	We have no reason to believe that the policy would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of marriage and civil partnership status.
<b>Intersectionality</b> - will have an impact due to a combination of two or more of these characteristics	No	N/A	We have no reason to believe that there would be any specific impact to intersectionality for this Policy.

If you have answered **'Yes'** anywhere in column A please complete the rest of the form, ensuring that all identified negative impacts are addressed in either Q12 'negative impacts that cannot be removed' or Q13 'Action Plan' below

If you have answered **'No'** in all rows in column A please provide the rationale and evidence in the all characteristics box in column C and go to Q14 'Outcome of EIA'.

**12.a Can any of the negative impacts identified in Q11 not be removed or reduced?**

Yes - please list them in the table below and explain why	
No	√

<b>12.b Potential negative impact</b>	<b>What alternative options, if any, were considered?</b>	<b>Explanation of why the impact cannot be removed or reduced or the alternative option pursued.</b>

**Action Planning** (you do not need to complete the grey cells within the plan)

13. Action Plan	Impact: (Answer remove or reduce)	Responsible officer (Name and service)	Target completion date
<b>Section A: Actions to gather evidence or information to improve NTC's understanding of the potential impacts on people with protected characteristics and how best to respond to them</b> (please explain below)			
<b>Section B: Actions already in place to remove or reduce potential negative impacts</b> (please explain below)			
Disability - Applicants can bid for homes online, by contacting the Council First Centres or by Auto-bid (this is set up for vulnerable customers).	Reduce	Liz Archer/ Paul Worth	
Gender reassignment - safeguards are put in place to ensure that offers are suitable. The implementation of this is carefully monitored, including making use of information about protected characteristics and reviewing procedures.	Reduce	Liz Archer/ Paul Worth	
Race - Safeguards are put in place to ensure that offers are suitable and that the proposal is sensitively implemented, particularly with regard to minority groups. The implementation of this proposal is carefully monitored, including making use of information about protected characteristics.	Reduce	Liz Archer/ Paul Worth	
<b>Section C: Actions that will be taken to remove or reduce potential negative impacts</b> (please explain below)			
There are no negative impacts identified. This will be reviewed on a regular basis.		Liz Archer	
<b>Section D: Actions that will be taken to make the most of any potential positive impact</b> (please explain below)			
Inform residents and tenants of the policy and how to access.		Liz Archer/ Paul Worth	

<b>Section E: Actions that will be taken to monitor the equality impact of this proposal once it is implemented</b> (please explain below)			
The Lettings Policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or as a result of changes in legislation and/or regulation or in line with business needs.		Liz Archer/ Paul Worth	2023
<b>Section F: Review of EIA to be completed</b>		Rachael Sanderson	2023 (one year after it has been adopted)

#### 14. Outcome of EIA

Based on the conclusions from this assessment:

Outcome of EIA	Tick relevant box	Please explain and evidence why you have reached this conclusion:
The proposal is robust, no major change is required.	√	The policy works well and fulfils our responsibility to all of our tenants to ensure people are living in accommodation most suitable to their needs, to rehouse those in the most housing need, and to let homes in the most efficient and effective way.
Continue but with amendments		
Not to be pursued		

Now send this document to the [Corporate Equality Group member for your service](#) for clearance.

#### Quality assurance and approval

*Questions 15-18 are only for completion by the Corporate Equality Group Member for your service*

<b>15. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?</b>	Agree		Disagree	
<b>16. If disagree, please explain:</b>				
<b>17. Name of Corporate Equality Group Member:</b>				
<b>18. Date:</b>				

Conclusion:

- If the assessment is agreed, please send the document to the Head of Service for sign off.
- If you disagree return to author for reconsideration.

*Questions 19-22 are only for completion by the Head of Service*

<b>19. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?</b>	Agree		Disagree	
<b>20. If disagree, please explain:</b>				
<b>21. Head of Service:</b>				
<b>22. Date:</b>				

Please return the document to the Author and Corporate Equality Group Member.