

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCREENING DOCUMENT

Name of Proposal

Revised Common Allocations Policy

Lead Department/Service

Communities - Housing

What is the aim of the proposal?

The revisions to the Common Allocations Policy aim to meet the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. It is envisaged that introducing a choice based lettings approach (CBL) will encourage a range of people to access social housing and give people more choice over their housing outcomes. By empowering and placing the initiative on the applicant it is hoped that CBL will improve demand for low demand stock, reduce refusal rates and improve applicant satisfaction. It is also anticipated that this will lead to more sustainable and balanced communities where tenants in turn are more committed to their community with less abandonments, crime and anti-social behaviour.

Is this a new or a review of an existing policy, procedure, function or report?

This is a review of an existing policy.

Screening Process

1. Has the proposal already been assessed for its impact on age; disability; gender; gender re-assignment; pregnancy/maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion and belief; and sexual orientation? **If yes, go to 1 a. If no, go to 1 b. - No**

1 a. Unless there have been significant changes, no further action is required. **Please add your name, position and date below at 3.**

1 b. Does the proposal involve or have consequences for the people the council serves or employs? **If yes, go to 2. If no, go to 1 c. - Yes**

1 c. Please state why not

The proposal is not relevant and no further action is required. Sign and date below at 3.

2. Is the proposal relevant to one or more of the protected characteristics? **If yes, go to 2 a. If no, go to 2 b. - Yes**

2 a. **Proceed to Step 1 of the Full Equality Impact Assessment on page 2.**

2 b. Please state why not

The proposal not relevant and no further action is required. Add your name, position and date below at 3.

3. Name:

Position:

Date:

FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Step 1

Are there any statutory legal requirements affecting this proposal? If so please describe.

Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended up to and including the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out the legal framework in which social landlords must allocate housing.

Step 2

What data/research is available to assess the likely impact of the proposal?

An evaluation of CBL as an alternative to a traditional points based allocations policy was completed in 2016, drawing on evidence papers, government guidance and site visits to Edinburgh City Council and Wheatley Group who both operate CBL with an established Common Housing Register and use Northgate's housing management system. We explored the possibility of introducing real choice while ensuring that the council continues to meet its legal duty to give reasonable preference to those in housing need. We explored the benefits of a CBL; potential access issues; and the tensions between creating balanced communities by making social housing accessible for a variety of people and providing housing for those in greatest need.

The research demonstrated that for a CBL to be successful, there needs to be adequate advice, information and support available to empower people to make informed choices. A robust allocations policy is also needed to provide an element of control and regulation in order to have a fair system that continues to meet housing need and create balanced communities. The conclusions and recommendations are supported by the Housing Management team and the proposed policy reflects the conclusions drawn from the evaluation of CBL as an alternative to our current allocations system.

Step 3

Is there any reason to believe the proposal could affect people differently due to their protected characteristic ie age; disability; gender; gender re-assignment; pregnancy/maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion and belief; and sexual orientation? Please **place a cross** in each box that applies, and give details alongside.

Age Existing age restrictions in place for different types of housing provision (ie. Amenity, Retirement and Supported Housing for Older People), these have not been revised as part of the revised allocations policy.

Disability Consideration has been given to the needs of disabled people in accessing advertisements and making bids on available properties. An action plan has been agreed following the consultation to ensure support provisions are in place prior to the launch of the policy and CBL allocations system. Within the allocations policy itself, greater priority is being proposed for applicants who need to move to suitable accommodation because of any mobility needs they have. It is recognised that the accommodation choices available to applicants with mobility needs is restricted. Higher priority is also proposed for applicants who no longer need specialist adapted or supported housing to ensure we can make the best use of this stock.

Gender _____

Gender Re-assignment _____

Pregnancy/maternity _____

Marriage and civil Partnership _____

Race _____

Religion and belief _____

Sexual orientation _____

Step 4

Is there evidence to suggest that any part of the proposal could unlawfully discriminate against people? If so, how?

No – all applications will be processed in accordance with legislation. A CBL approach intends to open up the letting of social housing and helps to ensure a fairer and more transparent process, compared to our current allocations approach.

Step 5

Can the proposal be seen to favour one section of the community

Yes No

or deny opportunities to another?

Yes No

If yes, please give details.

We have a statutory requirement to give reasonable preference to certain priority categories with unmet housing needs, as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. However the introduction of starter and mover categories is intended to achieve balanced communities, while continuing to give preference to those in greatest housing need.

Step 6

Does the proposal advance or restrict equality?

Yes No

If yes, give details

Step 7

Are there any other actions which could have been taken to enhance equality of opportunity?

If so please state - No

Step 8

Based on the work you have done, rate the level of relevance being allocated to this proposal.

High Medium Low Unknown Positively – increasing the opportunity of access to supported housing

Step 9

If during **Steps 3 - 6** there has been an adverse impact identified, consider whether this can be justified.

Yes No

If yes please give details.

We must allocate our houses within the legal framework set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, amended up to and including the recent changes introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 which defines the reasonable preference categories. The revised policy complies with the statutory requirements set out by this legislation.

If no, consider alternative ways of delivering the proposal to minimise negative impact or eliminate unlawful discrimination. Give details of the changes to be made to the proposal.

Step 10

Do you need to carry out a further impact assessment?

Yes No

If yes, what actions do you need to take?

Step 11

Make arrangements to monitor and review the impact assessment.

Step 12

Publish impact assessment.

Where will the Equality Impact Assessment be published?

This assessment accompanies a committee report and is available to the public on the council's website.

Please state your name, position and date, and forward this pro forma either to your designated Equality Impact Assessment Co-ordinator, or if it refers to a committee report, it should be forwarded with the report to committee services.

Name: Lynsey Dey

Position: Housing Options Coordinator

Date: 28/4/2017

For additional information and advice please contact:
the Equalities Officer - Tel: 01307 476058 or E-mail: Equalities@angus.gov.uk