

Charnwood Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment 'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'

■ Background

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

■ Legislation- Equality Duty

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions

■ **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy	Empty Homes Premium
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Karey Barnshaw
Date EIA started	10/1/19
Date EIA completed	14/1/19

■ **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)

Empty Homes Premium

Council Tax legislation enables local authorities to currently charge a premium of up to 50% in addition to the Council Tax on dwellings that are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for two years or more. Government has now amended this legislation to increase the premiums that can be charged as follows:

- 100% extra (for properties empty for 2-5 years)
- 200% extra (for properties empty for 5-10 years) [commencing in 2020]
- 300% extra (for properties empty for 10+ years) [commencing in 2021]

It has been estimated that there are 150 properties that have been empty for at least two years in the Borough.

The main purpose of the premium would be to reduce the number of empty homes, and provide an incentive to get empty homes back into use, rather than to generate income.

Care Leavers Policy

The Council understands that the transition out of care for young people can be very problematic. Without the support of a family and being inexperienced in managing their own finances, which means care leavers can be more susceptible to fall into debt. To support you people transitioning out of care the introduction of the Care Leavers Policy removes the liability of a care leave up to the age of 25 for Council Tax

What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?

The Empty Homes Premium changes will directly affect property owners of the empty homes, regardless of protected characteristic.

The Care Leavers Policy is aimed at young people between the age of 18-25 leave the care system. The policy's aim is to help smooth their transition into independent living by offering financial support for their Council Tax

Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?

Empty Homes Premium

The consultation ran for a period of 6 weeks until the 6th January 2019 and had 134 respondents. All residents who own an empty home were written to direct asking for their participation in the consultation. In summary the results were:

- Over 59% of respondents were supportive of the Council increasing the Empty Homes Premium to 100% after 2 years with nearly 57% believing if this was introduced after a property being empty for 1 year it would encourage empty properties to be brought back into use more quickly
- Nearly 49% of respondents were supportive of the introduction of the 200% premium for properties empty for 5 years or more.
- Over 47% of respondents were supportive of the introduction of the 300% premium for properties empty for 10 years or more.
- 75% of respondents said yes or maybe to the suggestion that by amending the current discount of 50% for 12 months for properties which are unoccupied, unfurnished or uninhabitable to 100% for 6 months this would encourage homes to be brought back into use more quickly.

In relation to the Care Leaver Policy, joint meetings between all Leicestershire local authorities have taken place to jointly agree the introduction of this policy.

■ Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

Empty Homes Consultation Dec/Jan 2018/19

No. of Care Leavers per annum – Leicestershire County Council

What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

Property owners and Care Leavers are likely to be from a range of protected characteristics and not any specific diverse group.

■ Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

Not applicable. A resident consultation has already taken place.

■ Step 5 – Assessing the impact

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

	Comments
Age	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of age.</p> <p>The Care Leaver Policy will have a positive impact on young people between the ages of 18-25 leaving care.</p>
Disability (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of disability.</p> <p>Neutral impact The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of disability</p>
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.</p> <p>Neutral impact The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of gender reassignment</p>
Race	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of race.</p> <p>Neutral impact The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of race</p>
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of religion or belief.</p> <p>Neutral impact The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of religion or belief</p>
Sex (Gender)	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of sex.</p> <p>Neutral impact The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of sex</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of sexual orientation.</p>

	<p>Neutral impact</p> <p>The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected characteristic of sexual orientation</p>
<p>Other protected groups (Pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)</p>	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon any other protected group</p> <p>Neutral impact</p> <p>The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon the protected groups</p>
<p>Other socially excluded groups (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)</p>	<p>Neutral impact. All property owners will be assessed by the same criteria standard for empty homes with no predicted adverse impact upon any other socially excluded group.</p> <p>Neutral impact</p> <p>The Care Leavers policy criteria is based solely on age and leaving the care system with no predicted adverse impact upon other socially excluded groups</p>

<p>Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.</p> <p>Please note:</p> <p>a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.</p> <p>b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).</p>
<p>There is seen to be a neutral impact for the Empty Homes Premium and a positive impact for the Care Leavers Policy, therefore meeting Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.</p>

Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review

<p>Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?</p>
<p>The take up number for the Care Leavers Policy will be monitored on a quarterly basis against expected volumes to ensure those that require financial support receive it.</p>
<p>How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.</p>
<p>The assessment will be included as part of the back ground papers that will go to Cabinet on 14th February 2019</p>

■ **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan			
Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
001	Monitoring take up of discount for Care leavers on quarterly basis	K Barnshaw	Ongoing

■ **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	Y	This assessment will be attached alongside the Cabinet paper of 14 th February 2019 and published on the Charnwood Borough Council Website.
Service users	Y	This assessment will be attached alongside the Cabinet paper of 14 th February 2019 and published on the Charnwood Borough Council Website.
Partners and stakeholders	Y	This assessment will be attached alongside the Cabinet paper of 14 th February 2019 and published on the Charnwood Borough Council Website.
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		

■ **Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the [Service Head](#))**

Please delete as appropriate
I agree
If <i>disagree</i> , state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:
Signed (Service Head): Simon Jackson
Date: 14/1/19

[Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.](#)