

# Midlothian Council Equality Impact Assessment Form



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**Lead contact:**

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## Section A: Introduction

### 1. Title of policy, procedure or function being assessed

Midlothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2013 - 2017

### 2. Divisions/organisations/groups involved in doing this Equality Impact Assessment

Communities & Well Being – Housing & Community Safety

### 3. Date started:

June 2012

### Date completed:

October 2012

## Section B: Information

### 4. Please describe the Policy, Procedure or Function you are impact assessing

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2013 – 2017 sets out the key housing issues to be addressed across all tenures in Midlothian, and also sets out the strategy for addressing homelessness, housing support, fuel poverty and energy efficiency/climate change.

### 5. What information and consultation data do you have to inform your assessment? What does it tell you?

- A comprehensive programme of information gathering and consultation data was carried out to inform the development of the LHS and the development of the accompanying EQIA.
- Information gathered included specific research into population and demographics, local housing system analysis, house condition and socio economic issues. Furthermore the LHS is informed by housing need and demand analysis which considers the needs of equality groups.
- In terms of consultation, efforts have been made to consult as widely as possible. LHS Consultation Events were carried out for Stakeholders, Council

Tenants, and the wider public. Consultation was also carried out through the Council's website and by writing to tenants, community councils and other relevant organisations to encourage them to provide feedback on the LHS.

- A range of groups which have an equalities remit were consulted with during the consultation process including support groups, societies and campaigning organisations in areas including: race, older people, carers, Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, older people, ethnic minority groups, disabled, young peoples groups, armed forces veterans, substance abuse, physical disability and learning disability.
- The feedback has been encouraging and will help to shape the final LHS report.
- A summary of outputs on results of this consultation is contained as an appendix of the LHS.

## 6. Do you need more information or more consultation/engagement data?

- Do you need anything more:
  - i. to do this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)
  - ii. to monitor or assess, in future, the impact of the policy/procedure or function you are EQIAing on people with different equalities characteristics
- Lack of data is not a sufficient reason to conclude there is no impact. It is insufficient to state that a policy will affect everyone equally without having considered the different barriers some people may encounter.

The Council's LHS is influenced by a wide range of information/data which helps inform future strategic direction, and a wide range of groups were given the opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the LHS.

## Section C: Assessment

Midlothian Council equality impact assesses on **all** of the characteristics in the shaded area below, so you should consider all of these in your assessment. If you want you can consider other groups as well.

**Race** (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)

**Disability** (e.g. physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health conditions or long-term illnesses)

**Sex**(male/female)

**Age** (all ages)

**Sexual Orientation** (gay man, gay woman/lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual/straight)

**Religion or belief** (including having no religion or belief)

**Pregnancy and maternity** (having just had a baby or being pregnant)

**Gender reassignment** or transgender status (a person who is proposing to undergo is undergoing or has undergone a process to change their sex)

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

**People experiencing poverty or at risk of poverty:** (poverty may be simply defined as not having enough money to meet one's basic daily needs or to have the things that most people in the UK take for granted).

### As you answer questions 7i. to 7iv. over the page:

#### a) Think about the policy, practice or function you are assessing and

- people with the above characteristics
  - people associated with them (e.g. a parent or carer)
  - people mistakenly assumed to have the above characteristics
- Remember to consider impacts on staff as well as communities and customers.  
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#### b) Consider whether the above people are likely to have different needs, or be affected in different ways by what you are doing/proposing. e.g.

- People may need, or benefit from, information provided in a particular format, like large print or easy read.
- A queuing system which relies on people standing for long periods will make it very difficult for some people to use the service.
- Charging more for a service is likely to affect people from several of the groups in the shaded area above, as on average they have a lower income.
- Targeting an area of high poverty could leave people experiencing poverty outside the area even worse off in comparison

#### c) Consider the General Equality Duty requirements to pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, victimization, harassment or other local conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the characteristics listed in shaded area at the top of this page (except poverty)
- advance equality of opportunity between and foster good relations between people who share a characteristic in the shaded area and those who do not (except marriage and civil partnership and poverty)

### 7i. Note any positive impacts on the above equalities groups

Equalities implications are incorporated into the Strategy.

A range of activities in the Strategy address the needs of specific equalities groups including:

- Providing households with particular needs, with the opportunity to access appropriate accommodation and services.
- Working to the Armed Forces Covenant to identify the housing requirements of members discharged from the Armed Forces.
- Working with East Lothian Council to secure improvements on the shared Gypsy Traveller Site.
- Researching the housing needs of those with learning disability or complex physical disability.

In addition there are many legislative requirements which ensure that the Council and partners provide appropriate services and housing for specific groups including those at risk of domestic violence and those at risk of homelessness.

**7ii. Note any negative impacts on equalities groups**

No specific measures currently in place to identify specific equalities traits such as poverty, faith, religion, sexuality other than census data.

**7iii. How significant would this negative impact be, and what kind of numbers would be affected?**

Due to the lack of monitoring of these specific groups it is difficult to estimate the numbers of affected. However overall it is not thought that services and activity provided as a result of the LHS would directly or indirectly discriminate against these groups.

**7iv. Note any opportunities for making a positive impact on equalities groups.**

LHS has a positive impact in terms of meeting the housing needs of specific groups and the Strategy itself will help to raise awareness of issues that affect equalities groups such as the elderly or those living in fuel poverty.

**Section D: Actions and Outcomes**

Questions 8 and 9 below ask about actions which have been taken, or will be taken **as a result** of this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). Any pre-existing actions should be included in earlier sections.

**8. Note any actions you will be taking as a result of this EQIA:**

Think about what you can do to:

- minimise or remove any negative impacts, and
  - maximise the opportunities for positive impacts
- Make the LHS available in variety of formats, such as large print, Braille, or provide translation into other languages if English is not their first language.
  - Ensure that representative groups have their say in the development of the LHS by involving and engaging local groups/organisations and their representatives.
  - Undertake bids for funding or other related initiatives which help address the needs of equalities groups.

- Consider ongoing partnership working and coproduction with stakeholders.
- Assist households on low incomes to cope with changes as results of Welfare Reform to avoid going into poverty.

**9. Please note any actions you have already taken as a result of this EQIA here.**

- Carried out LHS consultation events and enabled feedback in a wide variety of formats, including written, face to face, email, website and telephone.
- Produced the draft LHS in Easy Read version for those with learning difficulties.
- Provided LHS summary document.

**10. How will you track/monitor that the actions you mentioned in 8. have been achieved?**

e.g. by adding them to a work plan, service plan etc.

Report on actions in relation to equalities will be monitored and reported on annually.

**11. If you have decided not to take any action please note why this is, and any justification, here.**

A significant negative impact, even if it affects only a small number of people, should be addressed.

Currently there is no evidence that any group or community is discriminated against by the Outcomes and Activities set out in the Local Housing Strategy. Ongoing monitoring, consultation and engagement will ensure that this remains the case and will allow any issues action will be taken in the event that.

**12. Is a more detailed assessment recommended?**

No

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