

# **Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis**

(Version 4)

<b>Item name</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Title of service or policy</b>	Bath and North East Somerset Council's Housing Plan
<b>Name of directorate and service</b>	Sustainable Communities – Housing Services
<b>Name and role of officers completing the EqIA</b>	Graham Sabourn/Susan Hayter
<b>Date of assessment</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024

Equality Impact Assessment (or 'Equality Analysis') is a process of systematically analyzing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impacts it will have on people and different groups within our community. The main aim is to identify any adverse impacts (i.e., discriminatory, or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and to identify areas where equality can be better promoted). Equality impact Assessments (EqIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so mark N/A any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council's website following relevant service lead approval.

## 1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
<p>1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How the service/policy is delivered and by whom</li> <li>● If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations</li> <li>● Intended outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council's Housing Plan (The Plan) sets out the council's high-level aims for delivery of housing and housing services, against which specific areas of housing delivery, management or support will be assessed and more detailed plans made.</p> <p>It is the overarching document for the council's Housing Services which will shape all activities. It supports the Economic Strategy in developing the Council's action to address affordability</p> <p>Effective implementation of the Plan will support the council's ambition to deliver the right homes in the right places and ensure that residents have access to affordable, safe and high quality homes.</p>
<p>1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one?</li> <li>● Is it a national requirement?).</li> </ul>	<p>The Housing Plan is a newly developed document that outlines the primary goals for the delivery and management of all facets of the council's Housing Services.</p> <p>There is no national requirement for the council to produce a Housing Plan.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much room for review is there?</li> </ul>	<p>The Housing Plan will be a live document, regularly reviewed and delivery of the associated Action Plans will be monitored by an Officer Housing Group.</p>
<p>1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?</p>	<p>There are numerous council strategies and plans which rely upon housing action, and which establish the detailed outcomes necessary to deliver high quality homes and neighbourhoods where people want to live. The Housing Plan supports following key council plans and strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Strategy</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Strategy</li> <li>• Economic Strategy</li> <li>• Local Plan</li> <li>• Emerging Corporate Asset Management Strategy</li> </ul>

## 2. Consideration of available data, research and information

<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Data, research and information that you can refer to</b>
<p><b>2.1</b> What equality focussed training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?</p>	<p>Staff have completed online training on Diversity and Inclusion and Inclusive Environments. General equalities awareness training is regularly undertaken via corporate courses.</p>
<p><b>2.2</b> What is the equality profile of service users?</p>	<p>The Housing Plan 2025-2030 covers the full B&amp;NES Council local authority area. Links to the most up to date data for the B&amp;NES area (including Equalities data) can be found at: <a href="https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence">https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence</a></p> <p>The <a href="#">B&amp;NES Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) January 2024</a> Draft includes data relating to the housing needs of different groups, including older people and disabled people.</p>

<p><b>2.3</b> Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?</p>	<p>There are no known customer satisfaction surveys associated with the project.</p>
<p><b>2.4</b> What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?</p>	<p>Development of the Housing Plan has not included formal external consultation, however, there has been extensive internal consultation, including members of the Sustainable Places Board, Health &amp; Wellbeing Board, senior officers and across services within the council.</p>
<p><b>2.5</b> If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equality considerations within this?</p>	<p>Any future consultations on issues emerging from the Housing Plan will be underpinned by equality impact assessments. For example, any significant changes to the Homeseach Policy will be done via a formal consultation which will include the member advocates with responsibility for Equality, Access and LGBTQ+ will be engaged fully on any proposals.</p> <p>The Renters Right Bill is currently progressing through Parliament and, if the Bill becomes law, there will be significant impacts on tenants, many of whom will have protected characteristics. The introduction of the Renters Right Act will potentially require the council to review the existing Enforcement Policy. This will be done in consultation with the member advocates with responsibility for Equality, Access and LGBTQ+</p>

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**3. Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'**

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equality groups

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
<p><b>3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics</b></p>	<p>The Housing Plan is the overarching document for Housing Services within B&amp;NES, setting out the ambition for delivery and management of housing and the associated support services. Housing Services has implemented several initiatives to promote equality across all groups and protected characteristics:</p> <p><b>Decent Homes Policy:</b> This policy aims to improve housing conditions for all residents, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups such as disabled individuals. It includes grants and loans for housing adaptations, urgent repairs, and energy efficiency.</p> <p><b>Support for Refugees:</b> The council has been active in providing housing for refugees, including those from Ukraine and Afghanistan. This initiative ensures that refugees have access to safe and</p>	<p>A primary goal of the Housing Plan is to enhance the quality of life for all our residents. We aim to ensure a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics, and the Council's equality objectives are integrated into all policies supporting the delivery &amp; implementation of the Housing Plan.</p> <p>The Plan seeks to address the following challenges in relation to housing and support services:</p> <p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <p>The Plan sets an ambition to unlock and deliver affordable housing both through direct council delivery and via registered providers. This will be a positive benefit for those likely to be impacted by the lack of affordable housing.</p>

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	<p>stable housing, promoting social inclusion and equality.</p> <p><b>Accessible Housing:</b> B&amp;NES offers Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to fund adaptations that assist independent living for disabled residents. This helps to ensure that everyone, regardless of physical ability, has access to suitable housing.</p> <p>These efforts demonstrate B&amp;NES Housing Services' commitment to promoting equality and ensuring that all residents have access to safe, affordable, and suitable housing.</p>	<p><b>Tackling affordability</b> The plan establishes the expectation to develop a housing offer that is accessible and attractive to all. This will be a positive benefit to those struggling to afford to live in the area, including those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Ensuring that everyone has access to safe and affordable housing promotes social equity and reduces disparities within the community.</p> <p><b>Reducing homelessness &amp; ensuring supported housing meets local needs</b> Homelessness is often linked to poor physical and mental health. Providing stable housing will be a positive benefit that could improve health outcomes and reduce the strain on local healthcare services.</p> <p>Children in stable housing are more likely to succeed in school. Reducing homelessness can improve educational outcomes and future opportunities for young people.</p>

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<p><b>3.2 Sex</b> – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.</p>	<p>The Housing Plan will support delivery and management of new and existing homes that are equally accessible to women and men.</p>	<p>Overall, the Housing Plan aims to create a more equitable housing environment by addressing the specific needs of different groups within the community. The Plan seeks to address the following challenges in relation to housing and support services:</p> <p><b>Single Parents:</b> The Plan's focus on affordable housing can significantly benefit single parents, who often face financial challenges. Access to affordable housing can provide stability and improve their quality of life.</p> <p><b>Domestic Abuse Survivors:</b> Women &amp; men escaping domestic abuse may find it easier to access safe and secure housing, thanks to targeted support and housing options.</p> <p><b>Older Women:</b> With a higher life expectancy, older women may benefit from housing adaptations and support services that enable them to live independently.</p>

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		<p><b>Working Women:</b> Women can be affected by the gender pay gap, making housing less affordable, particularly in expensive areas such as B&amp;NES. The plan's emphasis on increasing the affordable housing stock can help address this issue</p> <p><b>Single Men:</b> Single men, particularly those on low incomes, may find it challenging to access affordable housing. The plan's emphasis on increasing the affordable housing stock can help address this issue.</p> <p><b>Homeless Men:</b> Men are more likely to experience homelessness. The plan's initiatives to reduce homelessness and provide supported housing can have a positive impact on this group.</p> <p><b>Young Men:</b> Young men, especially those entering the workforce, may benefit from affordable rental options and first-time buyer schemes.</p>



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<p><b>3.3 Pregnancy and maternity</b></p>	<p>The Housing Plan will support delivery and management of new and existing homes that are accessible to all regardless of pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Specific support for pregnancy and maternity is contained within Homesearch, the council's housing allocation scheme.</p> <p><u>Allocation Scheme: Homesearch - 2020 - Bath and North East Somerset</u></p> <p>The Homesearch Policy, includes several measures to ensure fair treatment for people with protected characteristics in the allocation of homes. The policy gives priority to pregnant individuals. The policy uses a grouping system to prioritise applications, and pregnant women are typically placed in a higher priority group due to their specific needs.</p>	<p>Pregnancy and maternity could impact on access to housing in B&amp;NES in several ways:</p> <p><b>Increased Housing Needs:</b> Pregnant individuals and new parents often require more space and specific amenities, such as proximity to healthcare services and safe environments for children. This can make finding suitable housing more challenging.</p> <p><b>Financial Strain:</b> Pregnancy and maternity can lead to reduced income due to maternity/paternity leave or the need to stop working. This financial strain can make it harder to afford housing, especially in areas with high living costs.</p> <p><b>Health and Wellbeing:</b> Stable housing is crucial for the health and wellbeing of both the parent and the baby. Insecure or inadequate housing can lead to increased stress and health complications, which can further complicate access to suitable housing.</p>

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<p><b>3.4 Gender reassignment</b> – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people</p>	<p>The Housing Plan will support delivery and management of new and existing homes that are accessible to all regardless of gender reassignment status.</p> <p>Housing Services activities are all underpinned by the council’s comprehensive equality and diversity policy to ensure that transgender people, have equal access to housing opportunities.</p> <p><b>Data Handling:</b> Data related to transgender individuals is treated with the utmost care and respect, ensuring privacy and confidentiality</p> <p><b>Confidentiality:</b> Personal information, including gender identity and any changes to it, is kept confidential.</p> <p><b>Data Protection Laws:</b> Housing Services staff adhere to data protection laws such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which mandates the secure handling of personal data and provides individuals with rights over their information.</p> <p><b>Maintaining Accurate Records:</b> Housing Services staff ensure that records are updated accurately and promptly when individuals change their name or gender. This helps prevent any discrepancies or issues in service provision.</p>	<p>The Housing Plan does not directly prioritise those residents who are/have undergone gender reassignment. However, as an organisation we have taken steps to engage and consult with the local LGBTQ+ community to ensure that they do not feel excluded from council services.</p> <p><b>Economic Disparities:</b> LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly transgender people, often face economic disparities due to discrimination in employment and other areas. This can make it harder to afford suitable housing.</p> <p>Transgender individuals often experience minority stress, which includes social stressors such as discrimination, stigma, and lack of acceptance. This can lead to higher levels of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.</p> <p>Studies have shown that transgender individuals are at a higher risk of self-harm and suicidal ideation compared to their cisgender peers. This is often linked to the stress and challenges they face in their daily lives.</p>

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	<p><b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting:</b> the council regularly monitors and reports on the impact of its housing policies on different groups which includes Transgender people. This helps to identify any disparities and take corrective actions to ensure fair treatment for all residents.</p> <p><b>Training and Awareness:</b> Staff involved in housing services receive training on equality and diversity to ensure they are aware of and sensitive to the needs of transgender people. This helps to prevent discrimination and promote inclusive practices.</p>	<p>Local authorities and support services in B&amp;NES can help mitigate these impacts by providing inclusive and accessible services, promoting acceptance and understanding, and offering targeted mental health support for transgender individuals.</p> <p>Addressing these challenges requires continued efforts to enforce anti-discrimination laws, increase awareness, and provide support services tailored to the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.</p>
<p><b>3.5 Disability</b> – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration of physical, sensory and mental health needs/differences)</p>	<p>In Bath and North East Somerset, the policy for providing accessible homes for disabled people is outlined in the Local Plan. Key aspects include:</p> <p><b>Enhanced Accessibility Standards:</b> New housing developments are required to include a proportion of homes that meet enhanced accessibility standards. These standards are defined in Part M of the Building Regulations, specifically M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings and M4(3) for wheelchair user dwellings.</p>	<p>Housing policies in Bath and North East Somerset aim to improve accessibility and adaptability for disabled residents and those with other health issues. However, there can still be potential adverse impacts:</p> <p><b>Insufficient Accessible Housing:</b> Despite policies requiring a proportion of new housing to meet enhanced accessibility standards, there may still be a shortage of fully accessible homes.</p>

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	<p><b>Policy H/AS:</b> This policy focuses on ensuring that new homes are accessible and adaptable, addressing the needs of disabled. It mandates that a certain percentage of new homes must comply with these enhanced standards.</p> <p><b>Affordable Housing:</b> The policy also includes provisions for affordable housing to meet accessibility standards, ensuring that affordable homes are also suitable for disabled residents.</p> <p><b>Planning and Evidence:</b> The council uses evidence-based planning to justify the need for accessible housing. This includes assessing local needs and integrating these requirements into the Local Plan.</p> <p>Disabled residents receive priority treatment under the B&amp;NES Homeseach Policy. The policy uses a grouping system to prioritize applications based on need. Disabled individuals with urgent medical, welfare, or hardship needs are placed in <b>Group A</b>, which is the highest priority group. This group includes those whose health, safety, or well-being is at serious risk and those in urgent need of accommodation due to medical reasons.</p>	<p><b>Retrofitting Challenges:</b> Existing housing stock may not meet current accessibility standards, and retrofitting homes can be costly and disruptive. This can make it difficult for disabled residents to find suitable accommodation.</p> <p><b>Site-Specific Constraints:</b> Factors such as site topography and vulnerability to flooding can affect the feasibility of building accessible homes. This can result in fewer accessible housing units being developed in certain areas.</p> <p><b>Economic Viability:</b> The cost of implementing accessibility standards can impact the overall viability of housing developments.</p> <p><b>Neurodivergence</b> – people who are neurodivergent are not specifically referenced in the Housing Plan. While our existing Equality Policy will ensure that we treat all individual with care and respect, we may need to specifically identify neurodivergence as an issue that requires greater consideration in future policy updates.</p>

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	<p>Additionally, individuals with high medical, welfare, or hardship needs are placed in <b>Group B</b>, which also receives significant priority. This ensures that disabled residents who may not be in the most urgent category still receive appropriate consideration for housing.</p> <p>By prioritizing disabled residents in this way, the B&amp;NES Homesearch Policy aims to ensure that those with the greatest need receive timely and appropriate housing support.</p> <p>These measures aim to create inclusive communities where disabled residents and those with sensory and mental health needs/differences have access to suitable and adaptable housing options.</p>	<p>Addressing these challenges requires continuous monitoring, enforcement of standards, and collaboration between the council, developers, and the community to ensure that housing policies effectively meet the needs of disabled residents.</p>
<p><b>3.6 Age</b> – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups</p>	<p>Overall, the B&amp;NES Housing Plan aims to create a more equitable housing environment by addressing the specific needs of different groups within the community.</p> <p>The Housing Plan will support delivery and management of new and existing homes that are accessible to different age groups.</p>	<p>The B&amp;NES Housing Plan considers the needs of people across different age groups in several ways:</p> <p><b>Older People:</b> The Plan includes reference to specialist housing and homes designed specifically for older people. This would include ensuring accessibility and providing extra care housing options.</p>

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		<p><b>Families and Children:</b> The Plan emphasises the importance of building family-friendly homes with adequate space and facilities to support families with children.</p> <p><b>General Needs:</b> The Plan also addresses the general housing needs of the population, ensuring a mix of housing types and tenures to cater to different age groups and life stages.</p> <p><b>Young Adults and Students:</b> The Housing Plan specifically refers to the need to provide housing suitable for young people, and the Local Plan provides policies to support the development of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) and co-living spaces to meet the needs of younger residents and students.</p>

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<p><b>3.7 Race</b> – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups</p>	<p>Housing Services activities are all underpinned by the council’s equality and diversity commitment to ensure that all residents, regardless of race, have equal access to housing opportunities. This includes:</p> <p><b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting:</b> the council regularly monitors and reports on the impact of its housing policies on different racial groups. This helps to identify any disparities and take corrective actions to ensure fair treatment for all residents.</p> <p><b>Training and Awareness:</b> Staff involved in housing services receive training on equality and diversity to ensure they are aware of and sensitive to the needs of different racial groups. This helps to prevent discrimination and promote inclusive practices.</p> <p>Translation services are available to assist wherever required. <a href="#">Link to Ethnicity and low pay as with sex.</a></p>	<p>The Housing Plan does not specifically refer to impacts on different ethnic groups, but some of the challenges that these groups could face include:</p> <p><b>Rental Market Discrimination:</b> Landlords or property managers might show bias against potential tenants based on their race. This can include not responding to inquiries, providing misleading information about availability, or setting higher rental prices for certain racial groups.</p> <p><b>Housing Segregation:</b> Minority communities might be concentrated in certain areas with fewer resources, lower-quality housing, and limited access to amenities like good schools and healthcare.</p> <p>The council has a comprehensive equality and diversity policy that guides all aspects of housing development, allocation, and management. The policy is designed to ensure that all residents, regardless of race, have equal access to housing opportunities.</p>

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<p><b>3.8 Sexual orientation</b> – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, questioning people</p>	<p>The council has a comprehensive equality and diversity policy that guide all aspects of housing development, allocation, and management. These policies are designed to ensure that all residents, regardless of sexual orientation, have equal access to housing opportunities.</p> <p><b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting:</b> B&amp;NES regularly monitors and reports on the impact of its housing policies on different groups, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), and others. This helps to identify any disparities and take corrective actions to ensure fair treatment for all residents.</p> <p><b>Training and Awareness:</b> Staff involved in Housing Services receive training on equality and diversity to ensure they are aware of and sensitive to the needs of different racial groups. This helps to prevent discrimination and promote inclusive practices</p>	<p>Members of the LGBTQ+ community in Bath and North East Somerset (B&amp;NES) may face several challenges when seeking suitable housing:</p> <p><b>Discrimination:</b> Despite legal protections, LGBTQ+ individuals can still encounter discrimination from landlords or property managers. This might include being denied rental applications, facing higher rents, or experiencing harassment.</p> <p><b>Limited Housing Options:</b> LGBTQ+ individuals might find fewer housing options available to them, especially if they seek inclusive and supportive environments. This can be particularly challenging in smaller communities where there may be fewer LGBTQ+-friendly housing providers.</p> <p><b>Homelessness:</b> LGBTQ+ youth are at a higher risk of homelessness due to family rejection and lack of support. This can lead to difficulties in finding stable and safe housing.</p>



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		<p><b>Safety Concerns:</b> Safety is a significant concern for many LGBTQ+ individuals. They may avoid certain areas or housing options due to fear of harassment or violence, limiting their choices further.</p> <p><b>Economic Disparities:</b> LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly transgender people, often face economic disparities due to discrimination in employment and other areas. This can make it harder to afford suitable housing.</p> <p>Addressing these challenges requires continued efforts to enforce anti-discrimination laws, increase awareness, and provide support services tailored to the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.</p>
<p><b>3.9 Marriage and civil partnership</b> – does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?</p>	<p>The council has a comprehensive equality and diversity policy that guides all aspects of housing development, allocation, and management. These policies are designed to ensure that all residents, regardless of marital status, have equal access to housing opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Training and Awareness:</b> Staff involved in housing services receive training on equality and diversity to ensure they are aware of and sensitive to the needs of different groups. This helps to prevent discrimination and promote inclusive practices.</p>
<p><b>3.10 Religion/belief</b> – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.</p>	<p>Housing Services staff receive training on equality and diversity to ensure they understand and respect the religious beliefs of all residents. This helps prevent discrimination and promotes a culture of inclusivity.</p>	<p>The Housing Plan does not specifically reference religion/beliefs however, the council adheres to the Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals from discrimination based on religion or belief.</p>

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		This includes protection for those with no religious beliefs.
<p><b>3.11 Socio-economically disadvantaged*</b> – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances  <b>(this is not a legal requirement but is a local priority).</b></p>	<p>The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) informs delivery of services that respond to the needs of residents who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Using robust evidence to establish local housing needs, the LHNA helps in planning and delivering housing that meets the specific needs of socio-economically deprived communities. Key facets of the LHNA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on the need for affordable housing to ensure that low-income families have access to safe and secure homes. This includes both rental and ownership options.</li> <li>• Alignment with government policies aimed at increasing housing supply, improving tenants' rights, and making homes more energy efficient. These policies are particularly beneficial for socio-economically deprived individuals who often face housing insecurity and higher energy costs.</li> </ul>	<p>The Housing Plan incorporates several measures to ensure fair treatment of socio-economically disadvantaged people:</p> <p><b>Affordable Housing:</b> In response to the LHNA, the plan prioritises development of affordable housing to ensure that low-income families have access to safe and secure homes. This includes both rental and ownership options.</p> <p>A key ambition of the Plan is to ensure residents have access to housing that is safe, warm &amp; accessible. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working to tackle fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households</li> <li>• Promoting affordable warmth and healthy housing across B&amp;NES</li> <li>• Developing comprehensive home adaptations and equipment service which responds to community needs</li> </ul>

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		<p>Housing Services provide support services to help disadvantaged individuals and families maintain their tenancies, prevent homelessness, and improve their living conditions. This includes financial advice, employment support, and access to social services.</p>
<p><b>3.12 Rural communities*</b> identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities</p>	<p>In B&amp;NES, there are several housing support options available for people living in rural areas:</p> <p><b>Rural Exception Sites:</b> These are small sites used for affordable housing in rural areas, where housing would not normally be permitted. They aim to meet the needs of the local community by providing homes for people who live or work in the area</p> <p><b>Affordable Housing:</b> The council has policies to ensure that new housing developments include a proportion of affordable housing. This helps to provide more housing options for people with lower incomes in rural areas.</p> <p><b>Home Improvement Grants:</b> For those living in rural areas, the council offers grants and loans to help with home improvements, making homes safer and more energy efficient.</p> <p>These initiatives aim to ensure that people living in rural areas of B&amp;NES have access to safe, affordable, and suitable housing.</p>	<p>People living in rural communities in B&amp;NES face several disadvantages, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cost of housing</li> <li>• Social isolation</li> <li>• Limited access to public transport</li> <li>• Inadequate digital connectivity</li> <li>• Limited access to public services</li> <li>• Fewer economic opportunities</li> </ul> <p>As the high cost of housing is a significant issue in rural areas, the Housing Plan specifically targets increased provision of Affordable Housing to address some of the challenges faced by rural communities.</p>

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		<p><b>Social Isolation:</b> The combination of limited transport, digital connectivity, and access to services can contribute to social isolation, particularly for older residents or those with limited mobility. These challenges highlight the need for targeted support and policies to improve the quality of life for residents in rural areas of B&amp;NES.</p>
<p><b>3.13 Armed Forces Community</b>  ** serving members; reservists; veterans and their families, including the bereaved. Public services are required by law to pay due regard to the Armed Forces Community when developing policy, procedures and making decisions, particularly in the areas of public housing, education and healthcare (to remove disadvantage and consider special provision).</p>	<p>In Bath and North East Somerset (B&amp;NES), members of the Armed Forces and their families are supported through the <b>Armed Forces Covenant</b>. This covenant ensures that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and have access to various forms of support, including housing.</p> <p>In relation to housing support in B&amp;NES, Members of the Armed Forces are given priority when it comes to housing allocations. This helps ensure that they have access to suitable accommodation.</p>	<p>The Housing Plan does not specifically refer to impacts on members of the Armed Forces, but some of the challenges that this group could face include:</p> <p><b>Affordability:</b> Housing affordability is a significant issue in B&amp;NES, with high property prices making it difficult for many to buy or rent homes. This can be particularly challenging for armed forces personnel who may have limited financial resources.</p> <p><b>Availability:</b> There is often a shortage of suitable housing options, especially for larger families or those with specific needs. The limited availability of affordable housing can make it harder for service members to find appropriate accommodation.</p>

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		<p><b>Frequent Relocations:</b> The nature of military service often requires frequent relocations, which can disrupt housing stability. Finding new housing each time can be stressful and time-consuming, especially in areas with high demand.</p> <p><b>Support Services:</b> While there are support services available, navigating these can be complex. Understanding and accessing the various housing schemes and support options can be a challenge for service members and their families.</p> <p><b>Transition to Civilian Life:</b> For those leaving the armed forces, transitioning to civilian life can be difficult. Securing stable housing is a crucial part of this transition, but it can be complicated by factors such as employment status and financial stability.</p> <p>Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from the council, housing providers, and support organisations to ensure that armed forces personnel and their families have access to suitable and affordable housing.</p>

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
<p><b>3.14 Care Experienced ***</b> This working definition is currently under review and therefore subject to change:</p> <p>In B&amp;NES, you are ‘care-experienced’ if you spent any time in your childhood in Local Authority care, living away from your parent(s) for example, you were adopted, lived in residential, foster care, kinship care, or a special guardianship arrangement.</p>	<p>Council data shows that there are currently 66 high risk care leavers who need supported housing.</p> <p>The following measures are part of B&amp;NES's broader commitment to supporting care-experienced young people in their transition to independent living:</p> <p><b>Priority Housing:</b> Care-experienced young people are automatically given Band 'B' housing priority until their 25th birthday. This ensures they have a higher chance of securing suitable housing.</p> <p><b>Supported Accommodation:</b> Various supported accommodation options are available, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staying Put:</b> Extending foster placements beyond the age of 18, up to 21.</li> <li>• <b>Supported Lodgings:</b> Living in someone's home with support to develop independent living skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>Semi-Supported Accommodation:</b> Offering support for those aged 16+ to develop tenancy management skills.</p> <p><b>Pathways and Low Support Accommodation:</b> Medium-level supported living options for 16-25-year-olds, and low support accommodation for those who have demonstrated some independent living skills.</p>	<p>The Housing Plan highlights the needs of care-experienced young people and the importance of providing suitable homes for those leaving care.</p> <p>This group can face real challenges in finding suitable accommodation and the right level of support to help them as they move out of care.</p> <p>A lack of suitable accommodation often leads to care leavers being forced to live in unsuitable conditions, sofa surf or sleep rough.</p> <p>The lack of appropriate housing coupled with young people's practical and emotional readiness to live independently all impact on care leavers' future outcomes.</p>

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
	<p><b>Social Housing:</b> Care-experienced young people are prioritised for social housing, ensuring they have access to stable and affordable homes.</p>	

\*There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

\*\* The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay 'due regard' to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

\*\*\*The Equality Act does not cover care experienced people. B&NES adopted this group as a protected characteristic in March 2024 alongside over 80 other Local Authorities. Although we have data for care leavers and children/young people who are currently in the care of B&NES we do not have wider data on disadvantage experienced through being in care.

## 4. Bath and North East Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
Need to increase focus on how we support Care Leavers into appropriate housing and support.	Set up a joint workshop with Children's Services & Housing Services.	Completion of joint workshop session.	Susan Hayter	Sept 2025
Despite the high percentage of people living in private rented accommodation in B&NES, identifying those affected by socio-economic deprivation, especially in terms of housing conditions, remains challenging.	Investigate enhanced data recording to encompass protected characteristics for all groups. Additionally, review the specific impacts of socio-economic deprivation to identify areas for improvement in housing conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial review of data recording processes</li> <li>Annual review of processes for recording data</li> </ul>	Graham Sabourn	Dec 2025

## 5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equality Team ([equality@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:equality@bathnes.gov.uk)), who will publish it on the Council's website. Keep a copy for your own records.

**Signed off by:**

(Divisional Director or nominated senior officer)

**Date: 23rd January 2025**