

# Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

<b>Assessment details</b>	
<b>Assessment area</b>	<b>Homelessness Review 2023</b>
<b>Date of assessment</b>	September 2023
<b>Directorate and Service</b>	Housing and Public Protection, Housing Services
<b>Manager</b>	Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager
<b>Officer conducting assessment</b>	Senior Housing Policy & Performance Officer
<b>Step 1: Scoping the assessment</b>	
<b>1. What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal?</b>	<p>Local housing authorities are required to carry out a review of homelessness every five years and to formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of that review. The review must take into account:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the borough</li> <li>b) The activities which are carried out for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) preventing homelessness</li> <li>ii) securing accommodation for people who are or may become homeless</li> <li>iii) providing support for people who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again</li> </ol> </li> <li>c) The resources available in the borough for the above activities.</li> </ol> <p>This Customer Access Review has been undertaken in conjunction with the homelessness review process to assess the equality impact of the Council’s approach to prevent homelessness, to secure accommodation and to provide support. Actions identified in this Customer Access Review will be fed into the homelessness review and inform the next Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029.</p>
<b>2. Who will be affected by the activity or proposal?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, including rough sleepers</li> <li>• Statutory and voluntary agencies who work in partnership with the Council to prevent and relieve homelessness and provide support to homeless households</li> <li>• Housing providers/private sector landlords who work with the Council to provide accommodation to homeless households</li> </ul>
<b>3. How does the activity or proposal contribute to: a) any key performance indicators? b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The homelessness review contributes to the Corporate Plan’s performance indicators to measure the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of households where homelessness has been prevented</li> <li>• Number of homeless applicants placed in temporary accommodation</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) The homelessness review contributes to the Corporate Plan’s strategic aim to facilitate quality, choice and diversity in the housing market, assist in meeting housing need in Dartford and deliver high quality services to service users. The review also contributes to the Corporate Plan strategic objective (HS3) to improve the housing circumstances of those most in need.</li> </ol>

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<p><b>Step 1: Scoping the assessment</b></p>	
<p><b>4. Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Act 1996</b> – Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 is the primary homelessness legislation that provides the statutory under-pinning for action required by local housing authorities to prevent homelessness and to provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless. Local housing authorities have a duty to ensure that accommodation is available to an applicant who is eligible for assistance, in priority need, and unintentionally homeless (the ‘main duty’).</p> <p><b>Homelessness Act 2002</b> – The Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) ensures a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness, in particular by requiring a homelessness strategy for every local housing authority; and</li> <li>b) strengthens the assistance available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by extending the priority need categories to homeless 16 and 17 year olds; care leavers aged 18, 19 and 20; people who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, the armed forces, prison or custody, and people who are vulnerable because they have fled their home because of violence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</b> – The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places duties on local housing authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires local housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have ‘priority need’. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days; and</li> <li>b) a new duty for those who are already homeless so that local housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Domestic Abuse Act 2021</b> – The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 amends Part 7 of the 1996 Act to strengthen the support available to victims of domestic abuse. The Act extends priority need to all eligible victims of domestic abuse who are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse. The Act brings in a new definition of domestic abuse which local housing authorities must follow to assess whether an applicant is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse.</p> <p><b>Equality Act 2010</b> – Local housing authorities must ensure that policies and decisions relating to homelessness and threatened homelessness do no amount to unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010 and also comply with the public sector equality duty.</p>

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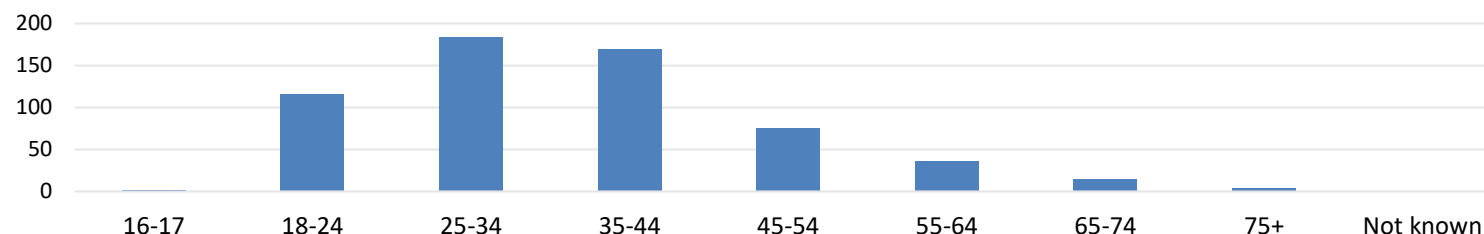
	<p><b>Homelessness Code of Guidance</b> – The Homelessness Code of Guidance is the statutory guidance that local housing authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions relating to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p> <p><b>Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018</b> – The Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018, stated that all homelessness strategies should include a specific focus on addressing rough sleeping.</p>
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<b>Step 2: Information collection</b>																			
<p><b>5. What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected?</b> (i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership)</p>	<p>Information on the population of Dartford is obtained from the Census 2021. Information on the characteristics of homelessness applicants approaching the Council for assistance is obtained from the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) data source. All local housing authorities are required to report data through HCLIC to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the purpose of monitoring the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p> <p><b>Age</b> – According to the Census 2021, the median age in Dartford was 37 years, which is slightly lower than the overall England mean age of 40 years. Chart 1 shows the age profile of Dartford’s population by age groups.</p> <p><b>Chart 1: Age profile of the population of Dartford (2021)</b></p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Chart 1: Age profile of the population of Dartford (2021)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>14 or under</td> <td>21.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 to 24</td> <td>10.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 to 34</td> <td>15.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35 to 44</td> <td>15.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45 to 54</td> <td>13.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>55 to 64</td> <td>10.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 to 74</td> <td>7.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75+</td> <td>6.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Chart 2 shows that homeless applicants aged 25-34 made up the highest proportion of main applicants assessed as owed a prevention or relief duty in 2022-2023 at 30.56%. Applicants aged 35-44 were the second highest group at 28.24% and applicants aged 18-24 represented the third highest group at 19.27%. This indicates that homelessness tends to largely affect working age households. This is also to be expected as these age groups are the largest in population by number. Those in older age groups generally have more settled housing patterns.</p>	Age Group	Percentage	14 or under	21.0%	15 to 24	10.0%	25 to 34	15.0%	35 to 44	15.5%	45 to 54	13.0%	55 to 64	10.5%	65 to 74	7.0%	75+	6.0%
Age Group	Percentage																		
14 or under	21.0%																		
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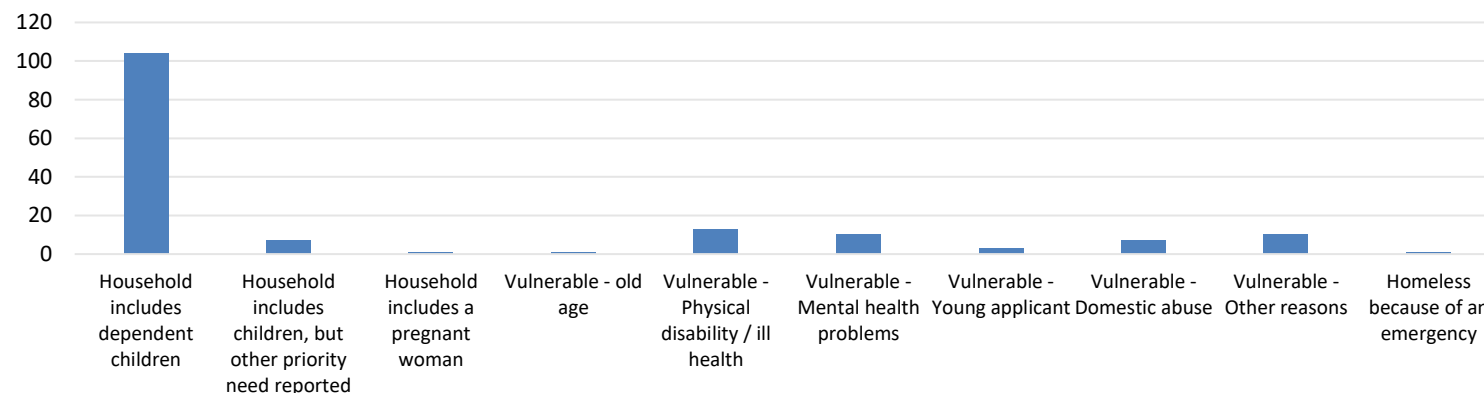
## Step 2: Information collection

**Chart 2: Age of main applicants assessed as owed a prevention or relief duty – Dartford (2022-2023)**



As shown in chart 3, homeless households that include dependent children are covered in legislation as a priority need group. In 2022-2023, this group was the largest priority need group accepted the main duty at 66.24%. Vulnerable young applicants (16-17 year olds and 18-20 year old care leavers) and applicants who are vulnerable as a result of old age are also priority need groups. In 2022-2023, 1.91% of vulnerable young applicants were accepted the main duty, and 0.64% were accepted the main duty due to being vulnerable as a result of old age.

**Chart 3: Priority need of households owed a main duty – Dartford (2022-2023)**



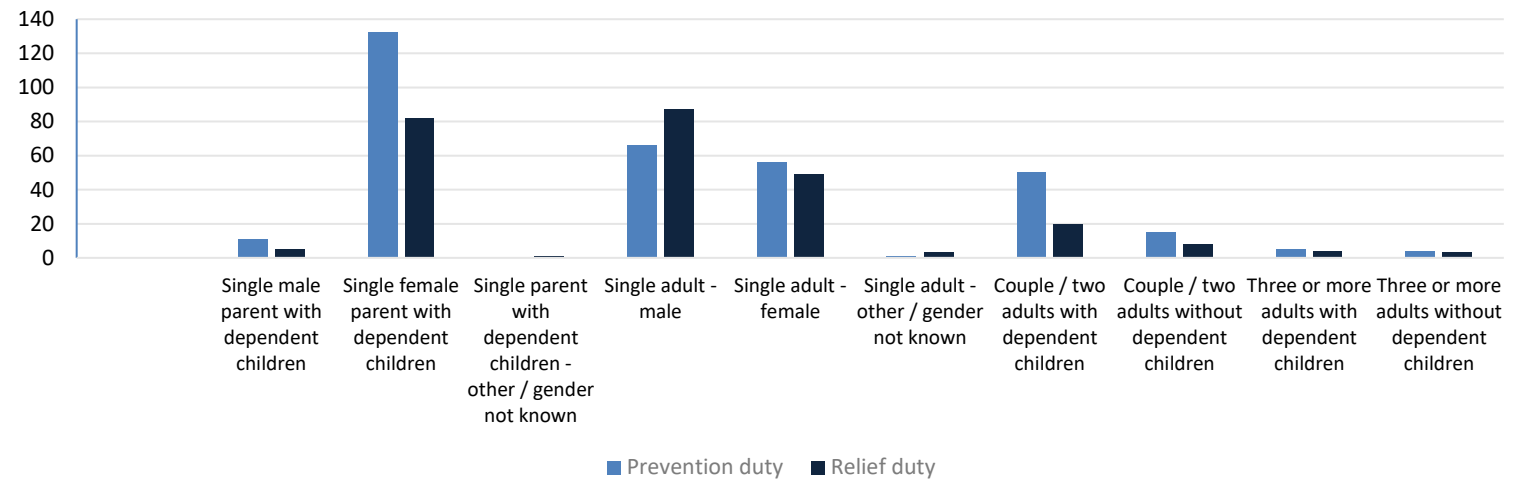
**Sex** – According to the Census 2021, 51% of residents in Dartford are female and 49% of residents are male.

Chart 4 shows that the majority of applications owed a prevention duty were from single female parent households with dependent children, and the majority of applications owed a relief duty were from single adult male households and single female parent households with dependent children.

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## Step 2: Information collection

**Chart 4: Household composition of applicants owed a prevention or relief duty – Dartford (2022-2023)**



**Race** – According to the Census 2021, the largest ethnic group that Dartford residents identify with is White at 74.50% (see chart 5).

**Chart 5: Ethnic group identity of the population of Dartford (2021)**

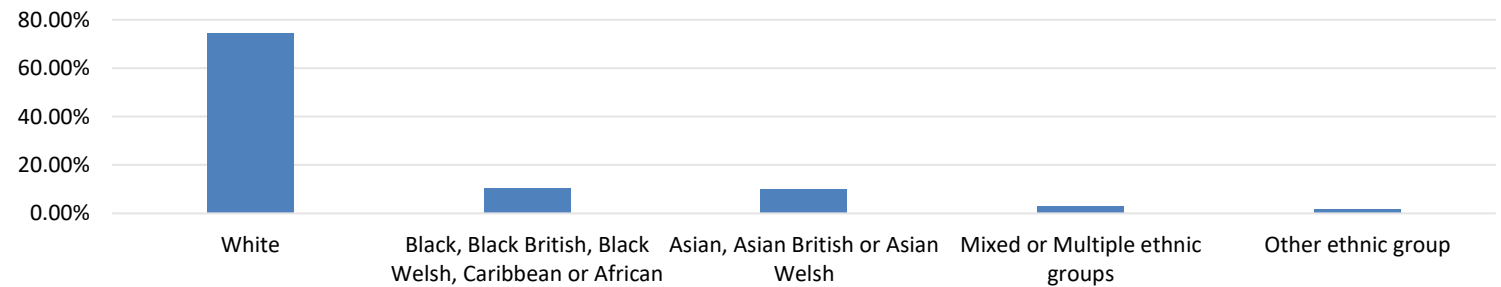
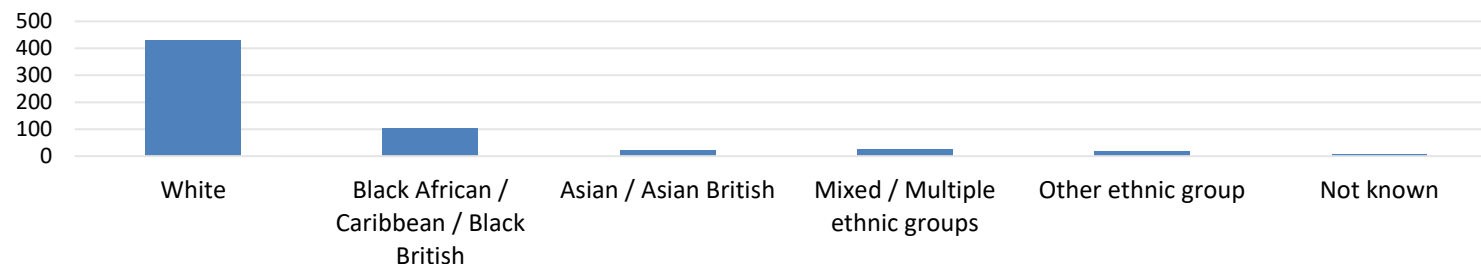


Chart 6 shows that the highest proportion of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty were from a White ethnic group (71.26%). 17.11% of acceptances were from applicants from the Black/African/Caribbean group. 3.49% of acceptances were from the Asian/Asian British Group, 4.32% from the Mixed/Multiple ethnic group and 2.82% from an other ethnic group.

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## Step 2: Information collection

**Chart 6: Ethnicity of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty (2022-23)**



**Disability** – According to the Census 2021, 15.9% of Dartford’s population are disabled. Of this, 6.6% of people’s activities are limited a lot and 9.3% of people’s activities are limited a little.

Homeless applicants who are vulnerable because of a mental or physical disability/ill health are covered in legislation as priority need groups. Following households that include dependent children as the largest priority need group, applicants vulnerable due to physical disability/ill health accounted for the second largest priority need group at 8.28% in 2022-2023. 6.36% of applicants were accepted the main duty under the priority need category of being vulnerable due to mental health problems and 6.36% for other reasons (see chart 3 above).

**Sexual orientation** – According to the 2021 Census, 91.2% of Dartford’s population aged 16 years and over identified as straight or heterosexual. 1.5% identified gay or lesbian. 1.09% identified as ‘Other’ sexual orientation. 6.54% did not answer this question in the Census (see chart 7).

**Chart 7: Sexual orientation of the population of Dartford (2021)**

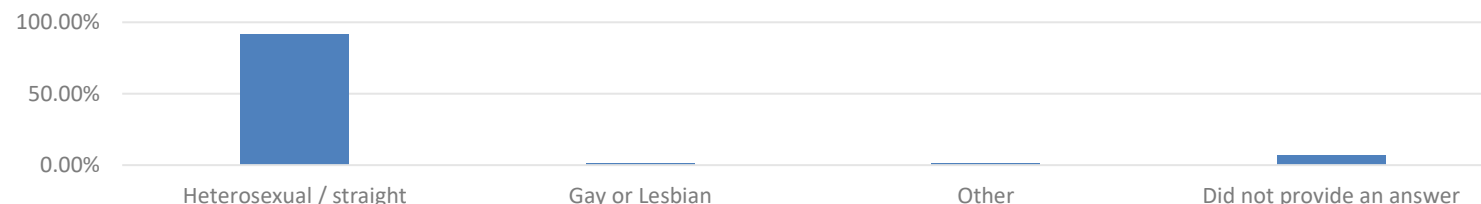


Chart 8 shows that 88.04% of homeless applicants owed a duty in 2022-2023 identified as heterosexual/straight. 1.50% identified as homosexual (gay/lesbian), 1.00% identified as other, and 9.47% preferred not to say (see chart 8).

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## Step 2: Information collection

Chart 8: Sexual identification of main applicants owed a duty (2022-2023)



**Gender identity** – According to the Census 2021, 94.29% of Dartford’s population indicated that their gender identity is the same as their sex registered at birth and 0.24% indicated that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth. 5.20% did not answer this question in the Census. In terms of specific gender identities, 0.12% identified as a ‘Trans woman’, 0.09% identified as a ‘Trans man’, 0.04% identified as ‘Non-binary’, and 0.03% identified as ‘All other gender identities’.

The HCLIC data source does not collect information on the gender identity of homelessness applicants.

**Religion** – 48.1% of Dartford’s population connect or identify with the Christian religion, followed by 3.8% Hindu, 3.5% Muslim, 1.7% Hindu, 0.6 Buddhist, 0.1% Jewish, 0.4% other religion. 36.5% of Dartford’s population did not connect or identify with any religion and 5.3% did not answer this question in the Census.

The HCLIC data source does not collect information on the religion homelessness applicants connect or identify with.

**Pregnancy and maternity** – Households who include a pregnant woman are covered in legislation as a priority need group (see chart 3 above). In 2022-2023, 0.64% of applicants were accepted the main duty under the priority need category being in a household with a pregnant woman.

**Rough sleepers** – In Dartford, the estimated total of rough sleepers in 2022 was 4. It is estimated that of those sleeping rough, 100% were males, 25% were UK nationals, 50% were EU nationals and 25% were non UK nationals. 100% were over the age of 26.

**Hidden homelessness** – Not all people who are homeless approach the Council for assistance or show up in official homelessness figures. This includes people who become homeless but find a temporary solution such as sofa surfing, living in squats or hostels or sleeping rough. This particularly affects single homeless people. Whilst an annual rough sleeper estimate is collated by the Council, it is very difficult to quantify the overall levels of hidden homelessness affecting all groups of people unless they come into contact with services.

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Step 2: Information collection	
<p><b>6. What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings</b></p>	<p><b>Consultation to inform the homelessness review</b> Internal consultation has been undertaken on homelessness review and the formulation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024-2029.</p> <p>The Council first started involving partner agencies in the homelessness review process at the Dartford Homelessness Forum meeting in December 2022. A live poll engaged participants to capture their initial thoughts on what is working well; what can be done better; and what they would like to see prioritised in the new strategy. At the meeting in March 2023, focus group work explored these areas more in-depth which has been fed into the Homelessness Review.</p>
<p><b>7. Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?</b></p>	<p><b>Customer feedback</b> Customer feedback is not currently collected from applicants using the homelessness service. Feedback can provide a valuable insight into the experiences of homeless applicants using the service, including where the service performs well and learning opportunities for improvement. It is recommended that customer feedback mechanisms should be introduced. Monitoring of customer feedback would also assist to identify any potential equality impacts that need to be addressed, and would therefore be useful for informing whether the Council is meeting its equalities duties and for informing future Customer Access Reviews.</p> <p><b>Consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029</b> The public and external partner agencies, including members of the Dartford Homelessness Forum, will be invited to comment and give their views on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029.</p> <p>The Housing Advisory Board (HAB) will be invited to comment and give their views on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029. The HAB considers reports on proposed policy, strategy and performance in relation to housing issues and makes recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate. The HAB includes representation from Council officers, elected Members and Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum members.</p>

## Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

- 8. Consider whether the activity or proposal has or will have any positive or negative equality impacts on the protected characteristic groups in relation to the following aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:**
- a) tackling unlawful discrimination
  - b) promoting equality of opportunity
  - c) promoting good relations



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## Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

### NOTES:

- The Initial Screening will have identified which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are relevant to the activity or proposal for consideration
- For existing activities, consider how they are working in practice for each relevant protected group
- For new proposals, consider whether there is anything that could give rise to positive and negative equality impacts for each relevant protected group
- If there is no identified equality impact, please tick the 'No Impact' box and explain why in question 9
- If the equality impact is unclear, please tick the 'Unknown' box and explain why in question 9

## Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
Age	<p><b>Families with dependent children</b> As set out in legislation, homeless households that include dependent children are a priority need group.</p> <p>The Council is a signatory to the Kent Joint Protocol to address the needs of intentionally homeless families with children.</p> <p><b>Vulnerable adults as a result of old age</b> As set out in legislation, persons vulnerable as a result of old age are a priority need group.</p> <p>Health is closely related to the protected characteristic of 'age' since health generally declines as people get older. The Council uses the Kent Agency Assessment Procedure (Joint Stock referrals). This assessment procedure is for people who need to move home due to a health or support related need that cannot be met, or is being impaired by, their current accommodation. For example, the person has a critical need to move due to extreme health and support needs that can only be relieved or</p>	<p><b>Adults with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)</b> A proportion of homeless applicants can experience a wide range of complex and multiple needs as a result of trauma in their lives. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) incorporate a wide range of stressful events that children can be exposed to whilst growing up. The long term impacts of ACEs can be poorer physical, mental health, health harming behaviours and poorer social outcomes in adulthood. Opportunities could be explored to ensure staff working with homeless applicants are trauma informed. Being trauma informed can assist to understand a person's experiences better so that support can be tailored to help improve overall health and social outcomes.</p> <p><b>Persons aged 35 and under</b> Half (50.17%) of households assessed as owed a prevention or relief duty (2023-2023) were aged under 35. Of those who are single with no children living in private rented</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	<p>improved by a move to alternative accommodation; where adaptations are required to enable a person to live independently and their current accommodation is not suitable for those adaptations; or where a person with severe mental health problems is receiving treatment and support from mental health services but is deemed to be at risk of harm in their current accommodation.</p> <p>The Council administers disabled facilities grants (DFGs) to meet the costs of adapting a property for the needs of a disabled person. The Council also provides discretionary assistance schemes which help people meet needs without going through the full DFG process. Their aim of this support is to ensure that people can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.</p> <p><b>Vulnerable young people</b> As set out in legislation, vulnerable young applicants (16-17 year olds and 18-20 year old care leavers) are a priority need group.</p> <p>The Council funds and uses a crash pad at the YMCA to support young people who are homeless in an emergency.</p>	<p>accommodation, under Local Housing Allowance rules (LHA), they are normally assumed to be living in shared accommodation. This means the maximum amount of rent that can be used in the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit calculation is based on the cost of renting a room in a shared house or flat in their area, even if they live in a self-contained property. This can result in the LHA not covering the rent in full which means the accommodation options for single people under the age of 35 are more limited than other age groups (although there are some exceptions where a higher LHA rate can be provided).</p> <p>To help mitigate the impact of the shortfall in LHA, the Council can provide eligible homeless applicants with Homeless Prevention Payments or Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), which is financial support to help with a shortfall in rent or housing costs. Households will be signposted to this support where appropriate.</p>		

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	<p>The Council is a signatory to the Kent Joint Working Protocol for Young People. This is a joint protocol between local councils and Kent County Council. The protocol guides each relevant organisation on the approach to supporting young people aged 16 and 17 and care leavers (18+) in an agreed and transparent way, this includes promoting the responsibility of all professionals to ensure that the young people who are being assisted can have access to inclusive independent advice, that will enable them to make informed decisions and choices across all elements of their life.</p>			
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p><b>People with physical disabilities</b>            As set out in legislation, persons vulnerable as a result of physical disability/ill health are a priority need group.</p> <p>Medical and support needs are assessed as part of the homelessness assessment process.</p> <p>The Council uses the Kent Agency Assessment Procedure (Joint Stock referrals). This assessment procedure is for people who need to move home due to a health or support related need that cannot be met, or is being impaired by, their current accommodation. For example, the person has a critical need to move due to extreme health and support needs that can only be relieved or improved by a move to alternative accommodation; where adaptations are required to enable a person to live independently and their current accommodation is not suitable for</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

## Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	<p>those adaptations; or where a person with severe mental health problems is receiving treatment and support from mental health services but is deemed to be at risk of harm in their current accommodation.</p> <p>The Council administers disabled facilities grants (DFGs) to meet the costs of adapting a property for the needs of a disabled person. The Council also provides discretionary assistance schemes which help people meet their needs without going through the full DFG process. Their aim of this support is to ensure that people can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.</p> <p><b>People with mental health problems</b> As set out in legislation, persons vulnerable as a result of mental health problems are a priority need group. The top support need of homeless applicants is due to a history of mental health problems.</p> <p>Effective support for people with mental health problems is provided through a range of services, including the Community Mental Health Team, Porchlight and Live Well Kent. Support can also be provided through the Kent Agency Assessment Procedure.</p>			

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	<p><b>Accessible communication</b> In accordance with the Council’s Equality &amp; Diversity Document Framework, information about the homelessness service, can be provided in alternative formats to people with sensory needs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braille, audio tape and large print versions of documents</li> <li>• British Sign Language interpreting</li> </ul> <p>Calls can be received via Relay UK.</p>			
<b>Sex</b>	<p><b>Domestic abuse survivors</b> While domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of their protected characteristics, domestic abuse is closely related to the protected characteristic of ‘sex’. Statistically more women are affected by domestic abuse than men. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 5.0% of adults (6.9% women and 3.0% men) aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022; this equates to an estimated 2.4 million adults (1.7 million women and 699,000 men).</p> <p>As set out in legislation, persons homeless as a result of domestic abuse are a priority need group. Domestic abuse is one of the main causes of homelessness and the homelessness review recognises there is a multi-agency response to keep victims safe and to provide support.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 imposes duties on local authorities to ensure all victims and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation. The Council works in partnership with Kent County Council to ensure the availability of specialist domestic abuse support services which includes the provision of safe accommodation in refuge. Under the Housing Allocations Policy, to support move on into stable accommodation, the Council will give additional priority to homeless applicants that are homeless as a result of fleeing domestic abuse.</p> <p>The Council is represented at the Dartford Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop, at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), and at the North Kent Domestic Abuse Forum. The Council is a signatory to the Kent High Priority Housing Reciprocal Scheme and the Kent Domestic Abuse Reciprocal Scheme, and provides a Sanctuary Scheme. In 2022, Council Housing Services staff were provided with domestic abuse awareness training. The Council has further developed its expertise and awareness of domestic abuse issues by creating domestic abuse champions whose role is to lead on continuing to cascading further awareness and providing support and advice to staff on domestic abuse issues.</p>			

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PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	The Council has also received White Ribbon accreditation and will be working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation. The Council is also currently developing a Domestic Abuse Housing Strategy which is likely to be available in 2024.			
<b>Gender reassignment</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race</b>	<p><b>Accessible communication</b> In accordance with the Council’s Equality &amp; Diversity Document Framework, information about the homelessness service, can be provided in alternative formats to people where English is not their first language including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents translated into other languages</li> <li>• Telephone and face-to-face language interpreting</li> </ul>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion/Belief</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy/Maternity</b>	As set out in legislation, households with a pregnant woman are a priority need group.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership*</b>	Not applicable as the policy does not apply in the context of employment.	Not applicable as the policy does not apply in the context of employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* Regarding the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership – public bodies need to comply with the first aim of the Public Sector Equality Duty and only in the context of employment.

Step 3: Assessing the equality impact	
<b>9. If ‘no impact’ or ‘unknown’ was selected, please explain</b>	There are no known circumstances of a disproportionate equality impact on the protected characteristic groups of gender reassignment, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

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<p><b>10. If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups</b></p>	<p>The Council works with statutory services (i.e. Social Services, Mental Health Services, Probation Services etc.), and voluntary services (i.e. Porchlight, Dartford Churches Homeless Project (New Avenues) etc.) in the prevention and tackling of homelessness.</p> <p>The multi-agency Dartford Homelessness Forum led by the Council aims to actively engage partners in the homelessness review, the strategy development process and implementation, including the monitoring of performance.</p> <p>The Council works with specific public authorities under the duty to refer, where these authorities must notify the Council of service users they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>The private rented sector plays a vital role in the Council's strategy to prevent and relieve homelessness. The Council's Private Sector Housing Team provides advice and assistance to private sector tenants and landlords. When working with private sector landlords in the procurement of accommodation for homeless households (i.e. the Dartford Private Sector Leasing Scheme), properties must meet minimum required standards. The Council also established a Landlords Forum to enable the exchange of ideas and allow discussion between the promotion and development of partnership working arrangements. The Landlords Forum has not met for some time and the homelessness review notes that there are plans to relaunch it to reconnect with landlords and promote how they and the Council can work together.</p> <p>The Council is member of the Housing Options Sub Group of the Kent Housing Group. The Group considers how to improve upon housing options and homelessness services provided across the county, monitor performance, share best practice and liaise with partner organisations that are linked to the outcomes of these services.</p> <p>The Council is a member of the North Kent Domestic Abuse Forum, which is an independent inter-agency partnership that brings together voluntary and statutory agencies, with the aim of strengthening partnership working, information sharing and coordinated service provision in response to domestic abuse. The Forum supports the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-2023 and works to meet its aims.</p>
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<b>Step 3: Assessing the equality impact</b>	
	<p>The Council's has representation on the Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The Board takes a collective responsibility for ensuring that victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation services across Kent. In doing so, the Board aims to improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach to identifying need for and providing accommodation-based support services.</p> <p>There are no known circumstances where these above partnership working arrangements have a disproportionate equality impact on the protected characteristic groups at an operational level. It is recognised in the homelessness review that some partnership working relationships could be improved at an operational and strategic level.</p>
<b>11. Any other comments</b>	None

<b>Step 4: Action plan</b>	
<b>12. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address:</b> <b>a) any gaps in information and consultation</b> <b>b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated</b>	
<b>a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need?</b>	

Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
To understand the experiences of homeless applicants	Introduce customer feedback mechanisms	To assist to identify any potential equality impacts so they can be addressed. To learn and improve from feedback	April 2024	The Homelessness Forum will be responsible for monitoring the progress of delivery of the Homelessness Strategy	Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager

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Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Views from the public and stakeholder partner organisations on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Invite views on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft strategy in advance of seeking approval for the strategy	October/ December 2023	Log of consultation responses	Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager
Views from the Housing Advisory Board on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Invite views on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft strategy in advance of strategy approval for the strategy	December 2023	Log of consultation responses	Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager

**b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts?**

Identified impacts (and who is affected)	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
The impact of Adverse Childhood Traumas (ACEs) on some homeless applicants. This affects the age protected characteristic group.	Engage in opportunities to ensure staff working with homeless applicants are trauma informed	Support can be tailored to help improve health and social outcomes	June 2024	The Homelessness Forum will be responsible for monitoring the progress of delivery of the Homelessness Strategy	Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager

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<b>Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring</b>	
<b>13. Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by?</b>	Director of Housing and Public Protection and Head of Legal Services
<b>14. Is the subject of the Customer Access Review going to committee? If yes, include your findings in the committee report and attach this assessment to the report</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>15. How will you continue to monitor the activity or proposal on protected characteristic groups?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Forum and annual reports to the Housing Advisory Board</li> <li>• HCLIC data returns</li> <li>• Customer feedback surveys</li> <li>• Complaints data</li> </ul>
<b>16. When will you review this Customer Access Review?</b>	New assessments will be undertaken every five years in conjunction with the review of the strategy, or sooner, in the event of major legislative or operational changes.

<b>Step 6: Final steps</b>	
<b>17. Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy &amp; Projects Officer</b>	
<b>18. Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded</b>	

**Reviewed by Legal Services:**



6 October 2023

**Reviewed by Director of Housing & Public Protection:**



6 October 2023