

Appendix C

North Somerset Council - Initial Equality Impact Assessment Overview

Service or project area:

Housing Solutions

Description of the proposal:

Approval of amendments to North Somerset Homechoice – Lettings and Allocations Policy

Summary of changes:

The proposed amendments to the North Somerset Homechoice – Lettings and Allocations Policy are the result of a short review of the current policy. This has resulted in a number of proposed minor changes to bring the policy more in to line with the policies used by our neighbouring authorities and adopt best practice, and also to ensure we meet the requirements of Statutory Guidance as we now work to implement a new IT management system.

Three minor changes to qualification (local connection) criteria, some additions and amendments to qualification/exclusion criteria concerning Armed Forces applicants and their families are proposed. Some other small changes to the policy also proposed to improve clarity and reflect current practice

We have consulted on the proposed changes to local connection criteria for all applicants with our Registered Provider partners. The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel have been consulted on all the main changes and are supportive. The councillor and council officer who undertake the roles of armed forces champion and armed forces co-ordinator respectively have been consulted in relation to the armed forces proposals and are supportive of these proposed changes.

Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have an impact on any of these groups?					Impact (positive/ negative/ both)
Insert X into one box per row.					
	High	Medium	Low	None	
Disabled people		X (Positive)	X (Negative)		
People from different ethnic groups		X (Positive)	X (Negative)		
Men and women (including pregnant women or those on maternity leave)		X (Positive)	X (Negative)		
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people		X (Positive)	X (Negative)		
People on a low income		X (Positive)	X (Negative)		

People in particular age groups		X (Positive)	X (Negative)		
People in particular faith groups				X	
People who are married or in a civil partnership				X	
Transgender people				X	
Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, impact on health and wellbeing. Please specify: Carers and Parents		X Positive	X (Negative)		

Explanation of customer impact

The implementation of these proposed amendments will result in increased access to social housing and as a result will have a medium positive impact on a range of people with protected characteristics.

The proposed amendments that would serve to relax local connection criteria will result in improved accessibility of the HomeChoice service and social housing in North Somerset to a larger cohort of applicants with protected characteristics. Often those applicants who apply to be included onto the housing register under 'exceptional circumstances', where they do not meet local connection criteria, are households who include or comprise individuals who fall into older age groups, have disabilities or are single parents and are often isolated from wider family, and thus these amendments will positively impact these groups among others.

The changes will also have a positive impact on families that include current or former Armed Forces members, who may have a disability or ill health due to injury and those single-parent families recently estranged from a current or former Armed Forces member by increasing their ability to access social housing in North Somerset.

There will also be a low negative impact on those groups of people with protected characteristics who are over represented amongst applicants on the register as a result of the changes in local connection and qualification criteria; women, older people, disabled people, people from different ethnic groups, carers and parents and people in receipt of a low income. The changes may result in a longer delay for applicants currently registered being considered for accommodation as more people may be eligible to join the register. The impact is assessed as low as we currently utilise our exceptional circumstances policy to accept applicants, where appropriate, who do not fully meet our current eligibility criteria. The proposed changes will incorporate this approach into the policy, avoiding individual exceptions needing to be made, as well as potentially allowing more people to join than otherwise might have.

Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? - No

Explanation of staff impact

If yes, how many posts could be affected? State whether they are current vacant, or filled permanently or temporarily.

Review and Sign Off

Directorate Equality Group

When was this assessment reviewed by the Directorate Equality Group?

N/A

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? - No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed? N/A

Service Manager: Mark Hughes, Head of Housing and Strategy

Date: 21 September 2020

If this assessment identifies a medium or high risk then a Full Equality Impact Assessment needs to be completed