

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Relevance Check



This tool will identify the equalities relevance of a proposal, and establish whether a full Equality Impact Assessment will be required. Please read the guidance prior to completing this relevance check.

What is the proposal?	
Name of proposal	Reduced use of temporary accommodation
Please outline the proposal.	Our aim is to reduce the number of households placed in temporary accommodation (including emergency accommodation and B&B) by intervening earlier and preventing homelessness more effectively
What savings will this proposal achieve?	£150,000
Name of Lead Officer	Gillian Douglas

Could your proposal impact citizens with protected characteristics? (This includes service users and the wider community)
Please outline where there may be significant opportunities or positive impacts, and for whom.
<p>The saving will be made by improving our response to citizens who are facing homelessness so that we have more opportunity to prevent homelessness. We are doing this by implementing a redesign of the Housing Options service so that there is more effective triaging of citizens who present to a Citizen Service Point or are referred by another agency. Citizens who are facing homelessness in the next 8 weeks are now seen within 48 hours and their situation is assessed so that action can be taken wherever possible to prevent homelessness and so avoid the need for temporary accommodation. In the past citizens had to wait longer for an appointment.</p> <p>The single biggest reason for homelessness in Bristol is the loss of a private rented sector tenancy. If we intervene early there is more potential to save the tenancy and sustain it e.g. by resolving rent arrears, breakdown between tenant and landlord or issues with the state of repair of the property. If there is a genuine and valid reason for the tenancy ending we work to find alternative settled accommodation although this is often not possible in the short term and the household will need to go in to temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Other major reasons for homelessness are the breakdown of a relationship involving domestic violence, parents no longer able or willing to accommodate, friends/relatives no longer able or willing to accommodate, harassment/threat of harm, leaving asylum-seeker accommodation, leaving hospital and leaving prison.</p> <p>Any household who has a right to temporary accommodation under the Housing Act will continue to be accommodated. This proposed saving will not mean a reduction in help offered to homeless households. It is about shifting our resources upstream so that we can avoid the need for temporary accommodation where possible.</p>

People and families affected by homelessness are generally on lower income even though 40-50% of households include an adult who is working. Black and minority families are over-represented, linked to lower income but also to the lack of larger family housing in both the social and private rented sectors.

Single homeless people are less likely to be in temporary accommodation and more likely to be in supported accommodation because of their particular support needs and the 'priority need' test in the Housing Act. Support needs include mental health and drug and alcohol misuse. This means a higher proportion of single homeless people are disabled people (than in the general population).

Please outline where there may be significant negative impacts, and for whom.

The council cannot artificially limit spend on temporary accommodation because of its statutory homelessness responsibilities. What we can do is reach people earlier, encourage people to seek help earlier and find ways to meet housing need before people become 'roofless'.

The demand for temporary accommodation in Bristol is a challenge and we strive to ensure that wherever possible families with children are not placed in accommodation with shared facilities or at least not for more than 6 weeks. At times we have had to use hotels or accommodation outside of Bristol but this is kept to a minimum.

Reducing spend will not impact on the standards that we require from accommodation providers, it is simply about taking a more preventative approach.

Could your proposal impact staff with protected characteristics?

(i.e. reduction in posts, changes to working hours or locations, changes in pay)

Please outline where there may be significant opportunities or positive impacts, and for whom.

Housing Advisors do face high demand for their service through direct referrals and the CSPs. However the shift to a preventative approach allows staff to achieve better outcomes for citizens, in some cases avoiding temporary accommodation. The restructuring of the team will improve the team leader to employee ratio and should offer greater line management support.

Please outline where there may be negative impacts, and for whom.

None - there are no staff changes as a result of this proposal, beyond the Housing Options restructure already being implemented.

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required?

Does the proposal have the potential to impact on people with protected characteristics in the following ways:

- access to or participation in a service,
- levels of representation in our workforce, or
- reducing quality of life (i.e. health, education, standard of living) ?

Please indicate yes or no. If the answer is yes then a full impact assessment must be carried out. If the answer is no, please provide a justification.	No
Service Director sign-off and date: Pp Gillian Douglas	Equalities Officer sign-off and date: Wanda Knight 21/10/16