

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

Front Sheet:

**Directorate and Service Area:
Children, Education and Families**

**What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change):
Housing and Homeless Strategy for Vulnerable Young People and Families**

**Responsible owner / senior officer:
Gillian Douglas**

**Date of assessment:
April 2019**

Summary of judgement:

Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change and possible impacts, including highlighting any significant mitigating actions – it is probably easier to write this after you have completed the assessment

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Vulnerable Young People and Adults brings together a comprehensive Needs Analysis and action plan. The housing needs of the following specific groups are considered:

- Families for whom housing is an issue
- Care Leavers and other vulnerable young people
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
- Young people with disabilities
- Young people involved in youth justice

The Strategy sets out a series of key objectives with actions to address the identified gaps in provision with timescales for completion.

The Needs Analysis also records data sources used, identifies gaps in data and provides pathways for future collection of data when the Council's new LCS system is operational in June 2019.

The impact of the Strategy and Needs Analysis is positive for the groups considered and there were no negative impacts identified for anyone sharing any of the protected characteristics. Of the groups sharing the protected characteristics those of a particular age (16-25), young people with disabilities, young people seeking asylum were specifically considered.

The needs of Gypsy and Travelling families were not considered as a separate group and this is considered to be an omission. This will be addressed in the updated Strategy to be agreed in 2020.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

This assessment has been undertaken in order to understand the impact on different groups in Oxfordshire of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Vulnerable Young People and Families. The Strategy has been drafted in conjunction with representatives from the City and District Councils and aims to present a coherent plan in order to address the housing needs of some of our most vulnerable people.

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person’s disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Social Value

There is common agreement that safe and suitable housing is a basic human right for children, young people and families. Conversely transient lifestyles and inappropriate housing have been identified as one of the risk factors on the pathway to harm. The denial of this basic right with its subsequent detrimental effect on an individual's potential and development is not only impoverishing for the individual but is costly on the public purse. People who have experienced homelessness are over represented as users of mental health services, social services and the prison population. Our Strategy and Needs Analysis, owned jointly by the County Council and the District Councils, forms a coherent plan to address the housing needs of some of our most vulnerable people.

Context / Background:

The Housing Needs Analysis highlighted the difficulties Oxfordshire faces in terms of cost and availability of housing. While there are intense building programmes around the county, affordability is still an issue and the number of homeless people is increasing. Young people in our supported housing pathway have increasingly complex needs and progress through the pathway is hampered by a lack of suitable places for them to move on to. The increasing number of looked after children is creating an ongoing pressure on places in the pathway. We need increased support and housing for vulnerable families as evidenced by the number of families in temporary accommodation. We also need specialist housing provision for young people with disabilities and more support for young people in the youth justice system.

Proposals:

The Strategy contains a detailed action plan under 6 key objectives. These were agreed by the working group of representatives from across the county and district councils. The 6 key objectives are:

- 1.To support vulnerable families to maintain secure and long-lasting housing.

2.The provision of a range of housing options, with support and intervention, for Care Leavers and other vulnerable young people including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and young people involved with the Youth Justice System.

3.To increase the supply of affordable housing options to meet the needs of families and single young people, and to optimise the use of available property.

4.To maintain partnership working between District and County Councils, housing providers, specialist support services and other stakeholders including young people and families.

5.To resource early prevention work with families and young people at risk of homelessness.

6.To support landlords to mitigate negative perceptions of social care service users and/or benefit claimants

For further details see full document available -<insert link>

Evidence / Intelligence:

The Strategy developed out of the Needs Analysis which looked at national data, the Oxfordshire context and the housing needs of the following groups in Oxfordshire: Looked After Children and Care Leavers including unaccompanied asylum seekers, young people with disabilities, young people in the Youth Justice System, and families at risk of homelessness. Both quantitative and qualitative research was undertaken and gaps in available data identified. Where possible future trends were modelled, and a sustainable method of obtaining ongoing data established.

Alternatives considered / rejected:

This is the first time that a comprehensive needs analysis has been undertaken and a strategy developed for these groups. It was considered necessary to have these to enable planning for future needs and to inform colleagues involved in housing provision of the needs of these groups.

Impact Assessment:

Identify any potential impacts of the policy or proposed service change on the population as a whole, or on particular groups. It might be helpful to think about the largest impacts or the key parts of the policy or proposed service change first, identifying any risks and actions, before thinking in more detail about particular groups, staff, other Council services, providers etc.

It is worth remembering that 'impact' can mean many things, and can be positive as well as negative. It could for example relate to access to services, the health and wellbeing of individuals or communities, the sustainability of supplier business models, or the training needs of staff.

We assess the impact of decisions on any relevant community, but with particular emphasis on:

- *Groups that share the nine protected characteristics*

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership
- Rural communities
- Areas of deprivation

We also assess the impact on:

- Staff
- Other council services
- Other providers of council services
- Any other element which is relevant to the policy or proposed service change
- How it might improve the economic, social, and environmental of the area affected by the contract **if** the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies

For every community or group that you identify a potential impact you should discuss this in detail, using evidence (from data, consultation etc.) where possible to support your judgements. You should then highlight specific risks and any mitigating actions you will take to either lessen the impact, or to address any gaps in understanding you have identified.

If you have not identified an impact on particular groups, staff, other Council services, providers etc. you should indicate this to demonstrate you have considered it.

The impact of the strategy will be positive for the all groups within its scope, many of whom will be resident in areas of deprivation. The specific impact on individual groups is considered below.

There are not considered to be any risks or negative impacts from the strategy on the groups that share the nine protected characteristics.

Impact on Individuals and Communities:

Community / Group being assessed (as per list above – e.g. age, rural communities – do an assessment for each one on the list)

Summarise the specific requirements and/or potential impact on this community / group, and then highlight the most significant risks and mitigating action that has been or will be taken.

Group	Impact
Families in vulnerable	There were 161 families in temporary accommodation across the county at the end of 2016/17 having become homeless. 83

housing	<p>of these were deemed ineligible for further support from their District Council either by their actions, inactions, or their immigration status. They were offered information and advice on finding their own accommodation. Following this, 17 families were supported by Children Education and Families into accommodation.</p> <p>The strategy requires the early identification of families who may be in difficulties over their housing and the upskilling of frontline County Council staff in housing issues. There is also a requirement to maintain partnership working between County Council and City and District Council staff and other housing and support providers. This will further enable timely, appropriate and targeted support to be offered. The need to support private sector landlords to mitigate against negative perceptions of social care service users was also identified. All these measures are designed to help to reduce the number of families who become homeless.</p>
Care Leavers and other vulnerable young people	<p>The number of Looked After Children (LAC) is rising nationally and in Oxfordshire the number of LAC aged 16 (when they can be referred into supported housing) had risen to 187 by 2017. In addition recent legislation requires support to be available for care leavers up to the age of 25. The Strategy requires the provision of a range of housing options and support for single young people and for young families, the majority of whom will be care leavers. A service already exists and the strategy and needs analysis are supporting the recommissioning of this service to start in April 2020</p>
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	<p>There has been a sharp increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children entering the county over the last years. The average number looked after during 2017/18 was 57. Since the start of 2019 the average has been circa 64. The needs analysis identified a shortfall in provision within the county of 30% and steps are underway to address this.</p>
Young People with disabilities	<p>Approximately 30 young people per year will need specialist housing and approximately 7 per year will need housing adapted for electric wheelchairs and ceiling tracking for hoists. Knowing this enables more detailed planning to take place with District Councils, and housing and support providers.</p>
Young People involved with Youth Justice	<p>Data continues to be hard to source for this very transient group of young people. However, the needs analysis identified housing and support needs for between 15 and 20 individuals per year. This has enabled further investigation and planning to take place.</p>
Gypsies and Travellers	<p>The updated version of the Strategy will benefit these groups of people as their need for sites will be documented and relevant action will be agreed with partnership organisations</p>

Impact on Staff:

Summarise the specific requirements and/or potential impact on staff, and then highlight the most significant risks and mitigating action that has been or will be taken.

Overseeing and implementing the Strategy will involve a continuing time commitment from commissioning and operational staff in the County Council and representatives from the housing departments in the City and District councils. However having a clear strategy will help in the design of team work programmes. Early intervention with families facing housing issues will prevent homelessness crisis work later and reduce stress on front line staff.

No impact has been identified on other Council services or providers.

Action plan:

Summarise the actions that will be taken as a result of the assessment, including when they will be completed and who will be responsible. It is important that the officer leading on the assessment follows up to make sure the actions are completed, and updates the assessment as appropriate. Any significant risks identified should also be added to the appropriate service or directorate risk register, to ensure they are appropriately managed and reviewed.

Action	By When	Person responsible
Bi monthly meetings to review progress towards key objectives identified in the Strategy	ongoing	Gillian Douglas
For detailed action plan see Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Vulnerable Young People and Families <insert link when public>		

Monitoring and review:

Try to be as specific as possible about when the assessment will be reviewed and updated, linking to key dates (for example when consultation outcomes will be available, before a Cabinet decision, at a key milestone in implementation)

Person responsible for assessment:

Version	Date	Notes (e.g. Initial draft, amended following consultation)
1	13 March 2019	Initial draft

2	5 April 2019	Revisions
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