

Initial Equality Analysis (EIA) Resident/Service User

1. Details of function, policy, procedure or service:	
Title of what is being assessed: Annual Review of Council Dwelling Rents and Service Charges and Temporary Accommodation rents for 2021/22	
Is it a new or revised function, policy, procedure or service? Revised approach.	
Department and Section: Housing	
Date assessment completed: 16/12/20	
2. Names and roles of people completing this assessment:	
Lead officer	Laura Giles, Head of Strategy and Compliance (Barnet Homes)
Other groups	
3. Employee Profile of the Project	<p>Will the proposal affect employees? NO</p> <p>If no please explain why. It is an approach that affects individuals living in council-owned dwellings.</p> <p>If yes, please seek assistance from HR to complete the employee EIA.</p>

How are the following equality strands affected? Please detail the effect on each equality strand, and any mitigating action you have taken / required. Please include any relevant data. If you do not have relevant data please explain why / plans to capture data			
Equality Strand	Affected?	Explain how affected	Indicate what action has been taken / or is planned to mitigate impact?
1. Age	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of age, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of age.</p> <p>The profile of our tenants shows that the largest proportions of tenants are in the following age bands:</p> <p>46-55 = 30.3%</p> <p>56-65 = 26.7%</p> <p>36-45 = 20.2%</p>	See section 9 of this EIA

		<p>Older people who rely on state pensions are not expected to be more disadvantaged than those in work or on other benefits as it is estimated that (under the terms of the Triple Lock Guarantee) the basic state pension is to increase by 2.5% from 12 April 2021. This is favourable when compared to the ONS Data (Average household income, UK: financial year ending 2020 (provisional)) that “in financial year ending 2020, the average disposable household income was up 2.3% compared with the previous year, after accounting for inflation. In this period, real earnings increased by an average of 1.5%, however total annual pay growth for March to May 2020 fell by 1.3% after accounting for inflation.</p>	
2. Disability	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of disability, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of disability.</p> <p>Our records indicate that approximately 2% of tenants have a disability, with a large proportion of unknown data at 59.6%.</p> <p>Whilst the rent is calculated on the property properties, no additional charges are levied to take account of any disabled adaptations, and rent charges are applied equally regardless of disability status.</p>	See section 9 of this EIA
3. Gender reassignment	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of gender reassignment, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of gender re-assignment.</p> <p>No tenant data is currently held on this area.</p>	See section 9 of this EIA

<p>4. Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of pregnancy or maternity status, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity status.</p>	<p>See section 9 of this EIA</p>
<p>5. Race / Ethnicity</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of race, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of race.</p> <p>The profile of our tenants shows that the largest proportions of tenants are of the following ethnicities:</p> <p>White = 33.7% Black / Black British = 18.6% Asian / Asian British = 2%</p> <p>There is a large proportion of unknown data at 39%.</p>	<p>See section 9 of this EIA</p>
<p>6. Religion or belief</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of religion or belief, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of religion or belief.</p> <p>The profile of our tenants shows that the largest proportions of tenants are of the following religions or beliefs:</p> <p>Christian = 30.1% None = 11.3% Muslim = 4.1% Hindu = 2.7%</p> <p>The faith of approx. 49.4% of tenants is unknown.</p>	<p>See section 9 of this EIA</p>
<p>7. Gender / sex</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of sex, the increase is not considered to</p>	<p>See section 9 of this EIA</p>

		<p>disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of sex.</p> <p>Females make up 69.1% of tenancy holders. Whilst women comprise the greater proportion of those impacted by the rent increase this is because women make up more than half of the tenancy holders.</p>	
<p>8. Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of sexual orientation, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of sexual orientation.</p> <p>46.1% of tenants indicate a sexual orientation of heterosexual, and 1.4% lesbian / gay / bisexual, with a large percentage (52.5%) preferring not to say or unknown.</p>	<p>See section 9 of this EIA</p>
<p>9. Marital Status</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of marital status, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of marital status.</p>	<p>See section 9 of this EIA</p>
<p>10. Other key groups?</p> <p>Carers</p> <p>People with mental health issues</p> <p>Some families and lone parents</p> <p>People with a low income</p> <p>Unemployed people</p> <p>Young people not in employment education or training</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>On the basis that the increased rent charge is applied consistently across all properties and not targeted to individual occupants, i.e. it applies to the tenant regardless of socio-economic status, the increase is not considered to disproportionately disadvantage tenants on the grounds of socio-economic status, although households that face socio-economic disadvantage, including those on lower outcomes, are highly represented within social housing.</p>	<p>See section 9 of this EIA</p>

5. Please outline what data sources, measures and methods could be designed to monitor the impact of the new policy or service, the achievement of intended outcomes and the identification of any unintended or adverse impact?

Include how frequently monitoring could be conducted and who will be made aware of the analysis and outcomes

Continuous weekly monitoring of rent accounts takes place to highlight areas of negative impact.

6. Initial Assessment of Overall Impact

Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/>	Negative Impact or Impact Not Known ¹ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Impact <input type="checkbox"/>
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7. Scale of Impact

Positive impact: Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Significant <input type="checkbox"/>	Negative Impact or Impact Not Known Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant <input type="checkbox"/>	
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8. Outcome

No change to decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Adjustment needed to decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Continue with decision <i>(despite adverse impact / missed opportunity)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If significant negative impact - Stop / rethink <input type="checkbox"/>
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¹ 'Impact Not Known' – tick this box if there is no up-to-date data or information to show the effects or outcomes of the function, policy, procedure or service on all of the equality strands.

9. Please give a full explanation for how the initial assessment and outcome was decided. .

The aim of the approach is to provide a fair method of calculating social rents and service charges within a viable and sustainable Housing Revenue Account (HRA) that enables the council through its ALMO to deliver effective services, invest in its properties to ensure homes are of a modern standard and maintained safely, and to provide new housing to rent.

The proposed revisions aim to ensure that the approach complies with the provisions in the Government's Rent Policy Statement in respect of social rents and to clarify the council's position in relation to service charge increases to cover the cost of inflation and ensure essential services can continue to be delivered. Key elements include:

- Rent increase of 1.5% for council tenants from 1 April 2021 (September CPI + 1%)
- Temporary accommodation rental charge alignment with current LHA rates
- Service charge increases of 3-5% to cover the increased costs of service provision

There are approximately 9,000 affected Barnet Council dwellings, managed by Barnet Homes (the council's Arms-Length Management Organisation).

The increase being applied is proportionate across all properties, and will be applied to all council dwellings under the social and affordable rent regimes. The % increase is applied to the property in that it has no bearing on the socio-demographic profile of the tenants. The increase does not target or disproportionately affect any group of people based on any of the protected characteristics. Whilst the rent increase does not target any specific group, the increase will have more of an impact on households on lower incomes.

From the perspective of the tenant, the rent and service charge increase will be viewed as having an adverse impact. The Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken from this perspective and has been assessed as not having a disproportionate adverse effect on any specific group. The potential for a detrimental impact exists in as much as an increase in rent will put pressure on those individuals in, or at risk of, financial hardship. The potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is currently unknown, however it is anticipated that it is likely to place additional financial pressure upon many households. It should be noted that all rent levels will remain well below both market rent and 'affordable rent' (80% of market) and below the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) level for the borough. The LHA is the maximum amount payable through the housing element of Universal Credit. In addition, Barnet Homes' in-house Income Collection Team takes a proactive, supportive approach to preventing rent arrears and offering financial inclusion through money advice, referrals for support, and assistance in maximising income (through benefit claims, or advice on management of other debts, for example). Thus, it is concluded that the detrimental effects of a rent increase are mitigated where appropriate.