

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (January 2021)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Sheila Jacobs

Email address: sheilajacob@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Lisa Newman

Chief Officer: Lisa Newman

Directorate: Regeneration & Place/Housing Services

Date: 09/01/2025

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Amendments to the Property Pool Plus Social Housing Allocations Scheme.

Section 2a: Will this EIA be submitted to a Committee meeting?

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee **Provisional date 17th
June 2025 tbc**

Hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to engage@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any protected groups (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals. We encourage services to consider the impact on those who serve and who have served in the armed forces and their families, in accordance with the Armed Forces Covenant

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Age	<p>Positive impact. The policy changes include additional provision for young people who are defined as a 'Child in need' as a result of a statutory assessment in accordance with the Children's Act 1989 Section 17. These changes will enable improved planning for independence and better outcomes for this group of young people. Provisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specification that joint protocols between the local authority children's services and housing services are to be taken into consideration when making qualification decision for all children in need.• Children in need who are awarded a Band A priority for move on from local authority contracted / grant funded homeless hostel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	<p>/ supported provision will have their award backdated to the date they moved into that accommodation.</p> <p>Positive impact. The policy changes include additional provision for young people leaving the care of the local authority who are owed a duty under the Children’s Act 1989 section 23c including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extension of local connection provision up to age 25 for this group regardless of whether they are still in education. This extends the provision within the existing policy to enable this group of young people to qualify for social housing in their original home area up to age 25.• The Band A provision for leaving care has been made clearer to specify that this provision, including a backdate to the 16th birthday is for those leaving care of the scheme partner local authorities for the first time. Additional criteria has been added to stipulate that Band A can be awarded if a subsequent move is required, up to age 25, but only where there is a housing need and if this is supported by Children’s services. However, a backdate to the sixteenth birthday will not be applied in these circumstances. This change will ensure that those young people leaving care and moving to independence for the first time will benefit from the greatest priority for rehousing, whilst still providing an appropriately urgent priority for care				
--	---	--	--	--	--

	<p>experienced young people who have a subsequent need for rehousing.</p> <p>Positive impact. The qualification criteria relating to savings has been amended to include a disregard to the savings criteria for those who are unable to be discharged from hospital due to the unsuitability of their home, where other solutions have been deemed unfeasible. It is anticipated that some of those people who will be positively impacted by this change will be older people.</p>				
Disability	<p>Positive impact. As stated above the qualification criteria relating to savings has been amended to include a disregard to the savings criteria for those who are unable to be discharged from hospital due to the unsuitability of their home, where other solutions have been deemed unfeasible. It is anticipated that some of those people who will be positively impacted by this change will be those with a disability.</p> <p>Positive impact. The qualification criteria for homeownership and savings have been amended to include a disregard in certain circumstances for those whose households include a severely disabled person requiring a substantially adapted property. This change will enable assistance to be provided to those who would otherwise be at a disadvantage in their ability to resolve their own housing need</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	due to the specialist nature and scarcity of substantially adapted accommodation				
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive Impact. The policy has been updated to make clear that unborn children will be included in the bedroom calculation from the point the matb1 certificate is issued. This will positively impact applicants who are pregnant by ensuring they can apply for adequately sized accommodation to meet the needs of their growing household.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Race	Positive Impact. The qualification criteria for local connection has been updated to make exemptions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless households who have been newly granted refugee status and are owed a Homelessness Duty by one of the scheme local authorities, and • Households placed in one of the scheme local authority areas under the 'Homes for Ukraine Scheme'. This change will positively impact those who are placed in the area and require rehousing, but do not meet the 2 year residency local connection criteria.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Domestic abuse victims	Positive Impact. A new disregard to rent arrears in respect of the qualification criteria has been added to the policy for those fleeing domestic abuse. This will remove a barrier to those requiring a move due to domestic abuse.				

All	<p>Positive Impact. The discretion criteria has been broadened to include scope to assist individual cases with an exceptional and urgent welfare need for rehousing which is not specifically referenced within the policy. This change could positively impact people in any of the protected groups who have an exceptional and urgent welfare need for rehousing which is not specified in the policy, by allowing individual circumstances to fully taken account of in the assessment of their housing need.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
All	<p>Potential negative impact in respect of the following policy changes being proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increase in priority to Band A for those ready to move on from Local Authority commissioned / funded homeless provision of supported housing / hostels. • The local authority will have the option to implement a period of direct matching for a proportion of properties to key groups. • The local authority will have the option to implement pilot trials of new ways of working to inform future service delivery and potential scheme improvements to resolve housing need. However, there are no current plans to implement this at this stage. Any future variation to the scheme will be subject to a separate Equality Impact Assessment. • Implementation of a 5% net cross boundary mobility cap to ensure that the majority of properties in any local authority 	<p>Any negative impact is likely to be mitigated by the fact that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leavers receive a backdate to the Band A award to their 16th birthday which affords an extra advantage which will limit any impact of these changes. • Those applicants moving into Band A under the proposed changes will be mainly one bedroom need applicants who will not be competing for larger properties thereby limiting the impact on applicant requiring properties with 2+ bedrooms. 	LCR CBL Lead and Contract Board	Quarterly	None

	<p>area are allocated to residents of that area.</p> <p>The above changes could negatively impact some applicants who are in the protected characteristic groups. The scheme is aligned to afford priority to those in housing need who are placed in Band A additional preference and Band B reasonable preference. Criteria for these priority bands include young people leaving the care of the local authority, people who need to move due to disability or health conditions, racial harassment, hate crime, Armed Forces, those fleeing domestic abuse, those needing to access care, frailty due to old age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of those in Band A for reasons linked to health / disability may require specific types of accommodation such as properties with adaptations. Properties of this type are advertised giving preference to those who need these facilities. • In respect of direct lettings, it is likely that those receiving a direct let will include some of those in the protected groups within Band A. • Properties which are adapted would not be direct matched to applicants who do not need the adaptations. • The impact on those who need / wish to move to sheltered accommodation and are aged 55+ will be limited due to the restrictions on allocating sheltered accommodation to those aged 55+. • Those in the highest housing need will still have a high priority based on the urgency of 			
--	---	--	--	--	--

		<p>their situation so may still receive an offer of accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some Armed Forces cases and all those with a priority for a move due to domestic abuse receive a local connection and relative priority for all scheme local authority areas thereby affording additional opportunity for rehousing.• Exemptions to advertising properties giving preference to local authority residents under a 5% cap will be afforded to some members of the Armed Forces community, Domestic Abuse victims and those leaving the care of the scheme partner local authorities.• Anyone in Band B whose urgency for a move escalates may be reassessed awarded Band A subject to meeting relevant criteria.• Anyone registered with the scheme who is at risk of becoming			
--	--	---	--	--	--

		<p>homeless or who becomes homeless can seek assistance from the relevant homelessness service, which may impact the level of priority, and the type of assistance provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of a period of direct lettings will be subject to a separate equality impact assessment.• Quarterly reporting and monitoring will be undertaken to monitor any adverse impact.			
--	--	---	--	--	--

Section 4a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

Quarterly monitoring via Liverpool City Region Property Pool Plus Contract Board.

Section 4b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

There are potential negative impacts as outlined in the document, these will be monitored. There are also a number of mitigating factors detailed in the document. Any potential for negative impact will be monitored as outlined above.

However, there are some positive impacts which are also outlined. Many of the policy changes are minor and do not have any significant impact on any of the protected groups.

Section 5: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

Property Pool Plus housing register and allocations data.

Section 6: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal? Yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 7.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to engage@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 7: How will consultation take place and by when?

A short four week consultation commencing on Monday 20th January 2025 will be undertaken with existing Property Pool Plus applicants, Registered Provider landlords who allocate their accommodation through the scheme and other partner organisations. These groups will be contacted to make them aware of the proposed changes and asked to submit any comments they may have on the proposals.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to engage@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal publishing requirements. The EIA will need to be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 4. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to engage@wirral.gov.uk for publishing.

Section 8: Have you remembered to:

- a) **Select appropriate directorate hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2a)**
- b) **Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 4)**
- c) **Send this EIA to engage@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer?**
- d) **Review section 4 once consultation has taken place and sent your updated EIA to engage@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**