

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis

(updated May 2020)

Title of service or policy: Local Authority Housing Fund nomination procedure and ongoing operation of the scheme

Name of directorate and service

Name and role of officers completing the EIA: Louise Murphy – Refugee Resettlement Manager
Anne-Marie Martin - Resettlement Housing Adviser

Date of assessment: August 2024

Equality Impact Assessment (or 'Equality Analysis') is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on different groups within the community. The main aim is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and also to identify areas where equality can be better promoted. Equality impact Assessments (EIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so leave blank any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council's website.

1.	Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented.	
	Key questions	Answers / Notes
1.1	<p>Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How the service/policy is delivered and by whom ● If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations ● Intended outcomes 	<p>Under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Programme round 1 the Council is providing 22 homes for families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes set out below. The LAHF scheme was set up under the former Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which has now been renamed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.</p> <p>All properties will be let by Aequus Development Limited (ADL), the B&NES owned property development company collaborating with B&NES in delivering and providing the resettlement and relocation units for the LAHF programme.</p> <p>All properties will be managed by Gregorys Estate agents on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) basis for a minimum duration of 6 months, or in the event of legislative changes, as agreed with B&NES Housing (Housing Team). The rent is capped to the appropriate Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate.</p> <p>The Council's Housing and Resettlement Teams will have 100% nomination rights to the properties.</p> <p>The aim of the programme is that 22 eligible households will live in affordable and settled accommodation. There will be more security of tenure than in the private rental market.</p> <p>The Council is also taking part in LAHF Round 3, which means we will be creating a further 4 properties for refugee resettlement. These 4 properties will be limited to Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme arrivals, with 3 medium sized properties (2 or 3 bed) and one larger property (4 bed or more). In addition, Round 3 of the LAHF has 1 property which will be allocated to households that need Temporary</p>

		Accommodation (this is for the general population, not for refugees and is those who are owed a homelessness duty by the local authority. It is likely this property will be targeted at families.
1.2	<p>Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? ● Is it a national requirement?). ● How much room for review is there? 	<p>This is a new procedure. Eligible cohorts are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (including British Nationals under this scheme) (ACRS) (LAHF 1 and LAHF 3) 2. Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) LAHF 1 3. Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS) (LAHF 1) 4. Homes For Ukraine scheme (H4U) (LAHF 1) 5. Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES) (LAHF 1) <p>All Local Authorities were offered Government funding under the LAHF schemes but it is not a compulsory programme.</p> <p>A nominations procedure has been developed, which is in line with the Council's Homeseach Allocations policy (see Appendix 1). If households are not offered a property, they can request a review within 14 days of receiving the decision of not being nominated. The review will be completed within 14 days by a manager not involved in the original decision. If the review is successful, the next suitable LAHF property may be offered to the household or alternatively support to secure Private Rented Accommodation.</p>
1.3	Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?	The nominations procedure is in line with the Council's Homeseach Allocations policy.

2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Monitoring data and other information should be used to help you analyse whether you are delivering a fair and equal service. Please consider the availability of the following as potential sources:

- **Demographic** data and other statistics, including census findings
- Recent **research** findings (local and national)
- Results from **consultation or engagement** you have undertaken
- Service user **monitoring data** (including ethnicity, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation and age)
- Information from **relevant groups** or agencies, for example trade unions and voluntary/community organisations
- Analysis of records of enquiries about your service, or **complaints** or **compliments** about them
- Recommendations of **external inspections** or audit reports

	Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to
2.1	What equalities training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?	All staff have received equalities awareness training (and the manager is a former Equality Officer)
2.2	What is the equalities profile of service users?	LAHF properties can only be accessed by a limited cohort – and this is a condition of the funding. These are 300+ Ukrainian guests here on the Homes For Ukraine sponsorship scheme, the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Extension Scheme. In addition, the service users are Afghan families who have entered the UK under the ARAP and ACRS schemes. Whilst the demographics are limited in terms of nationality/ethnicity, otherwise the cohorts are mixed in terms of other protected characteristics of sex, age, disability, etc.
2.4	Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?	We engage regularly with Ukrainian guests who are already here in B&NES. Where possible, we have tried to develop the LAHF offer in line

		with the needs of our cohort (e.g. size, location etc) at the time the programme started.
2.5	What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?	Head of Housing; Housing Options Team; Homesearch. Legal, Planning teams were consulted. The feedback helped to ensure that the LAHF nomination procedure is consistent with criteria within existing housing allocation schemes – as far as possible.

2.6	If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equalities considerations within this?	As it is a national scheme, we do not plan to undertake any further consultation on it, but we will be reviewing the scheme as it progresses.
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3. Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equalities groups

		Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
3.1	Sex – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.	LAHF properties are equally accessible to men and women.	There are more women than men in the Ukrainian cohort - as many men are unable to leave Ukraine due to Martial Law. There is nothing that we can do to address this imbalance – as it is Ukraine national policy. However, we are looking at ways of supporting women who are here in the UK as single parent households – for example – helping to set up HMO licences so women can rent together and share bills and childcare.

3.2	Pregnancy and maternity	LAHF properties are accessible to all regardless of pregnancy and maternity.	The bedroom need is calculated at the time that a particular person/family is being considered for a property. In line with Homesearch Allocations policy, we have the discretion to allow for additional bedroom need if a pregnancy is nearing birth date.
3.3	Gender reassignment – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people	LAHF properties are accessible to all regardless of gender reassignment status.	No issues identified
3.4	Disability - identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration both physical, sensory and mental impairments and mental health)	Part of the LAHF property nomination procedure involves assessing that the property is suitable and accessible in respect of any disability or impairment. We can ask Occupational Health for an assessment of suitability if need be. We can get tenancy agreements and inventories put into different formats on request.	We will prioritise those who have a disability for properties that are accessible to them, over a household who has no access need. Disabled people whose employment options are limited (and who therefore rely upon social security benefits) will not be disadvantaged by the LAHF nomination procedure – provided they pass the affordability assessment. We collect information on access requirements on the LAHF registration form. Very few applicants highlight that they have access requirements.
3.5	Age – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups	LAHF properties are accessible to people of different ages. Single people over 35 will be considered for 1 bedroom/self-contained apartments. Single people under 35 will usually only be considered for the House of Multiple Occupation (HMO). However, single people under 35 may also be considered for self contained 1 bed apartments if they can pass the affordability assessment.	We will prioritise households with children (e.g. a parent and child will have higher priority than two adults sharing). Will we prioritise those over 35 for 1 bed self-contained accommodation as it is more likely to be affordable for them. For the LAHF property that is an HMO, we will prioritise those under age 35 as they are only entitled to the room in a shared house LHA rate.

		Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
3.6	Race – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups	<p>The tenancy agreement can be translated into appropriate languages.</p> <p>We can use interpreters if and when required.</p> <p>The Resettlement Team and (BWR can offer additional support to help people with bidding etc if they have language support needs. For example, we will prompt people to bid for properties that may be suitable for them if they are threatened with homelessness.</p>	At the time of writing, LAHF properties are targeted at specific cohorts – Ukrainians and Afghans. It is anticipated that in the future, when these cohorts no longer require properties, they will become available to all other local BANES residents.
3.7	Sexual orientation - identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual people	LAHF properties are accessible to all regardless of sexual orientation.	No issues identified
3.8	Marriage and civil partnership – does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?	LAHF properties are accessible to all regardless of marriage/civil partnership status.	No Issues identified
3.9	Religion/belief – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.	<p>LAHF properties are accessible to all regardless of religion/belief.</p> <p>LAHF properties are located across the B&NES area – and are therefore relatively close to places of worship.</p>	We may use proximity of place of worship as a determining factor within the nomination procedure.
3.10	Socio-economically disadvantaged* – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors	The LAHF properties nomination procedure has been designed to prioritise those who are on a low income, who would be less likely	If savings or income exceed the maximum for a LAHF property (£60,000), Ukrainian households on the H4U sponsorship scheme may be able to access the H4U financial support package.

	like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances (this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).	than others to be able to secure a private tenancy	Others will be likely to be able to access a private sector rental on the open market.
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3.11	Rural communities* – identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities	An attempt has been made to create LAHF properties across the B&NES area. However, in order to ensure the most interest in a property, and find properties that are the lowest cost, the most rural areas of B&NES have been avoided. Therefore, properties are mainly located in Bath/surrounding area, Keynsham and the Norton Radstock area.	Ukrainians on the H4U scheme who are settled in the rural areas of B&NES without LAHF property options (e.g. the Chew Valley) will still have the option to access the H4U financial support package to rent within those rural areas. We have avoided LAHF properties in rural areas for Afghan families – so that local services are more easily accessible, and households are not isolated.
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There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council & NHS B&NES Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
Sex – Need to monitor potential impacts upon female and male LAHF applicants	Monitor if single women have struggled to access or sustain LAHF properties or affordable housing.	12 months	Resettlement Team	October 2024
Disability – Need to monitor potential impacts upon people who are disabled (consideratiing physical, sensory and mental impairments and mental health	Monitor if disabled people have struggled to access or sustain LAHF properties or affordable housing	12 months	Resettlement Team	December 2024
Age – Need to monitor potential impacts upon people of different ages	Monitor if people of any age have struggled to access or sustain LAHF properties or affordable housing	12 months	Resettlement Team	December 2024
Religion/belief – need to monitor potential impacts upon people from different faith backgrounds/and also upon those with no religion.	Monitor if people from different religious/faith groups have struggled to access or sustain LAHF properties or affordable housing	12 months	Resettlement Team	December 2024
Regular reviews will be conducted with those who have been allocated a LAHF property to ensure the tenancy is going well and is sustainable and affordable	Any issues identified in respect of either affordability or sustainability will be analysed to check if any issues relate to any of the protected characteristics	6 months	Resettlement Team	September 2024
Regular review of allocations to properties	Discuss with Resettlement Manager	6 months	Resettlement Team	September 2024
Feedback/appeals/right to review	Discuss with Resettlement Manager	6 months	Resettlement Team	September 2024

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5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equalities Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council's and/or NHS B&NES' website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by: Graham Sabourn
senior officer)

(Divisional Director or nominated

Date: 29.08.24

Appendix 1 – LAHF Property Nomination Procedure

Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Property Nomination Procedure

Introduction

As part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Programme the Council will provide 22 homes for families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via the following Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes:

6. Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (including British Nationals under this scheme) (ACRS)
7. Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
8. Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS)
9. Homes For Ukraine scheme (H4U)
10. Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES)

There are 2 distinct elements to the LAHF:

- The **'main element'** will provide 20 properties for Ukrainian households (and can also be accessed by eligible Afghan households facing homelessness).
- The **'bridging element'** which will provide 2 four+ bed properties for Afghan households only that were in bridging accommodation.

Tenancy and Rental Terms

All properties will be let by ADL, the B&NES owned property development company collaborating with B&NES in delivering and providing the resettlement and relocation units for the LAHF programme.

These will be Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) for a minimum duration of 6 months, or in the event of legislative changes, as agreed with B&NES Housing (Housing Team). The rent is capped to the appropriate Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate.

ADL reserves the right to end the AST after 6 months by giving adequate notice.

Main Element Nominations (Ukrainian and Afghan households)

Eligibility

The Council's Housing and H4U Teams will have 100% nomination rights to the main element properties. To be eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Arrived in UK via one of the above-mentioned schemes.
2. Must have been living in B&NES for the last 6 out of 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years.
3. Be at least 18 years of age.
4. Not be intentionally homeless i.e. a person becomes homeless intentionally if they deliberately do or fail to do anything in consequence of which they cease to occupy accommodation which is available for their occupation and which it would have been reasonable for them to continue to occupy [Housing Act 1996, Section 191 – Legislation.gov.uk](#)
5. The household size must be suitable for bedroom size of the property and not result in the property being over or under occupied. It is based on how many bedrooms the household can claim benefits for and the local housing allowance guidance for households who privately rent [Guidance for private rental properties](#)
6. The tenancy must be affordable for the household i.e. the monthly income (after all **essential** expenditure) exceeds the thresholds shown below (agreed with Welfare Support and St Johns)

£250 for a single person/couple

£275 for a household with one or two children

£300 for a household with three or more children
7. If they are a family, or a couple, must have a gross income of below £45,000 a year or single people (without dependent children) a gross income of below £32,000. This includes all income, apart from Child Benefit and child maintenance payments. Those with incomes above this are considered able to compete on the open market for housing

Priority

The Council's Housing and H4U Teams will consider all households eligible for the property and take into account the following factors when deciding which one is nominated for it:

- Priority will be given to households owed a prevention duty i.e. threatened with homelessness (TWH) within 56 days, a relief duty i.e. already homeless or a main duty
- Where the need for temporary accommodation can be avoided. This has a negative impact on the family and also incurs a cost to the Council of providing emergency accommodation

- Households not able to access private rented accommodation on the open market (e.g. Family visa scheme households who are not eligible for the BANES H4U housing subsidy)
- Any additional relevant information at the time of the application

Advertising & Application

The properties may be advertised through the H4U Newsletter, emails to H4U guests and hosts, some local interest groups and social media. Potential applicants for main element properties will contact H4U@bathnes.gov.uk in the first instance to express an interest.

Bridging Element Nominations (Afghan households only)

There are a number of options for the nomination process for bridging element properties (shown in no particular order) including:

- Home Office matching;
- South West Migration Partnership – sharing across SW Authorities;
- Direct liaison with neighbouring Local Authorities who have families in bridging hotels
- Bath and North East Somerset Council's Housing or the H4U Teams

Potential matches for bridging element properties will be agreed with the Refugee Resettlement Manager at B&NES Council in consultation with the Housing Team.

If more than one household is nominated for a property, the Main element factors for deciding priority (as stated above) will be applied in the same way.

Reviews & Appeals

Households can request a review of a decision within 14 days of receiving the decision of not being nominated. The review will be completed within 14 days by a manager not involved in the original decision.

If the review is successful, the next suitable LAHF property may be offered to the household or alternatively support to secure Private Rented Accommodation.

Disability & Adaptations

In certain situations, LAHF properties may need to be adapted before a disabled applicant, or a member of their household, can move into the property. In these situations, while confirming a household's initial eligibility, Housing Services will:

- investigate what adaptations would be required for an applicant to access the property
- investigate the feasibility of said adaptations – this will include considering any building warranties, rights of way etc.

These cases will be treated on a case-by-case basis. Housing Services will however not permit any adaptations to proceed until a tenancy agreement has been signed between the parties.

Discretionary Decisions

All applications will be considered on their own merit. In exceptional circumstances, and where there is a good reason, discretion from this policy can be applied. It would need to be agreed by the Housing Options & Homeless Manager in consultation with the Inclusive Communities Manager.

Refusals

If a suitable property is refused under a prevention or relief duty, then the duty can be discharged. The main housing duty will not apply if the offer was made under a relief duty as a final offer or a Part 6 offer. Should an applicant who was owed a prevention duty subsequently become homeless then a relief duty may apply.

If a suitable property is offered whilst under a main housing duty and declined by the applicant, then the homeless duty can be discharged.

An applicant should consider their decision to refuse a property because it cannot later be revoked. When a duty is discharged, temporary accommodation may be withdrawn, and another offer of accommodation may not be made, therefore this decision should be given careful consideration.

Equalities

We will comply with the Equalities Act 2010 and ensure that every application is assessed equitably and in a lawful and non-discriminatory manner.

We will:

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

We will regular monitoring applications and nominations, and the evaluation of this will feed into service development.

Date: 26th September 2023

Appendix 1: Main Element Process Chart

Stage	Step
Property advertised	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advertise property. 2. Establish which households are eligible and being considered
Pre-Housing Interview Document Collection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Contact eligible applicants and confirm that they have been shortlisted for a B&NES LAHF property. Where a 'suggested match' is envisioned, confirm the costs the household would be required to pay at the available property/s and any anticipated price rises. Request copies of the applying household's: bank statements, income, benefit entitlement letters/screenshots, existing rental agreements etc. Homes for Ukraine should confirm who would be listed as tenants (and the implications of this) and request the households' last three months of bank statements (including for savings accounts). 4. Prior to viewing a property, Housing Team will require applicants to sign and return a confirmation slip to say they want to progress their application.
Housing Interview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. H4U to interview prospective tenants to determine their support needs and any risks. Applicants must provide identification and can ask further questions about the available properties.
Viewing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Allow the prospective tenant(s) to visit their allocated property.
Property Offer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Housing and H4U Teams to allocate property to applicant deemed to be priority.
Final Checks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Any final documentation that is required to confirm an applicant's eligibility should be requested at this stage (this could include ID for household members, to prevent tenancy fraud).
Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Arrange deposit (as a loan if required) by the applicant and Rent in Advance (as a gift via H4U funding) via Great Western Credit Union (GWCU).
Sign Up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Agree a move-in date and complete the sign up.