



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

The council has a statutory duty to consider the impact of its decisions on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

The council also has a duty to foster good relations between different groups of people and to promote equality of opportunity.

Completing an EIA is the simplest way to demonstrate that the council has considered the equality impacts of its decisions and it reduces the risk of legal challenge. EIAs should be carried out at the earliest stages of policy development or a service review, and then updated as the policy or review develops. EIAs must be undertaken when it is possible for the findings to inform the final decision. Keep all versions of your EIA. An EIA should be finalised once a final decision is taken.

When you should undertake an EIA:

- You are making changes that will affect front-line services
- You are reducing the budget of a service, which will affect front-line services
- You are changing the way services are funded and this may impact the quality of the service and who can access it
- You are making a decision that could have a different impact on different groups of people
- You are making staff redundant or changing their roles (particularly if it impacts on frontline services).
- EIAs also need to be undertaken on how a policy is implemented even if it has been developed by central government (for example cuts to grant funding).

Who should undertake the EIA:

- The person who is making the decision or advising the decision-maker

Guidance and tools for completing EIAs are available on the WIRE:

<https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/wcc-comms/Pages/Equality-Impact-Assessments-.aspx>

An EIA e-learning module is available for all Westminster staff:

[www.learningpool.com/westminster/course/view.php?id=159](http://www.learningpool.com/westminster/course/view.php?id=159)

When you have completed an EIA, please send the final copy to [Equalities@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:Equalities@westminster.gov.uk)

It is the responsibility of the service to complete an EIA to the required standard and the quality and completeness of EIAs will be monitored by EMT.

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Title
Homelessness policies
<p>What are you analysing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the purpose of the policy/project/activity/strategy?</li><li>• In what context will it operate?</li><li>• Who is it intended to benefit?</li><li>• What results are intended?</li><li>• Why is it needed?</li></ul>
<p><b>What is being analysed</b></p> <p>This Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) assesses the impacts (individual and cumulative) of a suite of new Westminster City Council policies that will provide a framework for the use of private rented accommodation to help meet the council's duties to homeless households:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Private Rented Sector Offers (PRSO) Policy for homeless households</b> – the policy sets out the council's intention to make more homeless households offers of private rented accommodation to discharge its rehousing duty to them.</li><li>○ <b>Accommodation Procurement Policy for homeless households</b> – this explains the council's temporary accommodation needs, issues in procuring temporary accommodation and the principles the council will follow when procuring rented properties, both for temporary accommodation and private rented sector offers.</li><li>○ <b>Accommodation Placement Policy for homeless households</b> – this sets out how households will be prioritised for properties, both for temporary accommodation and private rented sector offers, in different locations.</li></ul>
<p><b>Legal framework</b></p> <p>Under the Housing Act 1996, local housing authorities have duties to secure suitable accommodation for homeless people with a local connection and with a priority need, as defined in the statute. Where permanent housing cannot be provided immediately, homeless households are placed in temporary accommodation. Until 2011, permanent accommodation usually took the form of social housing provided by the council or a housing association.</p> <p>The Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities the power to discharge this main housing duty to homeless households through an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector, without any requirement for applicant's prior agreement. This change effectively ended the previously direct link between Parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996 because where a suitable PRSO is made by the council, the applicant no longer has priority for social housing. Until now, the council has only offered private rented tenancies to a small number of households, and with their consent.</p> <p>The government carried out their own impact assessment on the power on 12 January 2011 which has been drawn on to help inform preparation of this assessment: <a href="http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA11-010AN.pdf">www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA11-010AN.pdf</a></p> <p>The above impact assessment stated that:</p> <p><i>The priority given to certain groups of young people and people who are disabled or mentally ill (who are considered most vulnerable and likely to suffer hardship if not secured accommodation), combined with the fact that households that include a pregnant woman or a dependant child are considered to have a priority need for accommodation under the homelessness legislation, means that women, pregnant women, young people and children, and disabled people are more likely to be</i></p>

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*affected by any change in the way that the main homelessness duty can be fully discharged. People from black and minority ethnic communities are also more likely to be affected because they are over-represented among homeless acceptances (compared to the general population).*

The impact assessment went on to consider equality impacts resulting from, inter alia, the location i.e. distance from where the household was previously living; and less security of tenure but also identified mitigating factors including the safety net of individual suitability assessments tailored to individual circumstances; that private sector accommodation could meet homeless households' needs both in the short term and longer term; the prospect of providing settled accommodation more quickly to duty accepted households; and the wider benefits to others on the waiting list for social housing.

The Government recognised, as does the council, that there is a need to continue to monitor the practical effect of policy changes against empirical data gathered after the policy has been put into effect. At this stage the assessment is based on the available information prior to implementation, but the importance of monitoring the actual impact within the periodic reviews to be undertaken after implementation of any policy changes should not be underestimated.

The 1996 Act and supporting regulations require local authorities to place homeless households in borough wherever "reasonably practicable". Location is one of the factors that must be taken into account when considering whether temporary or permanent accommodation provided to meet any of the homelessness duties is suitable.

### **Reasons for the policies**

Overall these policies are intended to ensure availability of enough suitable private sector accommodation for homeless households to allow the council to meet its duties at a cost that it can sustain and which are affordable to homeless households, against the background of an increasingly difficult market, marked by rapid increases in rent costs. Temporary accommodation already costs the council between £4-5 million per year, at a time when, in common with other local authorities, it faces medium-term financial pressures and there is requirement to make savings of £117 million to the end of 2018/19. This means that it cannot sustain an uncontrolled increase in costs. The policies will have the effect of off-setting the impact of continuing high numbers of homeless households presenting to the council and the loss of social rented supply. Modelling suggests that without the policies the cost of temporary accommodation could more than double to around £11.8m in 2020/21.

The policies are also intended to provide more certain and sustainable outcomes for homeless households, enabling them to secure suitable private rented housing more quickly rather than waiting in temporary accommodation for many years (and often subject to multiple moves over this time) until a social home becomes available. For other households, this approach will help free up resources that can be used to help prevent homelessness from arising in the first place – the approach being given increased priority locally, regionally and nationally.

More detail on each of the policies is given below:

- **Private rented sector offers (PRSO) policy**

The private rented sector offers policy is needed to set out clearly and transparently how the council will use its powers under the Localism Act. The policy sets out council's policy intention to make more private rented sector offers to homeless households, where the law allows it. Homeless households might either be offered a private rented tenancy as soon as they are accepted as homeless or from

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their temporary accommodation – meaning they will spend less time in temporary accommodation. This will help to contain temporary accommodation costs which are described above.

Another of the policy's objectives is to help improve outcomes for homeless households. Currently, they can wait for more than 10 years in temporary accommodation for social rented housing (these waits tend to be longest for households requiring two or more bedrooms). This temporary accommodation is often out of Westminster (currently 50% is outside Westminster). Currently, households often have to move a number of times within temporary accommodation – as an illustration, of a random selection of ten households currently in temporary accommodation at the time this assessment was completed, households moved on average three times, although some move many more times than this. The nature of temporary accommodation therefore means it can be difficult for households to settle in an area, establish local links and get on with their lives. The policy (which will be backed by a package of support for the households concerned) is intended to help ensure that the offer of a private tenancy will mean that households can move into more settled accommodation that is affordable to them more quickly, enabling them to settle in a neighbourhood, engage with local services and opportunities and plan their futures with more certainty.

The current long waits in temporary accommodation are due to a significant mismatch between the supply of social housing and demand for it in Westminster – 4,500 households have priority for social housing and 2,500 of these are homeless households in temporary accommodation. Only 600 – 800 social rented housing units become available each year in Westminster and the nature of the social housing stock available is that much of this (just under 50%) is comprised of one bedroom or studios, while the great majority of homeless households (94%) require two bedrooms or more.

The council seeks to maximise provision of new affordable housing in the city, including through its ambitious estate renewal programme, but the scarcity and cost of sites in Westminster restricts its ability to meet increasing demand in this way. These supply and demand factors are unlikely to improve as homeless acceptances are forecast to remain high at least in the medium term (primarily as a result of changes to the benefit system) – at around 475 - 550 each year.

Social rented supply is also likely to reduce, at least in the short term, due to a number of national policies mainly imposed by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, such as the extension of right to buy to housing association tenants and introduction of annual payments to government based on anticipated sale of local authority higher value voids to help fund it.

### ○ **Accommodation Procurement Policy**

This policy is needed to provide an action plan for procuring enough accommodation both for PRSO and for temporary accommodation and to meet housing needs for homeless households. It is also needed to set out the principles the council will follow when procuring properties. Having such clear key principles is needed because although the council will, wherever possible, seek to acquire affordable accommodation within Westminster and in neighbouring boroughs, this is becoming increasingly difficult, due to the lack of properties within benefit levels and subsidy thresholds. Independent research has confirmed the limited supply of properties available within the resources available (see below) both for PRSO and for temporary accommodation within Westminster and London. Since this research was carried out, the Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (published by the Office for National Statistics) confirms that rents in London have continued to rise. Financial modelling suggests that if all temporary accommodation were procured within Westminster, the annual cost could rise to £17.5m in 2020/21.

A key principle for the procurement of temporary accommodation is that it is affordable to the council

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within relevant subsidy levels, in order to help to contain temporary accommodation costs and to prevent them from rising excessively.

Another key principle is that rents need to be affordable to low income people within benefit levels as otherwise it will not be sustainable to them in the long term. Both of these considerations are likely to become increasingly pressing if private sector rents continue to rise and the tendency for landlords to let to more affluent tenants continues. They are likely to be further exacerbated by the introduction of Universal Credit between 2018-22.

The policy also sets out other factors which will determine where properties are procured – these are needed to ensure the locations are suitable for homeless households and have health, social and employment opportunities.

### ○ **Accommodation Placement Policy**

This Accommodation Placement Policy replaces the current Placement Policy for temporary accommodation. A new policy is needed as the amount of housing available for temporary accommodation (and for private rented sector offers) in Westminster and Greater London is likely to continue to decline while costs are likely to continue to increase. Although, as set out above, the council aims to place households in or as close to Westminster as possible, where sufficient affordable accommodation is not available, it will have to seek alternative accommodation further afield. The council therefore needs to prioritise households for properties in different locations in ways that take account of their needs. The particular focus of the policy is to prioritise allocation of accommodation in or near Westminster to households with the greatest need to be housed there. These locations are grouped in bands:

- **Band 1:** Westminster and adjacent boroughs
- **Band 2:** Greater London
- **Band 3:** Further afield.

The priority categories are designed to capture certain groups with compelling needs to be accommodated close to Westminster or within Greater London. The needs of children and disabled people and by extension those who care for them are a particular focus of the priority categories. Alongside this, some priority is given to working households. The council will also consider individual compelling claims to be entitled to locational priority which do not fit into the defined categories, on their own merits. Further, any offer of accommodation under the homelessness legislation is subject to an individual suitability assessment. These factors provide a safety net which allows for the consideration, for example, of cultural reasons for a particular placement which may affect certain ethnic minority households.

### Details of the lead person completing the screening/EIA

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6/1/2017

Version number and date of update

V9

## SECTION 1: Initial screening: Do you need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

Not all proposals will require an EIA, this initial screening will help you decide if your project or policy requires a full EIA by looking at the potential impact on any equality groups.

1.1	Does the project, policy or proposal have the potential to disproportionately impact on any of the following groups? If so, is the impact positive or negative?
	<p><b>What is being assessed</b></p> <p>The following initial assessment of impacts compares the new policy approach with the existing one. In making it the council acknowledges that homelessness is in itself a difficult experience for any household. In summary the differences are:</p> <p><b>Private rented offers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More private rented offers will be made, where they have only been made in very small numbers in the past – this is compared to households waiting for long periods in temporary accommodation for social housing.</li> <li>○ These offers will be made on a mandatory basis, to discharge the council’s duties, rather than largely on a voluntary basis as at present.</li> <li>○ Households that are made private rented offers will no longer have priority for social housing.</li> <li>○ These private rented offers will be in locations where there is supply and which are affordable to homeless households. As a result it is likely that more households will be housed outside London.</li> <li>○ Households will be prioritised for properties in different locations based on their needs. The aim is to ensure those with the greatest needs have priority for placements in or near to Westminster.</li> <li>○ The policy will help to give households greater certainty and will avoid the disruption of often repeated moves within temporary accommodation.</li> <li>○ A package of support will be provided to those made PRSOs to help them into and to sustain their tenancy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Temporary accommodation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is an updated action plan setting out how the council will meet requirement for temporary accommodation</li> <li>○ Temporary accommodation will be procured in locations where it is affordable to the council, which is more likely to be beyond Westminster and, increasingly, outside London where there is supply, and also where properties are affordable to homeless households within benefit levels. Currently 3% (75 units) of temporary housing is outside London (although 50% is outside Westminster). These numbers could grow</li> <li>○ Although in all cases the council will seek to ensure households are housed in or as near to Westminster to the extent that is reasonably practicable, they will be prioritised for properties in different locations based on their needs. The aim is to ensure those with the greatest needs have priority for placements in or near to Westminster.</li> </ul>

## Groups affected by the policies

Certain groups are more likely to be affected by the policies, as they are more likely to be disproportionately represented among households accepted by the council as being homeless. The following tables show the groups that are more likely to be disproportionately affected by the policies on this basis (those groups that are represented disproportionately are identified in **bold** in the tables below).

### Race

**Table 1 – ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Homeless Households (lead applicant)* 2016	Westminster Population (2011 Census)
White	21%	62%
<b>Black</b>	<b>25%</b>	7%
<b>Arab</b>	<b>21%</b>	7%
<b>Asian</b>	<b>16%</b>	12%
Mixed	3%	5%
<b>Other</b> (includes Chinese)	<b>13%</b>	7%

\*The data does not include households where their ethnic origin is unknown

Of all households currently in temporary accommodation, 43% require a 3-bed or larger property, and this need is higher amongst some ethnic minority groups, for example 47% of Asian households need 3 bedrooms or more, as do 56% of Arab (Middle Eastern) households. These groups are therefore particularly likely to be housed outside Westminster and London.

### Age

**Table 2 - age**

Age	Homeless Households (lead applicant) 2016	Westminster Population (2015 Mid-year estimates)
16-24	7%	8%
<b>25-44</b>	<b>65%</b>	40%
45-64	25%	22%
65-74	2%	6%
75+	1%	5%

Those aged 25-44 are disproportionately represented among lead applicants from accepted households. Conversely, those aged over 65 are under-represented and so less likely to be directly affected. Table 4 below shows that households with children are disproportionately represented among homeless households.

**Gender****Table 3 - gender**

	Homeless Households (lead applicant) 2016	Westminster Population (2015 Mid-year estimates)
Women	71%	48%
Men	29%	52%

Women are disproportionately represented among lead applicants from accepted households.

**Pregnancy, maternity, households with children****Table 4 - households with a pregnant household member/with children**

	Homeless households	Westminster Population (2011 Census)
Pregnant women	13%	Unknown
Households with children	86%	19%
Lone parents	48%	6%

A significant number of lead applicants from accepted households are pregnant women. Households with children are disproportionately represented among homeless households, as are lone parents (who table 3 suggests will be more likely to be women). As noted above, the priority categories have a particular focus on children with compelling needs to be accommodated close to Westminster or in London and those who care for them.

**Disability****Table 5 - Disability**

Homeless households	Fully wheelchair accessible property needed	Property needed for those who use a wheelchair outside the home but can manage in the home without one	Level access property needed with no stairs	Non adapted property needed
%	<1%	<1%	4%	95%

Only a small proportion of accepted homeless households have members needing a wheel chair adapted property or a level access property. Overall, less than 6% of homeless households have members with a physical disability which impacts on the type of properties needed. While borough wide data is not directly comparable with the categories above, 9% of the working age Westminster population is estimated to have a serious or moderate physical disability<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> PANSI information 2015



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Of accepted homeless households, 3% have been accepted as needing housing due specifically to a member having a mental health issue and the majority of these are single people. It is likely, however, that other applicants and members of their households may have mental health problems, but this information cannot be easily accessed. Other data support the view that the number of homeless households with mental health issues is likely to be higher. Across Westminster, an estimated 16% of the working age population may have a common mental health issue<sup>2</sup>. A national survey conducted by Shelter of 2,000 people in temporary accommodation<sup>3</sup>, found that more than half said that they were suffering from depression and depression and other mental health problems were two of the most common health conditions reported.

As noted above, the priority categories have a particular focus on disabled people with compelling needs to be accommodated close to Westminster or in London and those who care for them.

### **Sexual orientation and transgender/gender reassignment**

The council does not record information about the sexual orientation of members of accepted households. It is estimated that up to 10% of the Westminster population may be gay, lesbian, bi sexual or transgender (LGBT). Survey evidence published in 2009 (Mapping LGBT Westminster: Investigating the Needs and Experience of LGTB People in Westminster) suggests that the proportion of LGTB people living in private and social rented housing in Westminster is similar to that of residents more generally and this tends to confirm that this can be used as an estimate for the homeless population<sup>4</sup>. There is no evidence to suggest that people in these categories are likely to be disproportionately represented among those presenting themselves as homeless (survey evidence regarding rough sleeping in Westminster again tends to confirm this view).

### **Religion and belief**

Data about the religion and belief of homeless households are not recorded, although it is possible to draw some conclusions from the ethnicity information in table 1. It is likely that the diversity of ethnic origin this shows will be reflected in the range of religions and beliefs among homeless households, and while there is no evidence that any one will be particularly disproportionately impacted, this will be an issue that will need to be taken into account.

### **Income/non working households**

Although income is not a protected characteristic for the purposes of the Equalities Act 2010, homeless households in the main have lower incomes compared to the Westminster average - at least 92% of those in temporary accommodation currently receive housing benefit and this figure is likely to be higher as some claims are not yet in payment. Across all tenures in Westminster, 23% of households receive housing benefit. The average income of homeless households is not known but it is likely to be less than the annual average household income in Westminster which was £43k<sup>5</sup> in 2013.

<sup>2</sup> PANSI information 2015

<sup>3</sup> [http://england.shelter.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/40116/Living\\_in\\_Limbo.pdf](http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/40116/Living_in_Limbo.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Gold, D & Cowan, K. (2009) Mapping LGBT Westminster: Investigating the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Westminster – A report commissioned by Westminster City Council, GALOP

<sup>5</sup> CACI Paycheck

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Data are not available on the proportion of homeless households that are unemployed, but are able to work. It is likely to be higher than the Westminster average (which shows that 26.6% of the 16 – 64 year old population is not working<sup>6</sup>), given the number of households claiming housing benefit and also that unemployment is a recognised contributory factor to homelessness. Research by Crisis, for example, found that homeless people are five times less likely than the wider population to be in employment and also that only 2% of homeless people are in full time employment<sup>7</sup>. In addition, a policy briefing by Shelter advised that those in temporary accommodation are particularly likely to suffer from work disincentives due to higher rent levels<sup>8</sup>.

Some homeless families on our housing waiting list are eligible for “workers points” if they need a two bedroom property or more and are working over 16 hours each week. Currently 35% of those eligible have been awarded these points.

Also, 40% (170 households) of all those affected by the overall benefit cap (which applies to non working households) are living in temporary accommodation and they are the largest single group of all those affected. New information from the Department for Work and Pensions suggests a further 900 Westminster households are affected by the reduced benefit cap following the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016; of these 34% (327 households) are homeless and living in temporary accommodation (the second largest single group) and 44% are living in the private rented sector so potentially at risk of homelessness.

### **Initial assessment of impacts**

The EIA notes that there could potentially be negative impacts for some households arising from the policies and well as some positive ones.

### **Impacts relating to private rented sector offers**

1. A private rented sector offer might result in more settled accommodation being offered to homeless households more quickly. The policy is intended, amongst other things, to help address the instability caused by spending many years in temporary accommodation waiting for social housing, where contracts with providers can end and the where the funding provision can change. It is anticipated that this will help to give households greater certainty about their future and that this will enable them to put down roots in the neighbourhoods in which they live and to make arrangements such as signing up with a general practitioner and securing school places for children more quickly and with greater confidence about where they will be living into the longer term.
2. Although the policy is intended to give households greater certainty and stability - social housing overall does offer a higher level of long-term security of tenure compared with private rented tenancies. Private tenancies may only be for 12 months, although many will be for much longer. In 2014-15, private renters were found to have been in their current home for an average of 4.0 years<sup>9</sup>, this compares with 11.4 years in the social sector. Any move necessitated by the end of a tenancy is likely to particularly impact on households with children (and this is also true of moves within temporary

<sup>6</sup> [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/work-and-skills.html>

<sup>8</sup> [https://england.shelter.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/138580/Worklessness\\_and\\_social\\_housing\\_briefing.pdf](https://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/138580/Worklessness_and_social_housing_briefing.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/501065/EHS\\_Headline\\_report\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501065/EHS_Headline_report_2014-15.pdf)

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accommodation). However it should also be noted that the majority of new social tenancies in Westminster are now fixed term for a period of five years and national policy changes will result in the phasing out of lifetime council tenancies. The majority (60%) of new homeless households have already been living in the private rented sector before they present themselves to the council. Reduction in security should also be compared with spending long periods in temporary accommodation waiting for social housing when considering impacts. Temporary accommodation can also be insecure (as contracts with providers end), and it is not uncommon for homeless households to have to move between different properties which may be in different locations – sometimes on a number of occasions.

3. The private rented sector may offer more variety of accommodation i.e. properties with gardens (the majority of properties in Westminster are flats) which may be better suited to some households' needs i.e. those with children.
4. The rents for private rented sector offers will be market rents, so will generally be higher than social rents which might disproportionately impact lower income households. Westminster council rents can range from £98 per week for a studio up to £172 per week for a 5 bedroom home, while lower quartile private rents in London range from £230 per week for a 1 bedroom to £460 per week for a 4 bedroom plus property<sup>10</sup>. Some registered provider "affordable rented" housing (a recognised form of affordable housing intended to help meet the needs of those eligible for social rented housing<sup>11</sup>) however can be at rents much higher than council rents and a one bedroom property can be up to £260 per week. Outside London private rents vary – the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate in Harlow for example ranges from £133 per week for a 1 bedroom to £280 for a 4 bedroom and these rates are £121 - £224 respectively for properties in Milton Keynes. It should be noted that long-term affordability on a sustainable basis is a key principle of these policies – particularly given the number of people in temporary accommodation affected by the household benefit cap. Rents are unlikely to be higher than current rents in temporary accommodation and they must be affordable to those being housed to meet statutory suitability requirements. Also, as outlined above, many households being made private rented offers will already have been living in the private rented sector (60% of households accepted as homeless in 2015/16 were from this sector).
5. There is generally more support for tenants in the social sector (financial advice and help if they get in arrears for example) than in the private rented sector – although as stated above, many households to whom the policy applies will already have been living in the private rented sector. This difference is likely to change to some extent at least with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Bill – which is intended to ensure more support is provided to those in the private rented sector at imminent risk of being homeless. The policies will be accompanied by support service packages intended to reduce this impact (see below).
6. Private rented housing overall is of poorer quality compared with social housing. The

<sup>10</sup> GLA Rents Map October 2016

<sup>11</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, Glossary

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private rented sector has the highest proportion of non-decent homes in 2014 (29%) while the social rented sector had the lowest (14%)<sup>12</sup> – although levels of “non-decency” are declining. However it should be noted that all accommodation offered is required to meet the suitability requirements of homelessness legislation and, in particular, be free from Category 1 hazards under the 2004 Housing Act (i.e. free from hazards which could cause harm to the occupants).

7. Overall homeless households are likely to prefer the offer of social housing compared with a private rented tenancy for the reasons set out above. However this needs to be considered in the context of them firstly having to wait for many years in temporary accommodation for social housing. National research<sup>13</sup> indicates that families living in temporary accommodation were markedly less satisfied with their accommodation, than those that had been provided with more settled housing, and were more likely to report that their ‘life was on hold’.

### **Impacts relating to the location of properties for private rented offers and for temporary accommodation**

8. Properties for private rented offers and for temporary accommodation will be procured in areas which are affordable to the council and to homeless households over the longer term. More properties will therefore be outside Westminster and Greater London. Recent research<sup>14</sup> about the general impacts on all households of living in different areas identifies that homelessness is already an upheaval for households and relocating can lead to, in some cases, isolation from support networks and disruption for schooling for children. It is therefore acknowledged that moving to these locations may have a potentially negative impact for members of certain groups, such as people with children, and perhaps lone parents in particular, and people who rely on local support networks. However it must also be noted that each property offered must be suitable and that location is always a relevant factor in considering this; individual suitability assessments will be carried out in every case.

### **Financial impacts**

9. By helping to manage the costs of meeting the council’s housing duties the policies will enable resources to be deployed to services intended to prevent homelessness from arising in the first place, in keeping with the council’s policies and priorities and increasing emphasis on prevention at national level (shown by the progress of the Homelessness Reduction Bill with government support). Over time prevention is likely to have the most positive effects for all households currently affected by homelessness including those with protected characteristics.

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/501065/EHS\\_Headline\\_report\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501065/EHS_Headline_report_2014-15.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Pleace et al. (2008) Statutory Homelessness in England: the experiences of families and 16-17 year olds. DCLG.

<sup>14</sup> [https://england.shelter.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1267297/Home\\_and\\_Away\\_Out\\_of\\_Area\\_Briefing\\_2016\\_05\\_23.pdf](https://england.shelter.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1267297/Home_and_Away_Out_of_Area_Briefing_2016_05_23.pdf)

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Overall assessment of impacts										
	None	Positive	Negative	Not sure						
Disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Particular ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Men or women (include impacts due to pregnancy/ maternity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
People or particular sexual orientation/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
People on low incomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
People in particular age groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Are there any other groups that you think may be affected negatively or positively by this project, policy or proposal? Yes, children and carers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
<b>If the answer is “negative” or “unclear” consider doing a full EIA</b>										
<b>1.2</b>	<b>What do you think that the overall NEGATIVE impact on groups and communities will be?</b>									
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">None/ Minimal</th> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Significant</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>None or minimal impact would be where there is no negative impact identified, or where there will be no change to the services for any groups.</td> <td>Significant impact would be where there is an impact is identified that has substantial impact on any groups.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				None/ Minimal	Significant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None or minimal impact would be where there is no negative impact identified, or where there will be no change to the services for any groups.	Significant impact would be where there is an impact is identified that has substantial impact on any groups.
None/ Minimal	Significant									
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>									
None or minimal impact would be where there is no negative impact identified, or where there will be no change to the services for any groups.	Significant impact would be where there is an impact is identified that has substantial impact on any groups.									
	<b>If the answer is “significant” consider doing a full EIA</b>									
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Using the screening information in questions 2.1 and 2.2, should a full EIA be carried out on the project, policy or proposal</b>									
	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>									

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<b>1.4</b>	<b>How have you come to this decision?</b>
	A full EIA is needed as this is a significant policy change and the initial screening indicates that that there may be negative overall impacts on protected groups. A full EIA will help to further identify impacts on different groups and identify mitigations to put in place to can form a valuable baseline for monitoring the impacts of implementing the policies.

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### SECTION 2: BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE

<b>2.1</b>	<b>Build up a picture of who uses/will use your service or facility and identify who are likely to be impacted by the proposal</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If you do not formally collect data about a particular group then use the results of local surveys or consultations, census data, national trends or anecdotal evidence (indicate where this is the case). Please attempt to complete all boxes.</i></li> <li>• <i>A baseline of data is <a href="#">available here</a></i></li> </ul>	
	How many people use the service currently? What is this as a % of Westminster's population?	<p>There are currently 2,500 homeless households in temporary accommodation, which is 2% of all Westminster households.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>The 2,500 homeless households comprise 12,003 people (of which 4,035 are children and 7,968 are adults), which is 5% of the Westminster population.</p> <p>Equalities information is generally only available for the lead homeless applicant rather than for the whole homeless household.</p>
	Age	People in the 25-44 age group are disproportionately affected by homelessness so are more likely to be affected by the policies (see table 2 in Section 1). This group is also more likely to have children living with them.
	Disability	<p>Overall, less than 6% of homeless households have members with a physical disability which impacts on the type of properties needed. Homeless households needing wheelchair adapted properties will be exempt from being made a private rented sector offer, as these types of properties are unlikely to be available in the private rented sector. Some households with other physical disabilities will be impacted (see table 5 in Section 1).</p> <p>Some homeless applicants with mental health problems will be impacted (see Section 1).</p>

<sup>15</sup> Based on 105,772 households (Census 2011)

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Gender	<p>As table 3 in Section 1 shows, women are more likely to be affected by homelessness and are more likely to be impacted by the policies.</p> <p>Women are also more likely to be lone parents, who are disproportionately affected by homelessness in Westminster<sup>16</sup>. Women are also more likely to be carers<sup>17</sup>, who can be impacted by moves away from the people they are caring for.</p>
Children	4,035 of those in temporary accommodation are children (34%). This compares with a Westminster population overall of 17%.
Race	As table 1 in Section 3 shows, all ethnic groups, with the exception of white groups, are disproportionately affected by homelessness and are more likely to be impacted by the policies. In particular, households who require larger properties (which are much more difficult to procure at affordable rates in or close to Westminster) are also likely to be from ethnic minorities.
Religion or belief	Specific information is not available, although data on ethnicity suggests that there is likely to be considerable diversity of religion/belief among homeless people.
Sexual orientation	It is estimated that 10% of homeless households may be lesbian, gay, bi sexual or transgender (LGBT). Of these, survey evidence suggests that the proportion of Westminster LGTB residents living in private and social rented housing is similar to that of residents as a whole.
Gender Re-assignment	Specific information is not available.
Pregnancy and Maternity	People with children are disproportionately affected by homelessness compared to their share of the population (see table 5 in Section 1) so are more likely to be affected by the policies.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Lone parents are disproportionately affected by homelessness compared to their share of the population (see table 5 in Section 1) so are more likely to be affected by the policies.
Low incomes/non working households	Homeless households are more likely to have low incomes and not be working compared with the Westminster population (92% currently receive housing benefit) so are more likely to be impacted by the policies (see Income in Section 1).

<sup>16</sup> According to [Gingerbread](#), around 90% of single parents are women

<sup>17</sup> Carers UK estimates that 58% of carers are women.

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<b>2.2</b>	<p><b>Are there any equality groups that are overrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population?</b> <i>If so, this could indicate that the proposal may have a disproportionate impact on this group even if it is a universal service. Information about Westminster's population is on the Equalities page on the WIRE.</i></p>
	<p>In summary, the following households are more likely to directly impacted by the policies as they are more likely to be homeless compared with the overall Westminster population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Black, Arab, Asian and Other ethnic groups</li> <li>○ The 25-44 age group (this group is also more likely to have children)</li> <li>○ Women</li> <li>○ Households with children/pregnant women</li> <li>○ Children</li> <li>○ Lone parents</li> <li>○ Low income households/those not working.</li> </ul>
<b>2.3</b>	<p><b>Are there any equality groups that are underrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population?</b> <i>If so, this could indicate that the service may not be accessible to all groups or there may be some form of direct or indirect discrimination occurring.</i></p>
	<p>Overall, the following groups are less likely to be directly impacted by the policies as they are less likely to be homeless compared with the overall Westminster population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ White ethnic groups</li> <li>○ People over 65</li> <li>○ Men.</li> </ul>

### SECTION 3: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

In order to be able to identify ways to mitigate any potential impact it is essential that we know what those potential impacts might be.

<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Consultation Information</b> <i>This section should record the consultation activity undertaken in relation to this project, policy or proposal</i></p>
	<p><b>Who have you consulted with?</b></p> <p>The policies have been discussed with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Directors and senior officers in the Council's Adult Social Care and Children's Services</li> <li>○ Welfare Reform Board (April 2016) which is made up of a range of council officers including from; Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health</li> <li>○ Service Improvement Group (June 2016) which is made up of residents in temporary accommodation</li> <li>○ The Council's Executive Management Team (July 2016) – which is made up of Directors heading services across the council and those shared with Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham.</li> </ul> <p>The following officers across the council have also been consulted with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing Needs Managers</li> <li>○ Director of Housing</li> <li>○ Service Manager - Adult Social Care and Health</li> <li>○ Safeguarding Adults Lead - Adult Social Care and Health</li> <li>○ Performance and Business Support Manager - Children's Services</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Head of Localities and Early Intervention - Children’s Services</li> <li>○ Service Manager - Looked After Children and Leaving Care Service – Children’s Services</li> <li>○ Looked After Children Manager – Children’s Services</li> <li>○ Assist Director of LAC/Leaving Care – Children’s Services</li> <li>○ Head of Clinical Practice - Children’s Services</li> <li>○ Head of Child Protection- Children’s Services</li> <li>○ Head of Assessment and MASH – Children’s Services</li> <li>○ Executive Director of Adult Social Care</li> <li>○ Tri-Borough Director for Strategic Commissioning and Enterprise, Adult Social Care</li> <li>○ Director of Family Services</li> <li>○ Borough Director of Schools Quality and Standards</li> <li>○ (Interim) Strategic Commissioner, Adult Social Care</li> <li>○ Local Employment Services Team Manager.</li> </ul> <p>These policies were foreshadowed in the council’s draft Westminster Housing Strategy (June 2015) which was subject to extensive consultation. The results of this consultation were reported in the Westminster Housing Strategy Direction of Travel statement (December 2015), which confirmed the council’s intention to go ahead with its intention to discharge its duties by making private rented offers which might be outside Westminster and to procure temporary accommodation for homeless households in areas which are affordable in the medium term. This document also invited comments.</p> <p>In addition, although not formal consultation, the Shelter study <i>Home and Away</i> (May 2016) and Crisis’s <i>Homelessness Monitor England 2016</i> were taken into account.</p>
<b>3.2</b>	<p><b>What might the potential impact on individuals or groups be?</b>  <i>Consider disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, faith or belief and those on low incomes and other excluded individuals or groups</i></p>
	<p>This section builds on the initial assessment of impacts in Section 1:</p> <p><b>Disability</b>  Some households with disabled household members will not be made private rented offers i.e. those with members who need wheelchair accessible accommodation and applicants that cannot manage a private rented tenancy (due to a mental health condition for example). There may, however, be potentially negative impacts on disabled people made private rented or temporary accommodation offers outside Westminster as they are more likely to be receiving treatment, care and support, which would have to be transferred. Transferring care and support is in itself disruptive and in some cases this may impact on its sustainability and continuity. People with disabilities are also more likely to receive low level or informal support which could be affected if they moved outside Westminster or London as it would be harder to maintain. Similarly they could be affected if their carer was a homeless applicant and was offered accommodation outside London which meant the care could not be maintained.</p> <p><b>Race</b>  Households from ethnic minority backgrounds may be disproportionately affected as they are more likely to be made offers outside London, given that they have a greater need for larger homes, which are particularly difficult to source at affordable levels in Westminster/London. There may also be fewer cultural facilities for some ethnic groups in locations outside London, although this would very much depend on the area where the offer was made.</p>

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### **Faith/Belief**

Households with different faiths and beliefs could be potentially negatively affected by offers outside London, if they find it more difficult to access places of worship and other religious or cultural institutions although again, this would very much depend on the area where the offer was made.

### **Gender**

People with children, and lone parents (who are more likely to be women) in particular, will potentially be negatively affected if they move outside Westminster and London as they are more likely to rely on local support networks for child care arrangements. Households with children with special educational needs, where Family Services are working with them and where children are at key exam stages could be particularly affected. Carers, who are more likely to be women<sup>18</sup>, are also more likely to be impacted if they move outside Westminster and London and have to travel greater distances to maintain that care. The cumulative effect of the policies however is intended to help provide households with greater certainty, which may make it easier to establish lasting care networks and support, than if those concerned were likely to face repeated relocation as can be the case with temporary accommodation.

### **Age - Children**

Children will potentially be negatively affected if they need to move outside of Westminster and London as they will be more likely to have to start new schools, which can be disruptive particularly if they are at key exam stages. Children with special educational needs or those that are working with Family Services may be particularly affected by changing school. Again, greater certainty as a result of the policies may make it easier to find school places and other support that can be sustained over time than if those concerned were likely to face repeated relocation, as can be the case with temporary accommodation.

### **Age – Older people**

Older people eligible for Community Supportive (Sheltered) housing will not be made private rented offers. However older people could be offered temporary accommodation outside Westminster and London until this type of housing is available (although generally waits are much shorter). They may potentially be negatively impacted by this, if they have long established links to the local area and also as they are more likely to receive care and support packages which would need to be transferred. Also they may be more likely to receive informal support, possibly from family members, which might be harder to sustain at a distance. The data shows that people in these age groups are significantly under-represented among homeless people however.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Information on sexual orientation is not available but moves outside London may impact on the support networks and services available to Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender (LGBT) groups, although there is no actual evidence of this, and it would very much depend on the location of any properties offered. ONS data (2015) indicates that areas outside London have a smaller LGBT population. The proportion of the LGBT population in London is estimated to be 2.6% compared to 1.8% in the South East and 1.2% in the East of England<sup>19</sup>. There may be impacts arising from the relative lack of support and other services designed specifically for LGBT people in some places outside London, but again this would very much depend on the area where the offer was made.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2015>

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### **Transgender**

Information on transgender status of applicants is not available, but moves outside London may impact on them negatively if there are fewer support networks and services available to them, although there is no actual evidence of this and it would very much depend on the location of any properties offered. ONS data (2015) indicate that areas outside London have a smaller LGBT population. The proportion of the LGBT population in London is estimated to be 2.6% compared to 1.8% in the South East and 1.2% in the East of England<sup>20</sup>. There may be impacts arising from the relative lack of support and other services designed specifically for LGBT people in some places outside London, but again this would very much depend on the area where the offer was made.

### **Low income groups/non working households**

The higher rents in private rented housing might mean low income working households will need to claim benefits for longer than they would in social housing where rents are lower. There is also a risk that members of homeless households that are in employment may not be able to sustain their job if they had to move outside London and this is important, given that those in homeless households are disproportionately more likely to be non working and to be affected by the overall benefit cap than other households. There also might be fewer employment opportunities in some areas outside of London, although the proportion of the working age population claiming out of work benefits is 1.9% for London which is similar to Great Britain<sup>21</sup>, but there are obviously regional variations.

Mitigation measures have been developed to reduce the impact the policies might have on homeless people that are working (see Section 4), given that worklessness, and being affected by the overall benefit cap, can be causes of homelessness in themselves. There is also considerable policy research that supports the proposition that working contributes towards individual wellbeing<sup>22</sup>. However, it might be argued that prioritising working homeless households for properties in certain locations might disadvantage those that find it harder to work, such as: those with disabilities; lone parents; larger households with greater needs for child care; and those for whom English is not their first language. For example only 16% of homeless lone parents have “workers points” – 181 out of a potential 1,162 (see Section 1 for more information on workers’ points). The council aims to help mitigate this by engaging with non working homeless households and helping them into work and by considering the factors which are barriers to work (see Section 4), as well as by targeting within its priority categories certain groups that have a strong correlation with those who may find it harder to work, including people with disabilities and households with dependant children.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2015>

<sup>21</sup> [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

<sup>22</sup> For example: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/214326/hwwb-is-work-good-for-you.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214326/hwwb-is-work-good-for-you.pdf)

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**SECTION 4: REDUCING & MITIGATING IMPACT**

As a result of what you have learned, what can you do to minimise the impact of the proposed changes on equality groups and other excluded / vulnerable groups, as outlined above?

4.1 Where you have identified an impact, what can be done to reduce or mitigate the impact? (Remember to think about the Council as a whole, another service area may already be providing services which can help to deal with any negative impact).	
<p>Following the identification of some potential negative impacts above in Sections 1.1 and 3.2, the policies have been adapted to reduce or mitigate these impacts. Those consulted with (see 3.1) have helped to shape the final policies.</p>	
Column A – Protected Group	Column B – what changes can be made to remove or reduce barriers or negative impacts (Remember to think about the Council as a whole, another service area may already be providing services which can help to deal with any negative impact).
<p><b>All households</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of properties outside London will wherever possible be focussed in urban areas within the south east of England with reasonable transport links to Westminster – in order to help households maintain local connections</li> <li>• Places will be identified for procuring properties, where their social diversity as far as possible reflects that of Westminster, focussing on more urban areas which are more likely to have facilities for people with protected characteristics</li> <li>• Every offer of accommodation will take into account the household’s individual circumstances and suitability of the accommodation offered to meet their needs. Any special circumstances will be taken into account when making offers to households – taking into account if there is a compelling need for the accommodation to be in a particular location</li> <li>• Resettlement support will be offered to households being made private rented sector offers where they are relocating out of London and where needed when they are moving from Westminster</li> <li>• Support will also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London</li> <li>• It should be noted that the council places a strong focus on supporting people into employment and through the new Westminster Employment Service will be engaging with 500 - 600 homeless households over two years to help them into work and to help address the factors which are barriers to work. This should help to mitigate potential negative impacts of the policies. The policies also support certain workers to live in locations which will enable them to sustain their employment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The private rented sector offers policy excludes some disabled households who wouldn’t be able to manage a private rented tenancy (for example, those who may have care and support needs or a mental health condition which prevents them from managing a tenancy) and disabled households with members needing wheelchair accessible housing</li> <li>• Some people with particular health problems or disabilities will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation, these include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Households where at least one member has a severe health condition or disability (including a severe mental health condition) that requires intensive and specialised medical/</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<p>mental health treatment/ aftercare that is either (a) only available in Westminster or (b) where a transfer of care would create a serious risk to their safety or the sustainability of the treatment or care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Households where at least one member is receiving support through a significant commissioned care package or package of health care options provided in Westminster, where a transfer of care would create a serious risk to their safety or the sustainability of the care</li> <li>● Some carers, and people being cared for, will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation</li> <li>● Resettlement support will be offered to households being made private rented offers who are relocating out of London, and where needed where they are moving from Westminster to another London borough This support could include help to transfer care and support packages</li> <li>● Support will also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London and as above this could include help to transfer care and support packages</li> </ul>
<b>Race</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Places will be identified for procuring properties, where their diversity as far as possible reflects that of Westminster, focussing on more urban areas where there are likely to be more facilities and support networks. This might particularly benefit households of different ethnic origins</li> <li>● Procurement of properties outside London will, wherever possible, be focussed on urban areas in the South East in areas with reasonable transport links to Westminster – in order to help households maintain local connections. This might particularly benefit households of different ethnic origins</li> </ul>
<b>Faith/Belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Places will be identified where their diversity as far as possible reflects that of Westminster, focussing on more urban areas where there are likely to be more facilities and support networks for people. This might particularly benefit people with different faiths and beliefs</li> <li>● Procurement of properties outside London will, wherever possible, be focussed on urban areas in the South East in areas with reasonable transport links to Westminster – in order to help households maintain local connections. This might particularly benefit people with different faiths and beliefs</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mitigations for households with children are set out in the next section</li> <li>● Some carers (who are more likely to be women) will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation</li> <li>● Resettlement support will be offered for private rented offers which are out of London, and for moves within London where they are needed and this could include help to register children in local schools</li> <li>● Support will also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London and as above this could include help to enrol children in local schools and to find nursery places</li> </ul>
<b>Age - Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some children and families will be prioritised for in borough/adjacent borough accommodation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Households where at least one of the children has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, is receiving education or educational support in Westminster and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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		<p>where it is demonstrated that a placement would be significantly detrimental to their well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Households with a child where Westminster Family Services has demonstrated serious concerns about the child and is working with them intensively</li> <li>○ Households whose circumstances come under one of the Council’s protocol arrangements between Housing and Family or Adults’ services or where there is a recommendation through a joint assessment with Adult or Family services</li> <li>○ Households which include a registered Westminster City Council approved foster carer who is fostering a Westminster looked after child</li> <li>○ Households which (a) include a Westminster City Council approved person who is caring for a Westminster looked after child, (b) include a Westminster child that is subject to a Westminster Special Guardianship Order or (c) have a private fostering arrangement with a carer resident in Westminster where they have notified the council</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some children and families will be prioritised for accommodation in Greater London, where a child is at their final year of Key Stage 4 (generally Year 11) or in Key Stage 5 (A levels or equivalent Level 3 vocational courses, such as BTECs, or GCSE re-sits in English and Maths) at a school or further education college in London</li> <li>● Any special circumstances demonstrating a compelling need for accommodation in a certain area will be considered and this might particularly benefit children</li> <li>● Resettlement support will be offered for some private rented offers. This could include help to enrol children in new schools and to find nursery places</li> <li>● Support will also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London and as above this could include help to enrol children in local schools and to find nursery places</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Age – Older people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some older households will be exempt from private rented sector offers i.e. those that are eligible for sheltered housing and disabled households needing wheelchair accessible housing</li> <li>● The focus on procuring properties in the South East and with good transport connections to London, where possible, will help people in temporary accommodation maintain their location connections and this might be particularly important for older people</li> <li>● Support will also be offered to households moving into temporary accommodation outside London and this could involve help to transfer any care and support packages</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The focus on procuring properties in more urban areas, where their diversity as far as possible reflects that of Westminster, might help to ensure there are facilities for people of different sexual orientations, which might be more likely where the population is more diverse. In addition the focus on also procuring properties in areas with reasonable transport links to London might help people of different sexual orientations to continue to use support services, if there are fewer where they live</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The focus on procuring properties in more urban areas, where their diversity as far as possible reflects that of Westminster, might help to ensure there are facilities for transgender people, which may be more likely where the population is more diverse. In addition the focus on also procuring properties in areas with reasonable transport links to London might help transgender people in particular to continue to use local support services if there are fewer where they live</li> </ul>
<p><b>Low income groups</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certain workers (i.e. those where they or their partner works more than 16 hours per week in Westminster or an adjoining borough) will be prioritised for accommodation in Greater London so they can maintain their employment</li> <li>One of the procurement principles (set out in the Accommodation Procurement Policy for Homeless Households) is to take into account the employment opportunities in the areas where properties are being procured given that homeless households are more likely not to be working</li> <li>All offers of housing should be affordable in the longer term i.e. within benefit levels</li> </ul>

**4.2 Now that you have considered the potential or actual effect on equality, what action are you taking?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>1. No major change (no impacts identified)</b></p>	<p>Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and you have taken all appropriate steps to advance equality &amp; foster good relations between groups.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>2. Adjust the policy</b></p>	<p>You will take steps to remove barriers or to better advance equality.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>3. Continue the policy (impacts identified)</b></p>	<p>You will adopt your proposal, despite any adverse effect provided you are satisfied that it does not unlawfully discriminate and it is justified.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>4. Stop and remove the policy</b></p>	<p>There are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. The policy is unlawfully discriminating.</p>

**4.3 Please document the reasons for your decision**

The policies are justified. They are being proposed in order to achieve important objectives – ensuring that housing is provided to homeless households at a cost that is affordable over time to the council (and its council taxpayers) and sustainable for the individuals concerned. They will also provide households with greater certainty and the ability to engage with the neighbourhoods in which they are housed and the services and opportunities available there. These objectives are central to ensuring well-being and affordability. The policies are clearly designed to deliver on these identified objectives.

Alternative options to the policies have been considered such as making no policy change and procuring all temporary accommodation in Westminster and these have been assessed and shown to be unsustainable and unaffordable, given the likely levels of demand and the council’s overall financial position. They would also involve increased long-term reliance on temporary

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accommodation which would militate against ensuring greater certainty for the households concerned. As this assessment demonstrates, in bringing the policies forward consideration has been given to the impacts on the rights and interests of the individuals and households concerned and steps put in place to minimise negative impacts. As such, they are a proportionate means of achieving a number of legitimate policy aims.

The policies have been developed to help mitigate many of the potentially negative impacts that have been identified. However despite this, there may still be some potentially negative impacts on particular households:

- Children's education might be disrupted if they are not at critical exam stages and do not have any special needs
- Although resettlement support will be offered when private rented offers are made, it will be time limited, and this may not adequately replace the informal support provided through local networks which could be lost with a move outside London. People with children, lone and young parents and older people may particularly be affected as may be some minority ethnic households with particularly strong links to a community in London
- Low income working households might need to claim benefit for longer as rents in the private rented sector are higher
- Homeless applicants will lose priority for social housing, which overall does offer a higher level of long-term security of tenure compared with private rented tenancies which may be for 12 months and this will impact disproportionately on protected groups
- By prioritising some workers for properties in London, in order to sustain their employment, other non working households with protected characteristics may be disadvantaged, as the supply of properties in London is likely to be limited and certain households may be less likely to be in work due to factors such as being a person with disabilities, being a lone parent, not having English as their first language and due to having high child care needs

The policies will be monitored to assess the impacts on those households with protected characteristics (and more widely) and to identify whether any further additional mitigation measures (particularly as regards support packages offered to those concerned) are needed. These impacts will be reported on an annual basis as part of the Supply and Allocations report approved each year by the Cabinet member with responsibility for housing.

Alongside the negative impacts it also needs to be noted that, each household's needs are individual and complex and there also may be some positive impacts for certain households. Every case will continue to be considered on its individual merits and in particular there will be an individual suitability assessment in each case. It is intended that the PRSO policy will enable homeless households to move more quickly into a more settled form of accommodation rather than living in temporary accommodation for many years, which is often already outside Westminster and will become increasingly so. This could give those households concerned greater certainty about their immediate future.



## APPENDIX 5

### SECTION 5: ACTION PLAN

*This section is for actions related to any of the 9 protected characteristic: Age, Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment; Pregnancy & maternity, Race, Sexual Orientation or Religion/Belief*

<b>5.1</b>	<p>Complete the action plan if you need to reduce or remove the negative impacts you have identified, take steps to foster good relations or fill data gaps.</p> <p><i>Please include the action required by your team/unit, groups affected, the intended outcome of your action, resources needed, a lead person responsible for undertaking the action (inc. their department and contact details), the completion date for the action, and the relevant RAG rating: R(ed) – action not initiated, A(mber) – action initiated and in progress, G(reen) – action complete.</i></p> <p><b>NB. Add any additional rows, if required.</b></p>						
	Action Required	Equality Groups Targeted	Intended outcome	Resources Needed	Name of Lead, Unit & Contact Details	Completion Date (DD/MM/YY)	RAG
	Review policies annually and assess impacts on different equalities groups. Consult with groups, representing homelessness/minority groups on any changes as necessary	All	To understand the impact of the policies on different equalities groups	This can be completed within existing resources	Rebecca Ireland – Housing Needs Manager	January 2018 and then annually	
	Review provision of support packages on an annual basis	All	To ensure the support provided meets customers' needs	This can be completed within existing resources	Rebecca Ireland – Housing Needs Manager/Greg Roberts – Temporary Accommodation Manager	January 2018 and then annually	
	Review out of London placements annually in terms of location and outcomes	All	To understand the impact of the policies and whether the approach needs to be adjusted	This can be completed within existing resources	Rebecca Ireland – Housing Needs Manager/Greg Roberts – Temporary Accommodation Manager	January 2018 and then annually	

## APPENDIX 5

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER



SIGNATURE:

FULL NAME: Barbara Brownlee – Director of Housing and Regeneration

UNIT: Growth, Planning and Housing

EMAIL & TELEPHONE EXT: [bbrownlee@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:bbrownlee@westminster.gov.uk)

DATE: 23/12/2016

### WHAT NEXT?

**It is the responsibility of the service to complete an EIA to the required standard and the quality and completeness of EIAs will be monitored by EMT.**

**All completed EIAs should be sent to: [Equalities@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:Equalities@westminster.gov.uk)**