Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: the initial impact assessment

1. Process and guidance

The purpose of an EqIA is to make sure that the council is meeting the needs of all our residents by ensuring we consider how different groups of people may be affected by or experience a proposal in different ways. EqIAs help us to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty and where applicable the Armed Forces Duty

The council has a two stage EqIA process:

- Stage 1 - the initial impact assessment
- Stage 2 - the full impact assessment.

This form is for use at Stage 1 of the process. This must be completed when undertaking a project, policy change, or service change. It can form part of a business case for change and must be completed and attached to a Project Initiation Document. The findings of the initial impact assessment will determine whether a full impact assessment is needed.

Guidance and tools for council officers can be accessed on the council's Tackling Inequality Together intranet pages.

Date started:	11/06/2026	
Completed by:	Harrison Wilks	
Service:	Housing	
Project or policy EqIA relates to:	Affordable Rent Setting Policy	
Date EqIA discussed at service team meeting:	16/07/2026	
Conclusion (is a full assessment needed?):	No	

Signed off by (SD):	Darren Levy	
Sign off date:	23/07/2026	

2. Summary of the policy, project, or service

This section should be used to summarise the project, policy, or service change (the proposal).

What is the purpose of the proposal, what are the aims and expected outcomes, and how does it relate to service plans and the corporate plan?
This is a mandatory document detailing the Housing Service's policy for Affordable Rent setting. This policy is central to the Housing Service's operations as it determines how rents – the Service's primary source of income – will be set. Through this Affordable Rent Setting Policy, the Housing Service aims to be fair, transparent, and efficient in the setting of rent for its tenants.

How will the proposal be delivered, what governance arrangements are in place and who are the key internal stakeholders?
This policy will undergo comprehensive governance and scrutiny through the Housing Service's governance procedure, including multi-level review and engagement with Tenant Volunteers. Implementation will also be reviewed through relevant housing performance and assurance arrangements, including monitoring of rent account impacts, arrears trends, tenant feedback, requests for support and tenancy sustainment referrals. This will help ensure that any emerging adverse impact from rent increases is identified early and that the service can tailor its response where tenants need additional advice or support. Key internal stakeholders for this policy include: Head of Housing; Service Manager for Housing Information and Governance; Rental Income Team Leader.

Who will be affected by the proposal? Think about who it is aimed at and who will deliver it.
The Affordable Rent Setting Policy primarily affects Wokingham Borough Council tenants, including tenants whose rent is paid through Universal Credit, Housing Benefit or other income sources. The impact may be greater for tenants on low incomes, tenants with additional support needs, tenants who are not digitally confident, and households already experiencing financial pressure. The policy will therefore need to be implemented alongside clear communication, early advice, and tailored support so tenants understand any rent increase and know how to access help where affordability or tenancy sustainment issues arise. Internally, the Rental Income team and Rent Officers will be the most responsible for implementing the policy and will therefore be the most impacted by it. Furthermore, as a policy that directly impacts the Service's finances, the entire Service will be affected to varying degrees.

3. Data & Protected Characteristics

This section should be used to set out what data you have gathered to support the initial impact assessment.

The table below sets out the equality groups that need to be considered in the impact assessment. These comprise the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and other priority areas defined by the council.

Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy/Maternity
Religious belief	Race	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Socio-economic disadvantage

The Armed Forces Act 2021 also requires consideration of the impact on Armed Forces Communities when exercising certain housing, education or healthcare functions (excluding social care). Further guidance can be found here.

What data and information will be used to help assess the impact of the proposal on different groups of people? A list of useful resources is available for officers on the Council's Tackling Inequality Together intranet pages.
The assessment will be informed by internal housing data, including Business Objects, NEC, rent account information, arrears trends, tenancy sustainment referrals, Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Tenant Satisfaction Survey feedback. Where available, this will be reviewed alongside information about household circumstances, vulnerabilities, benefit status, support needs and contact with the Rental Income and Tenancy Sustainment teams. The impact of any rent increase will be monitored after implementation through arrears performance, requests for support, complaints, tenancy sustainment activity and tenant feedback, so that any emerging disproportionate impact can be identified and responded to.

4. Assessing & Scoring Impact

This section should be used to assess the likely impact on each equality group, consider how significant any impacts could be and explain how the data gathered supports the conclusions made.

Scoring impact for equality groups	
Positive impact	The proposal promotes equality of opportunity by meeting needs or addressing existing barriers to participation and/or promotes good community relations
Neutral or no impact	The proposal has no impact or no disproportionate impact.
Low negative	The proposal is likely to negatively impact a small number of people, be of short duration and can easily be resolved.
High negative	The proposal is likely to have a significant negative impact on many people or a severe impact on a smaller number of people.

Referring to the Scoring table above, please give an impact score for each group, explain what the likely impact will be, and briefly set out how the data supports this conclusion.

Equality group	Impact score	Impact and supporting data
Age	Neutral/No impact	The policy applies to tenants of all ages, but some older tenants and younger tenants may need additional support to understand rent information, access digital communications, or respond to changes in their housing costs. The impact will be mitigated through clear written communications, non-digital contact routes where required, signposting to advice and support, and early intervention where rent account data or tenant contact indicates affordability concerns.
Disability	Neutral/No impact	Some tenants with disabilities or long-term health conditions may need additional support to understand rent information, engage with the Council, or manage the financial impact of any rent increase. The policy itself applies consistently to all tenants, but implementation should include reasonable adjustments where needed, accessible communications, alternative contact methods, and referrals to tenancy sustainment, benefits or money advice support where a tenant's circumstances indicate additional vulnerability.
Gender reassignment	Neutral/No impact	This policy is not likely to disproportionately impact this protected characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral/No impact	This policy is not likely to disproportionately impact this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy/Maternity	Neutral/No impact	This policy is not likely to disproportionately impact this protected characteristic.
Religious belief	Neutral/No impact	This policy is not likely to disproportionately impact this protected characteristic.
Race	Neutral/No impact	The policy applies consistently to all tenants, but tenants whose first language is not English may need additional support to understand rent information, rent increase notices and available advice. The impact will be mitigated through clear plain English communications, translation or interpretation support where required, and

		signposting to income, benefits and tenancy sustainment advice so that tenants can understand the change and access support at an early stage.
Sex	Neutral/No impact	This policy is not likely to disproportionately impact this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral/No impact	This policy is not likely to disproportionately impact this protected characteristic.
Socio-economic disadvantage	Neutral/No impact	The policy applies consistently to all tenants and is not expected to create a disproportionate impact on tenants experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. However, the Council recognises that some households, particularly those on low incomes, affected by welfare benefit changes, in existing arrears, or with limited financial resilience, may need additional support to understand and manage any rent increase. This will be addressed through clear advance communication, signposting to benefits and money advice, early intervention by the Rental Income team, referrals to the Tenancy Sustainment team where appropriate, and tailored support where individual circumstances indicate a need.
Armed Forces Communities	Neutral/No impact	This policy is not likely to disproportionately impact this protected characteristic.

5. Conclusion and next steps.

The initial assessment has not identified a need for a full EqIA at this stage, but the implementation of the policy will be kept under review. The Housing Service will monitor the impact of any rent increase through rent account data, arrears trends, tenant contact, complaints, requests for support and tenancy sustainment referrals. Where individual tenants or groups of tenants experience difficulty, the service will tailor its approach through early advice, benefit and money guidance, reasonable adjustments, and referral to the Tenancy Sustainment team where appropriate.