

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Update to Cabinet on Social Housing Reforms	
Directorate: Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	Service area: Housing Income and Support Services
Lead person: Sue Shelley on behalf of James Clark	Contact: sue.shelley@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify an update to Cabinet on the Social Housing Reforms	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
The Social Housing (Regulation) Act regulations came into force on April 1 st 2024. The new regulations and inspection regime require social housing landlord to deliver in line with the four consumer standards relating to Quality and Safety, Transparency Influence and Accountability, Neighbourhood and Community and Tenancy. Social housing is governed by a range of legislation and these new consumer standards build upon the existing legislative requirements. This report is an update on the work taking place across Housing to make sure we meet the regulations. The new regulations require social housing providers to report a range of performance

measures on an annual basis. The first of these is the Tenant Satisfaction Measures which will be reported to the Regulator in June 2024 for the first time covering the year April 1st, 2023, to March 31st 2024. This report gives Cabinet an update on the work being done to make sure Housing meets the new regulatory standards, including the new revised consumer standards.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

The consumer standards are focussed on the quality of delivery for tenants and there is an expectation that landlords will know their tenants and will adapt delivery to meet particular needs, including in response to those with protected characteristics. In effect, being inclusive and respecting and responding to diversity and aiming for equality of access are core tenets of the new regulations. The new regulatory framework for social housing will include inspections so landlords will be judged on how well they are meeting these requirements.

The consumer standards that came into force from April 1st 2024 had a period of public consultation before being finalised. The final Equality Impact Assessment was published alongside the finalised consumer standards on February 29th 2024, and can be found at:

[Annex 6: Consumer standards – Equality impact assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?		√
Could the proposal affect service users?	√	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	√	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?		√
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		√
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		√

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

The Government's equality Impact assessment has been considered when reviewing the work being done to make sure we are compliant with the new regulations. As the government's assessment states, equality considerations were taken into account throughout the development of the new consumer standards. The work being done by the Housing service puts all groups of tenants at the heart of what we do but understanding that we need to evidence that services are accessible to and offered in ways that meet the needs of those with protected characteristics.

The government's equality assessment picks out a number of areas where the new standards are expected to have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of age, race and disability. The focus on stock quality is expected to benefit these groups. The requirement to treat all tenants with fairness and respect and meet diverse needs may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and sex. Accessibility to all tenants is at the heart of the new regulations. For example, landlords are required to make information that tenants want available in a variety of accessible forms as they wish. If landlords do not do this and meet the requirements of those with protected characteristics, they will not be seen as meeting the new regulations.

Overall, the new regulations will require housing providers to evidence that they know the make-up of their tenant base and are adjusting the delivery of services to meet the needs of particular groups and those with protected characteristics.

To ensure compliance with the new regulations Housing will be looking to reporting on the makeup of the tenant base in relation to protected characteristics and acting upon any issues identified. This will be part of the six-monthly updates to Cabinet on the social housing reforms.

- **Key findings**

The changes to the regulation of social housing are designed to improve services to tenants, the safety and quality of their homes and communal areas and give them access to information about how well their landlord is performing. In addition, it is a requirement of the regulations that tenants are involved in the shaping of changes to service delivery and revision of policies. The regulations are designed to improve equality of access to services for social housing tenants.

As set out above the equality impact assessment for the new regulations sees the

changes as having in some case a positive impact on those with protected characteristics. Where there isn't a positive impact the changes are seen as being neutral in their impact on those with protected characteristics.

- **Actions**

Implementing the provisions of the regulations build on existing Council policies and practices that have themselves already received equality assessment.

Further reports will be made to Cabinet providing monitoring information and updates. Consequently, a full EA is not required in this instance.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	N/A
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Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	N/A
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Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	N/A
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5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
James Clark	Assistant Director of Housing	

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	May 23 rd 2024
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Report title and date	Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023-24 and Social Housing Consumer Standards
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If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	July 8 th 2024
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Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	
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