

Equality Impact Assessment: Report and EIA Action Plan

What is being reviewed?	Extra Care Housing Commissioning Strategy
Service Lead and Service Unit:	Phil Hornsby – Adult Social Care Commissioning
People involved in EIA process:	Mick Mellors, Phil Hornsby
Date/s EIA started and reviewed:	09/06/2021

Background

The proposed change is the introduction of a new commissioning strategy for extra-care housing. It sets out in broad strategic terms the demand for extra-care housing and the opportunities to develop new schemes in BCP. Whilst it does not make detailed proposals, it does contain a section focusing upon equality and diversity issues and it concludes by identifying 13 strategic objectives, including one to ensure that the provision of extra-care housing takes full account of those people who fall under the various identified characteristics set out in equalities legislation.

The strategy is needed in order to give impetus and direction to the commissioning of these services and to ensure it is done in a fair and equitable way. Over time we expect the strategy to lead to an increase in extra-care accommodation in BCP.

We researched the local market and developments elsewhere as well as a careful analysis of the market, locally and nationally. We found some guidance on developing extra-care housing for people from BME and other minority communities, but this was somewhat out of date.

Consultation has taken place largely within the local authority because of the pressures created in the sector by Covid-19 and the restrictions the pandemic has placed upon consultation processes. However, as the lockdown eases we do expect to consult more widely with stakeholders.

Findings

The strategy is focused upon extra-care housing that can be suitable for older people and those with a wide range of disabilities, all of whom fall under the identified characteristics

Insofar as some people have previously been members of the armed forces it will impact upon them also.

The strategy includes a section devoted to equal opportunities that sets out how they need to be incorporated into the overall strategic approach, whilst acknowledging that it is at a more operational level that effective actions will be needed/taken.

The commissioning strategy for care homes for older people is, as the title suggests focussed upon older people, but this does not mean that younger people (for example those with long-term conditions) will be excluded if a residential placement in a care home that normally caters for older people was able to meet their needs.

The strategy does include a section that focuses upon equal opportunities and identifies and recognises that BCP does have a diverse population and that the council and extra-care providers need to accommodate older people from minority communities and also those with a mental health issue, a learning disability and cultural, religious or other social needs. There is evidence that a mix of people with the various identified characteristics can work well in extra-care housing.

At the same time this is a relatively high level strategy and it does not set out detailed actions to be carried out. However, it does include a strategic objective 'To ensure that the placement process and all care homes take full account of all aspects of equality and diversity.'

Conclusion

Summary of Equality Implications

The strategy includes a section devoted to equal opportunities that sets out how they need to be incorporated into the overall strategic approach, whilst acknowledging that it is at a more operational level that effective actions will be needed/taken.

The specific section in the strategy on equal opportunities sets out that the focus of the strategy is developing new schemes of extra-care accommodation. We recognise that it will affect and needs to take account of the whole range of different aspects of equal opportunities.

In the Equal Opportunities section we identify that as a means of keeping people in the community making available extra-care housing will have an impact upon carers as we hope that more people will be able to stay in their own homes longer. It will continue to be important to recognise the burden that caring can become for some older people. At the same time, many people will be pleased to be able to continue to have their loved ones living with them.

The ethnic minority population element of BCP is less than 6% of the total and significantly less than that for the older population. Nevertheless, we recognise that for people of any ethnicity, language culture and religious belief can be very important contributors to their wellbeing. We would expect the services commissioned to support people in extra-care housing to be aware of this and able to respond accordingly. We are aware of schemes elsewhere and of guidance relating specifically to ECH for people from black and minority ethnic groups¹ AS BCP council looks to develop further extra-care schemes there may be opportunity to go into partnership with specialist housing providers who look to meet the needs of minority groups. BCP council will look to take up those opportunities.

People with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health problems have all been identified in the past as those who can benefit from living in extra-care housing accommodation.

Similarly we recognise that there are other aspects of a person's life and identity that remain important to them, especially as they get older or develop a long-term condition. These aspects of a person's life can include things such as their marital or relationship status.

We do expect all aspects of diversity and equal opportunities to be picked up as part of each person's care and support plan, and this will be required in the accommodation and care providers' contracts.

In order to arrive at this statement we looked at the composition of the population in BCP, especially that of older people. At the same time, we drew upon work done elsewhere to ensure that we included the various different characteristics that needed to be covered. As indicated earlier, our ability to consult on the strategy at this stage has been severely limited by the impact of Covid-19.

At these stage we do not feel that there are any significant negative issues to be addressed, nor any adverse risks.

¹ 'Meeting the sheltered and extra care housing needs of black and minority ethnic older people', Jones, A, & Bignall, T Race Equality Foundation, 2011, <https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/housing-brief19.pdf>