

Equality Impact Assessment: *Housing Rents and Service Charges 2022-23*

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Executive Committee 10 th January 2023	Housing Rents and Service Charges 2023-24	That Executive recommend that Council approves:	See below

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rents of Council dwellings are increased by 7% from 1 April 2023 • Garage rents are increased by 7% from 1 April 2023 • Service Charges are increased by 7%, with the exception of charges specified in paragraph 12.3, from 1 April 2023 	
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Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This is must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
<p>Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>In October 2017, the Government announced its intention to set a long term rent policy in respect of annual rent increases on both social rent and affordable rent properties of up to CPI plus 1% from 2020, for a period of 5 years. The policy on rents for social housing came into effect from 1 April 2020. The CPI figure for September 2022 was 10.1%, so under this policy the Council would have been permitted to apply a rent increase of 11.1% for 2023/24. However in the autumn budget statement in November 2022 the Government announced a cap on this increase of 7% for 2023/24 as part of their response to the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>Rents of garages and service charges fall outside the scope of the Government's rent policy. Authorities are expected to set reasonable and transparent charges which reflect the service being provided to tenants.</p> <p>Increasing rent and service charges by the amounts specified will have a neutral effect on protected groups.</p> <p>The proposed rent increase is around 3% lower than the current rate of inflation (based on the September CPI rate). Not to increase rents would have an adverse effect on our services which would in turn adversely affect the health and well-being of tenants.</p> <p>Senior managers within Housing and Customer Access have considered the impact of the increase and the level of support available for people who may struggle to pay their bills. Officers continue to work to assist households in financial difficulty where</p>

			<p>possible, including the administering of Government funds to support those households in need.</p> <p>Many tenants including those with protected characteristics will have their rents met by Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC), so a lower rent increase would not necessarily benefit them. 30% of the council's tenants are on full HB, 10% on partial HB and 20% in receipt of UC.</p> <p>Exeter City Council rents remain the lowest in the city. For example, last year the average weekly rent for a two-bedroom property in the private sector was over £182; for Housing Associations it was over £99; while for Exeter City Council tenants the average rent will be £86.34 for 2023/24.</p>
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Neutral		See box 1 above
Sex/Gender	Neutral		See box 1 above
Gender reassignment	Neutral		See box 1 above
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	Neutral		See box 1 above
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	Neutral		See box 1 above
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age	Neutral		See box 1 above

categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers	Neutral		See box 1 above
Marriage and civil partnership status	Neutral		See box1 above
<u>Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion</u>			

Officer: Sarah Hemming
Date: 1st December 2022