

Colchester City Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

The Treatment of War Pensions within Housing Benefit – the ‘Local Modified Scheme’

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?
 - To allow the disregard of War Pensions within Housing Benefit

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?
 - Housing Benefit

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment? If so, what are they?
 - No changes being considered.

4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?
 - Housing Benefit claimants who are in receipt of a War Pension
 - Future claimants of Housing Benefit who receive a War Pension

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy?

- Confirmation War Pensions can continue to be disregarded within Housing Benefit

6. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below.

- No

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations¹ which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy upon customers or staff? *If so, provide details and include a link to the document or source where available.*

- No

8. The 'general duty' states that we must have "due regard" to the need to:

(a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

(b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'² and those who do not³

(c) foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not⁴

Not all policies help us to meet the 'general duty', but most do.

- War Pensions have always been disregarded in Housing Benefit at Colchester. By continuing to do so it maximises awards for low income and vulnerable residents throughout Colchester who receive a War Pension.

¹Click on [Customer Insight](#) for more information. The Council's surveys and consultations include 'equality monitoring information' to help us identify any particular concerns or views expressed by any particular group or 'protected characteristic'. It can also help us to assess how representative of our customers the respondent group is. Local data on the 'protected characteristics' is available [on this page](#) of Sharepoint.

² The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

³ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a 'protected characteristic' that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

⁴ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

9. The Council has an important role in improving residents' health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This relates to both its 'core functions' (such as housing, leisure, green spaces and environmental health) and to its 'enabling roles' (such as economic development, planning and engaging with communities)⁵. The Council recognises that its Public Sector Equality Duty and its role in improving health are interrelated and mutually supportive. This is especially true across the 'protected characteristics' of age and disability.

Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to improve health/reduce health inequalities for residents:

- Continuing to disregard War Pensions helps maximise Housing Benefit awards for low-income and vulnerable residents throughout Colchester. This will continue to assist in increasing disposable income and improving customers quality of life.

⁵ The King's Fund: [The district council contribution to public health: a time of challenge and opportunity, 2015](#)

10. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate equality impacts. Please indicate in the table below whether the policy is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the ‘protected characteristics’.

‘Protected characteristic’ group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)	Yes	Maximises Housing Benefit for customers in receipt of a War Pension	No	N/A
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	As above	As above	As above	As above
Disability	Physical	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Sensory	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Learning	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Mental health issues	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Other – <i>specify</i>	As above	As above	As above	As above
Ethnicity ⁶	White	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Black	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Chinese	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Gypsies/ Travellers	As above	As above	As above	As above

⁶ National Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, In As above dian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British), African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British), White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed), British, Irish, Other White (White), Chinese, Other (Other Ethnic Group).

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
	Other – <i>specify</i>	As above	As above	As above	As above
Language	English not first language	As above	As above	As above	As above
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	As above	As above	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	As above	As above	As above	As above
Sex	Men	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Women	As above	As above	As above	As above
Gender Reassignment ⁷	Transgender/ Transsexual	As above	As above	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	As above	As above	As above	As above
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership	As above	As above	As above	As above

11. If you have identified any negative impacts (above), how can they be minimised or removed?

- No negative impacts

⁷ The 'protected characteristic' of gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as "a person proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex." This is a personal process that may involve medical interventions such as counselling, psychotherapy, hormone therapy or surgery, but does not have to.

12. Could the policy discriminate⁸ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly⁹? (Yes/No)

- No

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment

13. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
A. No negative impacts have been identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No action required
B. Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	
C. Negative impacts could not be minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	
D. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement <input type="checkbox"/>	

14. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- Adam Wood – Benefits Manager

15. Date of completion:

- 14/08/2023

16. Date for update or review of this screening¹⁰:

⁸ The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic'.

⁹ If you answer 'yes' to question 11 (above) you will need to complete the following section *and* go on to complete 2 in order to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment.

¹⁰ This is normally three years, but not always: You may know that the policy itself will be reviewed earlier in which case the EqIA should be reviewed at that time. Or, in the case of a five year strategy, you may want to have a review date of five years. In the case of a "one off" decision, such as closing a service, a review date

- N/A

may not be needed - in which case you should indicate 'N/A'. In any event, the review date should be brought forward if you receive information or feedback which raises new concerns, or if the public policy context changes. You can speak to the [Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator](#) for more advice.