

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposed EIA Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Reference No EQUA496

EA is in support of New Service

Review Frequency Annually

Date of first review 23/03/2021

Directorate Assistant Chief Executive

Division Public Health - Partnership, Insight & Prevention

Service Area Inequalities team

Responsible Officer(s)

Quality Control Officer(s)

Accountable Officer(s)

Purpose of proposal

To establish the service is equitable for 9 protected characteristics under the equality act.

Data sources relevant reports/strategies

Please include any other sources of data

It is estimated that 69,692 households in Birmingham are fuel poor. This represents 16.2% of all households. The England figure was of the core cities (Manchester 11.9%, Liverpool 17.6%) Public Health Outcome Framework.

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public> - Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - a report which outlines where Birmingham stands with regards to keeping actions are need to be undertaken in the future -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/639118/Fuel_Poverty_Statistics - The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report 2017 states Birmingham's Housing Strategy says that: "Every citizen should have and warm home within a neighbourhood they are proud of". The strategy outlines the importance of tackling fuel poverty to improve financial inclusion. This is highlighted as a cross-cutting issue within the council's Vision and Priorities statement. The strategy also established "Stay Warm Stay Well" programme that delivers practical solutions to vulnerable people affected by fuel poverty.

The NICE guidelines NG6 "Excess winter deaths and illness on the health risks associated with cold homes" -

identifies citizens with pregnancy as being vulnerable. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6/resources/excess-winter-deaths-and-morbidity-and-the-51043484869>

National Energy Action (NEA) provide statistics on fuel poverty <https://www.nea.org.uk/>

ASSESS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT AGAINST THE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Protected characteristic: Age Service Users / Stakeholders; Wider Community

Age details: There are no age restrictions, this service available to all citizens who meet the criteria.

For Birmingham citizens to be considered eligible for ECO flexibility funding they must meet only one of the four criteria listed below than £8000 (single person household), or less than £12,000 (more than one-person household):

i. The citizen has one of the following illnesses and has an annual household disposable income of less than £27,200 (the provisional household disposable income for financial year ending 2017 as sourced from the Office of National Statistics). Disposable that households have available for spending and saving after direct taxes (such as Income Tax and Council Tax) have been from employment, private pensions and investments as well as cash benefits provided by the state.

a. Chronic Respiratory Condition e.g. COPD / Asthma / Pneumonia

b. Diabetes

c. Cardiovascular condition e.g. Coronary Heart Disease, high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, poor circulation

d. Cancer

e. Mental Health Condition

f. Musculoskeletal conditions (Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis etc.)

g. Long Term Illness made worse in Winter (i.e. Arthritis)

h. Blood conditions e.g. Sickle Cell Anaemia

i. Disability or Restricted Mobility

j. Neurological Condition (including dementia, Parkinson's Disease, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy etc.)

ii. The citizen is aged over 60 and has an annual household disposable income of less than £27,200

iii. The citizen is pregnant and has an annual household disposable income of less than £27,200

iv. The citizen has young children under the age of 5 years and has an annual household disposable income of less than £27,200

While the health of all ages is affected by cold homes older people (over 65 years) are more likely to suffer health problems. The over 85 years are most vulnerable. Cold homes may also pose a risk to the health of children under five years.

Protected characteristic: Disability Service Users / Stakeholders; Wider Community

Disability details: This service is available to all citizens who meet the criteria of the programme.

NICE guidelines NG6 "Excess winter deaths and illness on the health risks associated with cold homes" identifies people with disabilities, Health conditions being vulnerable. According to the Public Health Outcomes Framework there were 734 excess winter deaths in and over.

The scheme benefits those in receipt of a wide range of disability benefits, which means people with disabilities are more likely to household.

Evidence suggests the cold conditions associated with fuel poverty have a significant effect on the mental health of adults, young suggests living in fuel poverty leads to further depression and potential suicide.

Protected characteristic: Gender Service Users / Stakeholders; Wider Community

Gender details: This service is available to both male and female citizens who meet the criteria.

Kathy Lee

Julie Bach

Justin Varney

Responsibility for a household is more likely to fall to a woman (Bond and Christie 2000). Energy poverty can cause gender divisions, experiencing poverty may sacrifice food, clothing and other basic needs to put their families first. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey found that women are 'more likely to be poor on all four dimensions (lacking two or more per cent median income, subjective poverty and receiving Income Support) Bradshaw et al, 2003,p3.

Protected characteristics: Gender Reassignment Not Applicable

Gender reassignment details: This service is available to all citizens who meet the criteria of the programme.

Protected characteristics: Marriage and Civil Partnership Not Applicable

Marriage and civil partnership details: This service is available to all citizens who meet the criteria of the programme.

Protected characteristics: Pregnancy and Maternity Service Users / Stakeholders; Wider Community

Pregnancy and maternity details: The NICE guidelines NG6 "Excess winter deaths and illness on the health risks associated with cold homes" identifies pregnant women Cold housing and fuel poverty can negatively affect children's educational attainment, emotional well-being and resilience. Birmingham in low income families compared to England's average 17.0%.

Poverty is a potential risk factor in infant mortality and Birmingham's infant mortality is significantly worse than England's average. briefing paper 2018 identified that a baby born in a cold home is 3 x more likely to suffer coughing, wheezing and respiratory illness. conditions have a 30% greater risk of admission to hospital or primary care facilities. However this scheme may have a positive impact on low income households that have recently had children as they will be in receipt Credit.

Protected characteristics: Race Service Users / Stakeholders; Wider Community

Race details: This service is available to all citizens who meet the criteria of the programme.

Women's poverty is affected by their diverse identities, for example 20% of white women are living in poverty but the figures are Pakistan and Bangladeshi women (Fawcett Society and Women's Budget Group, 2006,p2)

Black and Minority Ethnic and Polish are more likely to be represented within the lower socio-economic groups in Birmingham, therefore from this scheme.

Protected characteristics: Religion or Beliefs Not Applicable

Religion or beliefs details: This service is available to all citizens regardless of any belief as long as they meet the criteria of the programme.

Protected characteristics: Sexual Orientation Not Applicable

Sexual orientation details: This service is available to all citizens regardless of sexual orientation who meet the criteria of the programme.

Please indicate any actions arising from completing this screening exercise.

Birmingham's 2017 housing strategy states that " Every citizen should have the opportunity to live in a safe and warm home within proud of". The strategy outlines the importance of tackling fuel poverty to improve health, well-being and financial inclusion. This issue within the Council's Vision and Priorities statement. The strategy refers to the "Stay Warm Stay Well" programme vulnerable people affected by fuel poverty. The adoption of this scheme will be in line with the governments fuel poverty target fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable to a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by the end of 2030. It aims to reduce low income and vulnerable households on a long term, sustainable basis and minimize the impact fuel poverty has on their health where it is needed will support those not in fuel poverty but vulnerable to the effects of a cold home, for example elderly people underlying health condition. The drivers of fuel poverty (low income, poor energy efficiency and energy prices) are strongly linked home is associated with poor health outcomes and an increased risk of morbidity and mortality for all groups. The percentage of poverty based on "low income, high cost" methodology for Birmingham is 16.2% (69,692) compared to England which is 10.9%. The scope of available energy efficiency measures for low income, fuel poverty and vulnerable citizens. This will improve the well-and fuel poor households and will potentially improve the communities they live in.

The scheme has a positive impact on all citizens under the 9 protected characteristics who meet the criteria of the programme which households and those with health conditions who may be at greatest risk or living in fuel poverty. The benefits of this scheme will potential savings for health provision and improve productivity. The delivery approach of this scheme needs to be clear and simple customer service. We must ensure the citizen is at its heart and reflects how people think and behave. At the end of March we will identify its effectiveness and determine whether a full Equality Assessment will be required. Birmingham City Council will initially carry 1 in 10 declarations reducing this to 1 in 20 for contractors that have proven performance and reliability to ensure the declarations households meet with the criteria. Citizens participating in the programme will be asked to complete a brief satisfaction survey process.

Consultation has not taken place at this point; however we will start to review the process at the end March 2021. The scheme has people with protected characteristics as the eligibility criteria for the scheme includes all groups as long as they meet the criteria. by Birmingham City Council will be recorded and monitored to enable an ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the scheme both household income, savings and secondary eligibility criteria at the time of approval.

In view of the current situation with the Coronavirus this is likely to disrupt many more lives causing financial hardship and have

Please indicate whether a full impact assessment is recommended NO

What data has been collected to facilitate the assessment of this policy/proposal?

Consultation analysis.

Adverse impact on any people with protected characteristics.

Could the policy/proposal be modified to reduce or eliminate any adverse impact?

How will the effect(s) of this policy/proposal on equality be monitored?

What data is required in the future?

Are there any adverse impacts on any particular group(s) No

If yes, please explain your reasons for going ahead.

Initial equality impact assessment of your proposal

Consulted People or Groups Not required

Informed People or Groups Not required

Summary and evidence of findings from your EIA Not required

QUALITY CONTORL SECTION

Submit to the Quality Control Officer for reviewing? No

Quality Control Officer comments Feedback has been included in the report.

Decision by Quality Control Officer Proceed for final approval

Submit draft to Accountable Officer? Yes

Decision by Accountable Officer Approve

Date approved / rejected by the Accountable Officer 24/03/2020

Reasons for approval or rejection Appropriate consideration of protected characteristics

Please print and save a PDF copy for your records Yes

Julie Bach

Person or Group

Content Type: Item

Version: 111.0

Created at 17/03/2020 04:35 PM by

Last modified at 24/03/2020 01:58 PM by Workflow on behalf of

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Sense checked: 08 April 2020, by Kwabena Osayande