

Background Paper

Equality & Safeguarding Impact Assessment – Update of the Housing Allocation Scheme regarding the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS)

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Partners/decision makers/implementers, etc.	West Sussex County Council - Partner Members – Decision making Hyde Group – Housing provider
Start date	1 December 2015
End date	The end date is 8 March 2016 when the amendment will be considered by Cabinet although the SVPRS is a 5 year scheme.
Relevance	The revision of the Housing Allocation Scheme is to allow the lawful provision of social housing to households being relocated to the area via the Government’s Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.
Policy Aims	The change in policy is to allow social homes to be allocated in accordance with Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 which requires the allocation of social housing to be in accordance with the Council’s Allocation Scheme.
Available evidence	There are currently 1836 households on the Council’s Housing Register and all but 7 of them have a local connection to the district. Homemove the Council’s Choice Based Letting system, commenced in July 2007 and since that time an average of 435 social homes have been let each year. West Sussex County Council is the lead authority for the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) and has advised the Home Office that it has the capacity to accept 60 households over the five year period of the scheme. Each district and borough in the County is expected to assist by providing sustainable housing for these households. Chichester District Council will thus be required to provide housing for 9 households over a period of 5 years. If the number of allocations continues at the same rate as previous years only 0.4% of homes allocated over the next 5 years will be to a household via the SVPRS.
Evidence gaps	This is a new scheme and we do not know the needs of the households we will be providing housing for.
Involvement and consultation	Council was advised of the SVPRS at its meeting in January 2016. A Locality SVPRS Steering Group has been set up with representation from West Sussex County Council, Hyde Group and a wide range of voluntary sector groups.
What is the actual/likely impact?	There is a potential to have an adverse impact on some groups with protected characteristics because households accommodated via the SVPRS will have priority over them for certain properties. However any disadvantage will be limited due to the small number of people being housed via the Scheme. The humanitarian issues outweigh any disadvantage to a person with protected characteristics.

Age	<p>The amendment to the Allocation Scheme should have no impact in respect of this group. It is anticipated that all families housed through the SVPRS will be working age households with children.</p> <p>A significant proportion of the social housing stock does, however, suit the needs of elderly applicants should it be required, including sheltered housing. Many bungalows and ground floor flats are advertised with preference given to people over a certain age (often 55 years or older) or to applicants with a mobility need.</p>
Disability	<p>There should be no adverse impact upon this group since we will try to allocate homes that cannot be adapted to meet the needs of disabled occupants unless the person being housed via the SVPRS has a disability requiring adaptation. In such a case a disabled person may be disadvantaged because the family housed by the SVPRS will have priority. It is considered that it will have a minimal impact because of the small number being housed via the Scheme.</p>
Race/Ethnicity	<p>The amendment will have a positive impact upon this group since it will be providing housing to people with a specific ethnicity. However, the impact will be small since the scheme will only provide housing for a small number of people</p>
Religious/Faith Groups	<p>The amendment may have a positive impact upon this group since it may be providing housing to people with a specific religion/faith. However, any impact will be small since the scheme will only provide housing for a small number of people. At the present time we do not know the religion/faith of the households that will be housed via the SVPRS.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>The impact cannot be determined at this stage. Some households housed via the Scheme may contain a pregnant person and some may have young children so it could have a positive impact. It is not envisaged that there will be a significant impact on other applicants on the housing register given the small number of allocations involved in the Scheme but there may be a small delay in some households being allocated a large home to meet their pregnancy/maternity needs.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>No adverse impact in respect of this group.</p>
Gender/Sex (including gender reassignment)	<p>No adverse impact in respect of this group.</p>
Safeguarding	<p>The Council has a duty to cooperate with others to safeguard children and adults at risk.</p> <p>The proposed change in the allocations policy should have no impact on safeguarding issues, however, clearly the SVPRS itself will involve children and vulnerable adults. Any CDC staff who may come into contact with families will be subject to our safeguarding policy and procedures. The keyworker will be a</p>

	<p>WSCC Think Family worker who will be subject to WSCC safeguarding processes and procedures. In addition any volunteers working with CDC as part of this scheme will be required to undertake DBS checks prior to having any contact with the families.</p>
Address the impact	<p>Some households on the Housing Register may have to wait slightly longer to be allocated a home because of the proposed amendment to the Allocation Scheme and this may affect some households with member with a protected characteristic. However, it is likely that we will only be providing accommodation for 9 households over a five year period and thus any impact on other households on the Housing Register will be very small. The humanitarian purpose of the SVPRS outweighs any minor impacts on applicants on the Housing Register with a protected characteristic.</p>
Monitoring and review	<p>The Housing Allocation Scheme is a document that is kept under constant review by officers of the Homemove Team to ensure that it complies with legislation and case law and also to make sure that it continues to meet its objectives. All allocations of housing through Homemove are monitored to ensure that they are in accordance with the Allocation Scheme. Applicants housed via the SVPRS will be monitored via the Locality Steering Group.</p>
Action Plan	<p>There is no specific action plan to monitor the equality impact assessment since no significant adverse impacts have been identified. However, the Scheme will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that it achieves its objectives and to ensure that it has had no adverse impact on any of the protected groups or any other group such as low income households.</p>
Decision making and quality control	<p>Cabinet 8 March 2016</p>