

# Equality Impact Assessment

See the *How to make an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet for help to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or [DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru), for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely Equality Impact Assessment should be completed before a decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

## I Details

### I.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Housing Support Grant

### I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is used to address the growing housing crisis in Gwynedd and to eliminate inequality. The HSG contributes to achieving the Housing Action Plan's aim of:

- No one homeless in Gwynedd
- Social housing available to everyone who needs it
- Affordable homes for everyone in Gwynedd
- Gwynedd housing benefiting the environment
- Homes having a positive influence on the health and well-being of the people of Gwynedd.

The HSG is part of a Welsh Government programme which offers grants to:

- enable early intervention to support activities to prevent homelessness
- stabilise people's housing situation
- assist people who may become homeless to find and keep accommodation.

The confirmation of the allocation for the financial year 2021/22 includes an increase in the grant, and therefore it will be necessary to ensure that the management of the HSG provides the best possible support for homeless people in Gwynedd. However, it should be noted that the Housing Support Grant does not contribute to the Authority's statutory duty to prevent homelessness.

### I.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Dafydd Gibbard, Head of Housing and Property

### I.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

30/03/2021– first version

## 2) Action

### 2.1 Who are the partners it will be necessary to work with to undertake this assessment?

Housing and Property Department staff  
Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department  
Housing Associations within Gwynedd  
Care Scrutiny Committee

### 2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics?

Confirmation of the increase in the Government's allocation arrived late and therefore there was little time available to submit the revised HSG application. However, an urgent consultation was undertaken with all external providers who currently provide homelessness support under the aegis of the Housing Support Grant requesting information on potential schemes that would fit the priorities of both the Grant and the Council. This built on the results of the engagement process which took place for the development of the Housing Action Plan 2021-2026.

### 2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

- Several responses were received from a number of different providers outlining elements of the services they offered and how the money could contribute to strengthening provision.
- The suggestions received were fully considered before some aspects of current plans were confirmed and included in the Authority's spending plan.
- The exercise was also useful in identifying contingency plans and additional services which could form part of the Programme in the future.

### 2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

The plan for the revised grant is based on the evidence contained in the Gwynedd Local Housing Market Assessment. This evidence has been updated to reflect the current situation following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Levels of homelessness have been steadily increasing since 2014 but this year, the number of homeless people has risen significantly with the figure approaching 950, an increase of 26% in one year and 71% higher than it was in 2014.
- The impact of the current pandemic has clearly contributed to the deterioration in the current situation. One direct side-effect of this situation is that there are now around 94 individuals in bed and breakfast accommodation compared to around 25 at this time last year.
- We have also had to seek options to temporarily increase our housing stock and now have around 95 in use.

- Two homeless hostels in the County are also full and there are currently over 200 individuals, couples and families in temporary accommodation in Gwynedd.

**2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be gathered?**

Any gaps in the evidence will be identified during the implementation of the Programme for 2021/22 by assessing and monitoring the individual plans for any equality impact.

### 3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must duly address the impact that any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to add other characteristics if you wish.

| Characteristics                     | What type of impact?* | In what way? What is the evidence?  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Race (including nationality)</b> | Positive              | The Plan has identified that 98% of people have confirmed their ethnicity as White and 2% of people were from other ethnic groups. According to the Local Housing Market Assessment, there is evidence that within the Private Rented Sector some potential tenants face discrimination because they are from an ethnic minority. The services provided by the grant will help all eligible individuals gain support according to their individual needs.   |
| <b>The Welsh language</b>           | Positive              | Increasing the number of those benefiting from the proposed support packages may mean that more local people choose or can stay in Gwynedd.<br><br>The additional investment in the Housing Support Grant will support the Council's policy to ensure that services are provided in the individual's language of choice.  |
| <b>Disability</b>                   | Positive              | There are a number of barriers for disabled children and adults in finding suitable and affordable housing, with a lack of accessible and flexible housing for adaptation. In addition, disabled people are more likely to live in poverty and experience severe deprivation than non-disabled people.<br><br>The support that people with a learning disability receive from the services contributes positively to improving the individual's quality of life. It also reduces the pressure on, and complements the support from, Social Care and Health.<br><br>The percentage of tenancies under threat due to mental health issues is increasing year on year. Supporting tenants to remain in their homes is an essential part of our strategy to prevent homelessness. If homelessness cannot be prevented then our temporary accommodation options will need to be further increased and more supported accommodation provided, which is costly. The extra money will contribute to ensuring that there is expertise to help these vulnerable individuals avoid losing their tenancy. |
| <b>Gender</b>                       | Positive              | The additional investment will help more men and women generally, it is intended to have a positive impact on all genders.<br><br>However, there are some specific schemes aimed at either women or men to meet their different needs, including those with some challenges which affect some with protected characteristics more than others.<br><br>The additional investment will contribute to services which ensure that victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence can access the support  |

|   |          |   |
|---|----------|---|
|   |          | they need. More women (almost 57%) receive support from services compared to men (43%).   |
| <b>Age</b>                                | Positive | <p>The Housing Support Grant funds housing related support services for people over 16 years of age. The additional funding will increase the number of individuals who will receive services linked to the grant and this is likely to have a positive impact on their situation. Attention will be focused on two specific groups, young people (16-24) and people over 55.</p> <p>About 16% of young people (16-24) receive grant aid. They have a need for property to 'move on', training for independent living and dealing with multi-support issues which has been identified as a priority and a specific project will seek to provide support for this issue for the 16-24 age group.</p> <p>In addition, around 44% of people over 55 receive grant aid. The over 80s population is increasing with many older properties unsuitable for enabling them to live independently in their homes.</p> |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b>                 | none     | <p>There are no individual plans relating to these features. However, individual plans will need to be monitored to identify if there are issues to be considered and if additional plans need to be commissioned.</p> <p>Regional discussions are ongoing to consider the need for Hoarding, Refuges for Men and LGBTQ projects in North Wales. Any equality assessment will be modified depending on the nature of the discussions at the RHSCG Group.</p>  |
| <b>Religion or belief (or non-belief)</b> | none     |   |
| <b>Gender reassignment</b>                | none     |   |
| <b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>            | none     |   |
| <b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>     | none     |   |

**3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society by advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties.**

| <b>General Duties of the Equality Act</b>                              | <b>Does it have an impact?*</b> | <b>In what way? What is the evidence?</b>   |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b> | Yes                             | The Housing Support Grant contributes to the efforts of the Housing Action Plan to provide suitable accommodation and seek to eliminate discrimination. In addition, the Grant promotes equality of opportunity by reducing barriers which prevent people in Gwynedd from living in accommodation which meets their needs. The additional investment will raise the number of people who will benefit from the Grant. |
| <b>Building good relationships</b>                                     | Yes                             | The Housing Assistance Grant offers partnership services aimed at reaching people in real need through promoting information about the grant and the support provided. The extra money will widen the opportunities to inform the services and look to build good relationships in consultation with people.  |
| <b>Encouraging good relationships</b>                                  | Yes                             |   |

|                            |     |   |
|----------------------------|-----|---|
| <b>Socio-economic Duty</b> | Yes | Evidence shows that 60% of people in Gwynedd are priced out of the housing market. The Housing Support Grant targets those facing socio-economic disadvantage through schemes to help them find and retain accommodation. The additional investment will directly contribute to increasing the number of people who will benefit from the services offered under the Grant. |
|----------------------------|-----|---|

#### 4) Analysing the results

##### 4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

Yes. The programme helps over 2,000 people every year in Gwynedd to live independently. The additional allocation will assist Gwynedd providers and officers to increase the support available to individuals who present themselves as homeless or potentially homeless. The proposed arrangements will significantly increase the size of the in-house support team with the aim of one officer supporting around 25 vulnerable individuals rather than the current 1:60. The additional Government funding gives us the opportunity to put in place appropriate support arrangements to respond to the growing challenge in the sector.

##### 4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

We do not anticipate any negative impact but we will regularly monitor the relevant plans and prepare annual reports to the Welsh Government as part of our ongoing activities.

##### 4.3 What should be done?

Select one of the following:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Continue with the policy / service as it is robust                   | X |
| Adapt the policy to delete any barriers                              |   |
| Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big |   |
| Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified  |   |

##### 4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Robust arrangements are already in place to monitor the outcomes achieved by the specific plans and services. Ongoing consultation will take place with providers to ensure that the scheme continues to assist in the delivery of services to users and to identify and mitigate any negative impacts identified by the Council or providers as a result of the additional investment.

##### 4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, please explain why here.

Not applicable

#### 5) Monitoring

##### 5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

Under the terms of the grant, Local Authorities are required to ensure that they review and monitor all Housing Support Grant related contracts. This should be arranged on a regular basis, at least annually, to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Grant, using a risk-based approach. In addition, the Council will

need to keep under constant review that the plans align with the Council's strategic aim for addressing homelessness.