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# **Equality Impact Assessment Form: Own Initiative Investigation - Homelessness Assessments and Reviews**

See Equality Impact Assessment Policy and Procedure for detailed guidance on how to complete this form.

### Section 1: Purpose and scope of policy

<b>Title</b>	Own Initiative Investigation – Investigation of the homelessness assessment and review process
<b>New or existing</b>	New
<b>Owner</b>	Own Initiative Investigation Team
<b>Officer(s) undertaking the EIA</b>	Beverley Allen Ania Rolewska
<b>What does the policy aim to achieve?</b>	<p>The intervention concerns conducting an own initiative investigation (OII) into administrative practice of review of homelessness assessments in Wales. The investigation will also consider any improvements or good practice in this part of homelessness service delivery resulting from the COVID -19 pandemic with a view to making recommendations if the investigation finds maladministration or service failure.</p> <p>The intervention involves four steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Specifying proposed focus of the investigation</li> <li>2. Public consultation on the proposed focus</li> <li>3. Investigation</li> <li>4. Formulation of recommendations and sharing of findings</li> </ol> <p>This assessment considers the first two steps.</p> <p>In March 2020, the proposed focus of the own initiative investigation was the administration of the homelessness assessment and review process by local authorities (LAs) in Wales.</p> <p>It was proposed that this investigation would consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether LAs in Wales are meeting their statutory duties to ensure that homelessness assessments are carried out appropriately</li> <li>• whether those who may seek to challenge the outcome of an assessment, or the decision that an LA's duty has ended, understand their right to request a review under section 85 of the <a href="#">Housing (Wales) Act 2014</a> (HWA).</li> <li>• whether reviews undertaken in accordance with section 85 HWA were properly administered</li> </ul>

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- the reasons given for overturning decision, and, if appropriate, whether lessons are learned and shared within those LAs
- in cases where decisions have not been overturned, whether those affected are aware of the remaining remedies available to them.

A public consultation on this proposed investigation was launched in [March 2020](#). However, given the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown, a decision was taken to delay the OII and amend the consultation to include the changes that RBs have made in response to COVID-19.

In May 2020, the OI Team recommended that it would not be appropriate to re-start the original consultation in its current format and that it would be preferable to move into a 'watch and wait' situation in the short term to ensure that the first OII was current, reflected the recent efforts/successes and potentially any issues of maladministration arising from Covid-19 situation. Restart around October 2020 was recommended.

It was felt that this would also be an opportune time to host a Webinar to disseminate information about PSOW powers, proposals and encourage engagement with the consultation process.

In September 2020, a revised proposal was finalised and approved. Consultation of this proposal was launched at the Chartered Institute for Housing Cymru: Tai Cymru 2020 event. This platform was chosen as a means of reaching people working in the sector and those representing users of the service to ensure a broader audience to encourage awareness and participation in this exercise. Endorsement for the proposal was received from an eminent actor and social campaigner. The consultation documents were published on the PSOW website and details of the same were communicated directly to a number of consultees to include other public service regulators, relevant bodies in jurisdiction, third sector and representative organisations and other interested parties.

The [September 2020](#) consultation proposed that the own initiative investigation should consider:

- Whether Local Authorities in Wales are meeting their statutory duties under the HWA and the Guidance to ensure that homelessness assessments are carried out appropriately
- Whether those who may be entitled to seek to challenge the outcome of an assessment, or the decision that a Local Authority's duty has ended, are aware and understand their right to request a review under section 85 HWA
- Whether reviews undertaken in accordance with section 85 HWA are properly administered

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reasons given for overturning assessment decisions and, if appropriate, whether lessons are learned and shared within those Local Authorities or more widely, as appropriate</li> <li>• In cases where decisions have not been overturned, whether those affected are aware of the remaining remedies available to them</li> <li>• The range of administrative actions and approaches taken during the pandemic to assess, address and review the needs of homeless people or those presenting as homeless by Local Authorities to identify opportunities for longer term or wider improvements</li> </ul>
<b>How is the policy related to other areas of work?</b>	<p>This intervention links to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSOW Corporate Plan 2019-22 (Strategic Aim 2: Promote Learning, Work to Improve Public Services)</li> <li>• PSOW Operational Plan 2020/21 (Action 2.2)</li> <li>• PSOW Equality Plan 2019-22 (Objective 2.3)</li> </ul> <p>It is also relevant to PSOW's general investigatory work.</p>
<b>Who is likely to be affected by this policy?</b>	<p>This intervention will impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• members of the public who have been affected or impacted by homelessness and associated issues</li> <li>• Relevant Bodies – Local Authorities</li> <li>• 3rd party stakeholders – Welsh Government, Audit Office Wales, Charities and Future Generations Commissioner</li> <li>• PSOW (in terms of our workload, ways of working and reputation)</li> </ul>

### Section 2: Assessment of relevance and proportionality

Key points to remember:

- to assess relevance you must consider evidence related to all equality characteristics (see EIA policy for details)
- you must record all evidence considered in [section 4](#) of this form.

Question	No	Yes	Comments
Does the policy relate to PSOW's equality objectives and identified actions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PSOW Equality Plan 2019-22 (Objective 2.3)

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Question	No	Yes	Comments
Does the policy relate to functions that evidence, or previous activities have identified as being important to, particular characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Our role is to investigate complaints of maladministration and service failure that result in injustice for members of the public. As part of that, we also intervene in cases where equality and human rights issues are relevant. Whilst we conduct equality monitoring of our complainants, we don't currently tag cases where specific protected characteristics have been engaged (an action to be developed during 2020/21). However, investigating on our own initiative represents a new way of working for us, allowing us to proactively investigate the existence of systemic maladministration causing injustice, including for groups of complainants who would not commonly or may have difficulty accessing our service.
Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities, or a significant potential for reducing inequalities or improving outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are well-evidenced links between homelessness and age, gender, sexual orientation and trans identity, and physical or mental health difficulties. These vulnerabilities may be aggravated further by the person being homeless as it may restrict their ability to access and engage with the support and assistance they require. There is also growing evidence about the link between ethnicity and Covid-19 health outcomes, which make the provision of adequate housing to BAME people a particularly pressing issue.
<p>Is there evidence to suggest that this policy may affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• equal treatment of people with certain characteristics</li> <li>• meeting the needs of people with equality characteristics (including through provision of reasonable adjustments)</li> <li>• participation of people with equality characteristics</li> <li>• community relations between different equality groups</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This intervention concerns access to services by people who are homeless. It will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seek to meet the needs of people who are affected by homelessness. Within this group, there appears to be higher than average representation of women and people who are disabled or suffer from health conditions. There is evidence that people who identify as LGBTQ+ may be both in more need of the service than straight people and face barriers to access. This group is also clearly affected by socio-economic disadvantage.</li> <li>• involve securing insights from homeless people, either through representative organisations or directly.</li> </ul>
Is there evidence to suggest that this policy may influence disadvantage due to people's socio-economic status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Socio-economic disadvantage is defined as "living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services".

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Question	No	Yes	Comments
			<p>Homelessness is one of the key disadvantages that people may suffer due to inequality in socio-economic factors, such as material deprivation; access to adequate housing; access to health and social care services.</p> <p>PSOW cannot assess the merits of decisions taken by the LAs but the investigation will consider whether the process followed in reaching those decisions is applied correctly, thus helping to ensure that all who are entitled to help, receive it.</p>
Is there evidence to suggest that this policy may affect opportunities for people to use Welsh or affect how PSOW treats the Welsh language?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The intervention is unlikely to have clear direct effects. The main foreseen implication for the Welsh language relates to ensuring that all consultation documents and publications related to the intervention are available bilingually and that any evidence can be submitted in Welsh as well as English.

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, proceed to [section 3](#).

If a policy is not deemed relevant for conducting a full EIA, proceed to [section 5](#).

### Section 3: Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key points to remember:

- you must consider at this stage any need for collection of further evidence - including through engagement with groups potentially affected by the policy;
- you must record all evidence informing this stage in [section 4](#) of this form.

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Characteristic	Negative impact			Positive impact			n/a	Justification based on the evidence considered	Proposed actions to mitigate negative impact /maximise positive impact	Negative impact			Positive impact		
	H	M	L	H	M	L				H	M	L	H	M	L
General aspects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<p>The screening stage highlighted that the investigation focus is likely to touch upon multiple areas of existing inequalities and has a potential to improve outcomes for groups with several equality characteristics.</p> <p>The consultation documentation demonstrates recognition that certain groups may experience inequalities and that views or comments were welcomed from all who are, have been homeless or have experience of the Assessment and Review Process.</p>	<p>The positive impact of the investigation can be strengthened if its scope is expanded to explicitly take into account how the LA are seeking to meet the needs of protected groups as part of the assessment and review process – with particular focus on people who are disabled and experience mental health issues; people who identify as LGBTQ+; young people; and ethnic minorities. This focus may require a consultation with EHRC.</p> <p>See further notes below about targeting specific groups.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed investigation focus should impact all age groups equally positively. The evidence suggests, however, that of households threatened with homelessness in 2018/19, 22% were under 25, the evidence suggests that the number of young people presenting as homeless/threatened with homelessness appears to be increasing.</p> <p>To facilitate access for different age groups, the consultation document gives the option for submission of responses/comments electronically via a survey monkey weblink and also explains that postal responses could be submitted as an alternative. Telephone contact details are included to deal with</p>	<p>A more explicit focus on the experiences of and provision for this age group could maximise the positive impact of the investigation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Characteristic	Negative impact			Positive impact			n/a	Justification based on the evidence considered	Proposed actions to mitigate negative impact /maximise positive impact	Negative impact			Positive impact		
	H	M	L	H	M	L				H	M	L	H	M	L
								any questions, queries or requests which may arise or be made.							
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed investigation focus can be expected to have high positive impact on disabled people. In 2016, 1/3 of homelessness cases were caused by a health problem. A 2014 study suggested that the proportion of homeless people with disabilities or mental health problems was much higher than in the general population. Given the representation of this group among people who are homeless, it is likely that the investigation will have a highly positive impact.</p> <p>All consultation communication will be made available in Easy Read.</p>	<p>The assessment suggested that positive impact of the investigation could be increased by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• additional focus of the investigation on accessibility of information and support on assessment and review process</li> <li>• more specific targeting of this group during the consultation stage</li> <li>• further steps to improve the accessibility of the consultation</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed investigation focus should impact people equally positively, regardless of gender.	No further steps to maximise the positive impact on this group were identified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed investigation focus is such that it could have a higher positive impact on LGBTQ+ people. This group as a whole is understood to be particularly at risk of homelessness due to familial rejection and face barriers in access to support services.</p> <p>Given the vulnerability of this group, the proposed investigation could have a higher positive impact on LGBTQ+ people than on some other protected groups.</p>	The positive impact of the investigation on this group could be increase by more specific targeting of this group at the consultation stage (e.g. through Stonewall).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Characteristic	Negative impact			Positive impact			n/a	Justification based on the evidence considered	Proposed actions to mitigate negative impact /maximise positive impact	Negative impact			Positive impact		
	H	M	L	H	M	L				H	M	L	H	M	L
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There was no clear data to link the investigation focus to marital status. The proposed investigation focus should impact all people equally positively regardless of their marital status.	No further steps to maximise the positive impact on this group were identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed investigation focus should have a higher positive impact on parents and pregnant women. The presence of dependent children or a pregnant woman accounted for 43 per cent of all Section 75 assessments during 2018-19.	No further steps to maximise the positive impact on this group were identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed investigation focus should have a higher positive impact on people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The data on households threatened with homelessness in 2018/19 indicated over-representation of ethnic minorities in the proportion of households who accepted an offer of settled suitable accommodation.</p> <p>There is also a wealth of research connecting ethnic background with higher rate of vulnerability to Covid-19 – amongst others, due to the higher levels of existing health conditions among BAME people, barriers to accessing health information and support due to language barriers and digital exclusion. Given that, according to public health advice, staying indoors and social distancing are amongst the key safety measures to avoid exposure to the virus, provision of appropriate housing</p>	The positive impact of the investigation on this group could be increase by more specific targeting of this group at the consultation stage (e.g. through representative and advocacy organisations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Characteristic	Negative impact			Positive impact			n/a	Justification based on the evidence considered	Proposed actions to mitigate negative impact /maximise positive impact	Negative impact			Positive impact		
	H	M	L	H	M	L				H	M	L	H	M	L
								becomes a particularly pressing need for BAME people.							
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The data did not point to inequalities in access to or experience of the assessment and review process based on religion. The proposed investigation focus should impact service users positively regardless of their religion.	No further steps to maximise the positive impact on this group were identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed investigation focus is could have a higher positive impact on LGBTQ+ people. This group as a whole is understood to be particularly at risk of homelessness due to familial rejection and face barriers in access to support services.  Given the vulnerability of this group, the proposed investigation could have a higher positive impact on LGBTQ+ people.	This positive impact of the investigation on this group could be strengthened by more explicit targeting during the consultation process of organisations working with LGBTQ+ communities (e.g. Stonewall).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Given its focus on homelessness, the proposed investigation is likely to have a high positive impact on economically disadvantaged groups.  Homelessness is a problem across Wales. The investigation also aims to tailor the sample of the LAs investigated to ensure that they are representative geographically (North / South). It will also select the authorities based on the available data on households assessed as homeless / review requests received	No further steps to maximise the positive impact on this group were identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Characteristic	Negative impact			Positive impact			n/a	Justification based on the evidence considered	Proposed actions to mitigate negative impact /maximise positive impact	Negative impact			Positive impact		
	H	M	L	H	M	L				H	M	L	H	M	L
								<p>/ overturned (see Shelter evidence, section 4)</p> <p>These criteria currently suggested a possible focus on Cardiff, Newport, Wrexham, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Carmarthenshire or Bridgend.</p>							
Welsh language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed investigation focus should impact equally positively Welsh speakers and people with no Welsh language skills. The evidence reviewed did not point to inequalities in access to or experience of the assessment and review process based on the Welsh language skills.</p> <p>All consultation communication as originally planned would be available bilingually.</p>	<p>The positive impact of the investigation could be strengthened by considering the availability of information about the assessment and review process in Welsh.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section 4: Register of evidence and engagement

Existing evidence considered	
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>Welsh Government <a href="#">Homelessness in Wales, 2018-19</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of households threatened with homelessness in 2018/19, the majority (78 %) of applicants were over 25 years old, but in 20% of cases applicants were between 18 and 24 years and in 2% applicants were 16 or 17 years old.</li> <li>of Welsh households threatened with homelessness and applying for support in 2018/19, 63% of applicants were women. However, for those households assessed as homeless (under Section 73), in 55 per cent of cases the applicant was male</li> <li>the presence of dependent children or a pregnant woman accounted for 43 per cent of all Section 75 assessments during 2018-19</li> <li>during 2018-19, the applicant was from a black or minority ethnic background in 7 per cent of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless and 6 per cent of households successfully relieved of homelessness. However, in both 2017-18 and 2018-19, the proportion of households who accepted an offer of settled suitable accommodation under Section 75 where the applicants were from a black or minority ethnic background was much higher at 15 per cent</li> <li>whilst 46% of applicants were single, 33% were single parents and 11% were couples with dependent children</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Post-implementation evaluation of Part 2 of the Housing Act (Wales) 2014: Final Report (July 2018)</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single people experienced poor outcomes under the previous legislation. It is important to note however, that under the new Act, that the outcomes for single people are still poor as they often remain without a solution after all stages.</li> <li>The number of young people presenting as homeless/threatened with homelessness appears to be increasing</li> <li>Poor mental health affected the majority of service users who participated in the study</li> <li>people who are rough sleeping, cannot have their homelessness prevented and often do not meet the vulnerability threshold to be considered as being in priority need. Therefore, they do not receive a rehousing duty at the final stage of the legislation</li> </ul> <p>Equality and Human Rights Commission <a href="#">Housing and disabled people: Wales's hidden crisis</a> (2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disabled people tend to face a longer wait to be housed in suitable accommodation; this is acknowledged by housing providers</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Causes of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Rapid Evidence Assessment</a> (March 2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2017, roughly half of the individuals in supported homeless accommodation in England are between the ages of 18-24. The strong association between young age and homelessness is explained by some studies by the disproportionate experience of poverty among young people.</li> <li>young people who identify as LGBT experience more acute challenges and</li> </ul>

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	<p>are more likely to find themselves homeless than their non-LGBT peers e.g. due to parental rejection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the UK evidence on the causes of homelessness among older people is relatively dated</li> </ul> <p>Welsh Government definition of socio-economic disadvantage (p. 10-11), <a href="#">A More Equal Wales –Commencing the Socioeconomic Duty</a> (2019)</p> <p>EHRC, <a href="#">England’s most disadvantaged groups: Homeless people</a> (2016)</p> <p>Homelessness Link <a href="#">The unhealthy state of homelessness’</a> (2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41% of homeless people were found to have long term physical health problems – compared to 28% of general population</li> <li>• 45% of homeless people were found to have mental health problems – compared to 58% of general population</li> <li>• Despite 90% of those surveyed reporting that they are registered with a GP, a significant number of homeless people report that they are not receiving help with their health problems</li> </ul> <p>A policy paper produced by Age UK in July 2019 ‘<a href="#">Older homelessness’</a> references a warning issued in 2017 by the Local Government Association that “based on existing trends, the scale of elderly homelessness is set to double by 2025” in England and Wales.</p> <p>Age UK also identifies that many older people, some with multiple needs, do not apply to their local authority or, if they do, they may be denied help depending on the interpretation of the homelessness legislation by individual local authorities. The paper further identifies that although it is also the case that older people may still be accepted as homeless if they are recognised as having a ‘priority need’ due to ‘vulnerability’, older homelessness is often hidden in hostels or temporary accommodation provision so does not appear in official statistics.</p> <p>Equality and Human Rights Commission <a href="#">Is Wales Fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2018</a>, 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An investigation commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2016 to examine the experiences of homeless people found a third of those asked stated their homelessness was caused, in part, by a health problem</li> <li>• EHRC 2018 inquiry found that disabled people are demoralised and frustrated by the housing system, reporting a severe shortage of accessible houses across all tenures. Only 30% of local authorities felt they were meeting the demand for tenancy support.</li> <li>• For 6% of households prevented from becoming homeless, and 5% of households relieved of homelessness, the applicant was from an ethnic minority background. This is slightly higher than official estimates of the ethnic minority population in Wales overall (4%) (ONS 2012).</li> </ul> <p><u>Office for National Statistics, Deaths of Homeless people in England and Wales: 2018</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent data published by the Office for National Statistics estimated the number of deaths of homeless people in England and Wales in 2018 at 726. Of these deaths, two in five were related to drug poisoning, an increase in this cause of</li> </ul>
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	<p>death of 55% since 2017. The mean age of death for men was 45 and for women 43 years of age. In Wales, the ONS data estimates 34 people died.</p> <p>Shelter Cymru, <a href="#">Trapped on the Streets Understanding rough sleeping in Wales</a> (2018). The study found that the following groups were prominent among respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prison leavers</li> <li>• care leavers</li> <li>• people with complex, unmet support needs</li> <li>• couples</li> </ul> <p>The professionals who contributed to the study spoke of a perception that the age profile of people sleeping rough has lowered in recent years, with increasing numbers of younger people on the streets in Wales.</p> <p>The study found that pathways into rough sleeping included individual factors, which are problems in the person's own life, such as physical or mental health conditions or relationship breakdown (31%); and structural factors, which are wider problems in the system such as the rising cost of housing, the poverty trap, and welfare benefit cuts.</p> <p>Shelter Cymru <a href="#">Homelessness among trans people in Wales</a> (2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGBTQ+ people as a whole are understood to be particularly at risk of homelessness due to familial rejection.</li> <li>• trans people were frequently unwilling to access homelessness services, believing that they would not have anything to offer them that met their needs.</li> <li>• the overall picture was of services that want to help trans people, although where structures operate as a barrier, staff are not always aware of the best way to do this</li> <li>• being homeless made it harder to access formal support for transitioning socially, legally and/ or medically.</li> </ul> <p>25% of British trans people have experienced homelessness according to <a href="#">LGBT in Britain - Trans Report</a> (2017).</p> <p><a href="#">COVID-19 BAME Advisory Group - Potential impact of COVID-19 evidence paper</a> (July 2020)</p> <p>There is a wealth of research connecting ethnic background with higher rate of Covid-19 cases. Research points in this respect, amongst other, to the higher levels of existing health conditions among BAME people, such as diabetes, the fact they suffer from mental ill health and face barriers to accessing health information and support due to language barriers and now digital exclusion.</p>
<b>Additional evidence collected</b>	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	
Method of evidence collection	Targeted consultation
Record of the evidence	<b>Audit Wales</b> completed an investigation in respect of <a href="#">Rough Sleeping in Wales</a>

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collected	<p><b>The Future Generations Commissioner</b> confirmed that homelessness as an issue which they consider as part of their monitoring and assessment of the Health and Wellness national goal. They confirmed that they would be very open to working with PSOW on joint projects</p> <p><b>The Older People’s Commissioner for Wales</b> said that more specialised advocacy services such as Shelter Cymru available to help people with housing and homelessness issues, the OPCW does not generally receive those type of complaints, therefore homelessness and associated issues are not an area of focus as such for them currently.</p> <p><b>The Children’s Commissioner Wales</b> said that homelessness and the issues associated with this were a feature in their ‘Lost After Care’ monitoring report in 2013. As part of that the CCW considered concerns that there was a lack of appropriate affordable accommodation for care leavers.</p> <p><b>Shelter Cymru</b> was able to share information held by them in relation to the homelessness review process. They advised that in 2019 they requested information via FOI requests from all 22 local authorities in Wales on the number of review requests under section 85 H(W)A 2014 that they receive each year and the reason why. Shelter Cymru also asked how many of the reviewed decisions were overturned. The information was provided by 19 local authorities (Carmarthenshire, RCT and Anglesey failed to respond).</p> <p>For the period 2017 – 2018 the majority of review requests were made to Cardiff (185 review requests – 50% overturned), Wrexham (50 review requests – 14% overturned), Flintshire (49 review requests – 37% overturned), Bridgend (26 review requests – 35% overturned) and Blaenau Gwent (25 review requests – 32% overturned). The remaining local authorities had 16 or less requests.</p> <p>The authorities that had the highest percentage of review decisions overturned were Denbighshire (100% - 1 review request), Neath Port Talbot (75% - 8 review requests), Cardiff (as above), Powys (50% - 4 review requests) and Gwynedd (46% - 13 review requests). Statistics from previous years showed that in some local authorities, these figures were consistent.</p> <p>Anecdotally, Shelter Cymru expressed concern about the quality of decision letters and information given to homelessness applicants concerning the right to review.</p> <p>Shelter Cymru explained that their clients have to satisfy a means and merits test to obtain legal aid to cover appeal or Judicial Review proceedings. This can be challenging for some people who are rough sleeping, hidden homeless or sofa surfing</p> <p>Shelter Cymru produced a report analysing the role of <a href="#">Homelessness reviews and litigation</a>. Which highlighted that limited access to advice and legal funding means that fewer people can be assisted to exercise their rights of appeal and legal challenge.</p>
Date completed	30 October 2020
Method of evidence collection	Public consultation
Record of the evidence collected	Responses were received from 24 different sources, ranging from other Commissioners, the Auditor General, Local Authorities and third sector organisations. Specifically, the OPCW and the CCW. The OPCW explained that there is a real and growing concern

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	<p>about the plight of older people who become homeless. The OPCW said that the availability of advice and support, particularly around securing alternative accommodation is crucial, as is having a clear understanding of the assessment process, a right to request a review plus their right to make a further complaint. Additionally, the OPCW said that greater emphasis on collaborative working presents opportunity to change perceptions and reach those who felt unable to engage with services.</p> <p>The CCW expressed concern that an increasing and disproportionate number of young people who are in care experienced, face the devastating experience of becoming homeless. The CCW said that it is critical, that any assessment on homelessness for families with dependent children, takes account of children and young people's unique rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The CCW is also aware that many young people have not been able to access support in the way they usually would during the pandemic.</p> <p>These responses highlight the difficulties encountered by older and younger persons and will be taken into consideration during the investigation when considering the impact on all groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.</p>
Date completed	<p>The consultation was originally launched in March 2020. However, it had been delayed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Revised consultation launched on 23 September 2020. The Consultation closed on 30 October 2020.</p>



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## Section 5: Outcomes report

<b>EIA stage completed</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Screening</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Impact assessment</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Screening	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Impact assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Screening	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Impact assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
<b>Outcome of the EIA procedure</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Proceed with policy – no changes</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Make changes to policy</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Do not proceed with policy</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Proceed with policy – no changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make changes to policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Do not proceed with policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proceed with policy – no changes	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Make changes to policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Do not proceed with policy	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<b>Action plan (full EIA only)</b>							
Where actions are required to mitigate the level of negative impact or maximise positive impact, please specify:							
<b>Key issue</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Responsible officer</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>				
<b>Consultation design and process</b>							
Improve accessibility of the consultation documents	<p>Large print documents of the consultation documents to be made available on request.</p> <p>A launch event to take place where details of the consultation will be presented.</p>	OI Team	Completed at consultation stage (September 2020)				
“	Due to the ongoing restrictions to manage the Covid -19 pandemic, it was not possible to organise focus groups to improve he accessibility of the consultation. However, accessible options for engagement, such as focus groups, will be arranged as part of the investigation process to ensure that we are able capture views and experiences of those impacted where the Covid-19 situation will allow.	OI Team	Completed at consultation stage (September 2020)				
“	On reflection, we should have produced a format for anyone hard of hearing or blind. This action was not considered in time for the September 2020 consultation. However, the OI Team will learn from it and ensure that these formats are made available during the next OI consultation, was well as when producing the report on the investigation.	OI Team	At publication of the investigation report At planning of the next OI investigation				

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Improve engagement with the consultation by young and older people	Organisations representing younger (Llamau, FGC & CCW) and older people (Age Cymru & OPCW) to be directly consulted with and asked where possible to encourage and support participation.	OI Team	Completed at consultation stage (September 2020)
Improve engagement with the consultation by people with disabilities	Organisations representing older people and people with physical and mental health disabilities (Disability Wales & Age Cymru) to be directly consulted with and asked where possible to encourage and support participation.	OI Team	Completed at consultation stage (September 2020)
Improve engagement with the consultation by LGBTQ+ community	Details of the public consultation to be shared with Stonewall. Stonewall to be asked to spread the word about consultation through appropriate channels.	OI Team	Completed at consultation stage (September 2020)
Improve engagement with the consultation by BAME people	Details of the public consultation to be specifically shared with third sector representative organisations of the BAME communities (EYST, EMWWAA, African Community Centre, RCC & Chinese in Wales). These organisations to be also asked to spread the word about consultation through appropriate channels.	OI Team	Completed at consultation stage (September 2020)
<b>Scope of the investigation</b>			
Improve attention of the investigation to equality issues in general	Include in the scope of the investigation how LAs are seeking to meet the needs of protected groups as part of the assessment and review process – with particular focus on people who are disabled and experience mental health issues; people who identify as LGBTQ+; young people; and ethnic minorities.	Tb considered – does it align with our remit and would it be feasible?	EIA commenced in May 2020 and updated continuously. Will be next reviewed end of January 2021 when relevant statistics are received  Amended (13/04/2021) LA's asked to provide stats on protected characteristics which have been provided  - Questions to LA officers asking about barriers in particular language barriers

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Improve attention of the investigation to Welsh language provision	Include in the scope of the investigation the extent to which LAs ensure that the assessment and review process is accessible in Welsh	To be considered - does it align with our remit and would it be feasible?	EIA commenced in May 2020 and updated continuously. Will be next reviewed end of January when relevant statistics received  Amended (13/04/2021) LA's asked to provide info about Welsh language which have been provided - Questions to LA officers asking about barriers in particular language barriers.
<b>Monitoring (full EIA only)</b>			
<b>Please outline monitoring arrangements</b>	At the point of approval of consultation arrangements At the point of approval of final investigation proposals		
<b>Please specify responsible officer</b>	Claire Beynon (Improvement Team) The Management Team		
<b>Publication needs (full EIA only)</b>			
Was the impact deemed as substantial (high)?	Yes		
Authorised by the MT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Date	April 2021		