

Budget EqIA 4: Supported Housing

This is an Equality Impact Assessment of the Supported Housing saving in the budget. Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The duty to pay 'due regard' is required to be demonstrated in the decision making and the implementation process. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed projects that are part of the programme is the means by which we show 'due regard'.

1. The Decision

Remove funding for support to those not in priority need (YMCA/Orbit/St Mungos), ensuring that most vulnerable will continue to be supported including retaining provision for accommodation and support for vulnerable teenage parents.

2. Key Issues

a) What does this funding achieve?

The funding employs staff to provide support to people in supported accommodation. Staff support people to maintain their current temporary accommodation and to find permanent accommodation. They will work with residents to develop the skills needed to prevent future homelessness and will liaise with more specialist support services such as mental health and substance misuse.

b) What will be lost?

20 x places of direct access short-term provision for homeless people aged 16-65 (YMCA)

36 x homeless hostel places for 25-65 year olds (Orbit)

12 x supported housing places for 16-19 year olds (St Mungo's)

c) How does this relate to the equality duty?

The funding supports services provided to various groups of people who can benefit from housing support. People accessing the YMCA and Orbit may not all be priority homeless as defined by the Housing Act as these services are currently open to referral routes other than the Council's housing options team such as self-referral and the Probation Service. All 16 -17 year olds and care leavers are priority homeless but effective joint working between housing and social care has reduced the number of places required for this client group (St Mungo's)

It is possible that a level of support may continue without the Council's revenue funding through housing benefit or income generated by the provider organisations e.g. charitable donations but if the funding were to be withdrawn this decision would rest with the provider organisations in Milton Keynes. Any people previously supported by these services where there is a statutory homelessness duty will need to be accommodated and supported through other services.

3. Recommendation

Vulnerable people who would benefit from supported accommodation including young people or people with a mental illness may be adversely impacted. The impact may be mitigated if accommodation and a level of support can be provided without the need for local authority revenue funding.