

City Housing Directorate Equality Plan

Equality Advisory Group

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Presenter:

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Recommendations for action or decision

The Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the findings against each directorate equality plan outlined in appendices 9-14.
2. Review and comment on actions taken to date and next steps proposed by the service outlined in appendices 2-8.
3. Endorse proposed actions where appropriate

Key Questions for Scrutiny to consider:

1. For scrutiny panel to review and comment on progress made and performance achieved against Housing EDI Directorate Equality Plans (DEPs) as outlined in slide 4
2. Invite the scrutiny panel to query or comment on performance against the housing DEPs, particularly where disparities have emerged outlined in appendices 1-17.

Purpose and Background

1. For scrutiny panel to review and comment on progress made and performance achieved against Housing EDI Directorate Equality Plans (DEPs) as outlined in slide 4
2. Invite the scrutiny panel to query or comment on performance against the housing DEPs, particularly where disparities have emerged outlined in appendices 1-17.

Key Information for Scrutiny (1)

Challenge	Response
<p>Coverage of certain protected characteristics, mainly 'sexual orientation' is low (this doesn't include where tenants have chosen not to disclose). We also can't look at the coverage of gender identity reporting until the fields are split (currently, it falls under sex and there is no separate gender identity field on NEC)</p>	<p>We are in the process of getting NEC developers to increase the sexual orientation response options to match the Census reporting and EDI best practice so that tenants have increased options of ways to identify that they feel best represent them.</p> <p>The 'engage' app produced by Wolverhampton Homes will give residents the ability to update their demographic information by logging in and changing this themselves. This will save time and resource that would have been needed to backfill this information from a service perspective.</p>
<p>The system we use for private sector reporting (IDOX) doesn't have certain fields we would need to accurately report on all of the protected characteristics. It doesn't have a field for gender identity or sexual orientation and even though the other fields are in the system, coverage across all of our demographic data is a lot lower in idox compared to NEC.</p>	<p>We have produced a data quality dashboard to show the IDOX data quality errors so that the team inputting data can identify where reporting gaps are and improve this recording going forward.</p> <p>We will have similar discussions with IDOX developers as we have with NEC to see if we can get the additional fields added to the system.</p>

Key Information for Scrutiny (2)

Challenge	Response
<p>Prioritisation criteria can skew disproportionality figures. We aren't always going to have the same proportions of people across the cohorts due to the fact that certain groups of people will be priority for rehousing (those with disabilities, caring responsibilities or dependent children)</p>	<p>We will look case by case to understand disproportionalities identified in more depth and see whether it is due to prioritisation. Where we suspect bias, we will interrogate and make the appropriate changes to the service to ensure this doesn't continue to happen.</p>
<p>A lot of good practice can be seen across the directorate equality plans. One area where we see positive disparities across all the directorate equality plans is our service accessibility and support for those with a disability. We would hope to see the same positive performance across all protected characteristics.</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor disability representation across the service; however, we may need to shift our focus and dig deeper into the data and service context for why other protected characteristics may not be showing the same positive disparities.</p> <p>There may be reasons beyond the services control such as prioritisation, limited stock and increasing waiting list, type of stock available and whether it's suitable for people on the waiting list in the groups that are being over and underrepresented.</p>

Performance Overview (1)

Indicator	Source	Time Period Covered	Commentary
Waiting vs Rehoused	NEC	1 st Jan 2023 – 31 st Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting list data is live, rehousing depends on what period you choose • Although NEC fields are comprehensive, there are a lot of blanks in the data where people haven't got data recorded/don't want to disclose. The 'engage' app will allow tenants to update their own personal information which saves housing officers having to update this manually and retrospectively. • The data looks mostly proportional against all protected characteristics in this table. • Slight overrepresentation of older people and those with a disability being rehoused, most likely due to additional support needs in these groups. • There are a higher proportion of Muslim people being rehoused than on the waiting list which we will be exploring with deep dives into the data, but we think it may be because they are more likely to live in multi-generational households and have more overcrowded living situations which would make them a priority. • Sexual Orientation doesn't seem to have any influence over those who get rehoused, the applicants who choose not to disclose their sexual orientation are the most overrepresented when comparing proportions on the waiting list to the rehoused list, • Gender Identity isn't collected appropriately enough to comment on disparities efficiently.

Performance Overview (2)

Indicator	Source	Time Period Covered	Commentary
Rent Arrears vs Active Tenants	NEC	Live as of Dec 31st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent Arrears and active tenant data is live so we can see updates as they happen • Our performance indicates that tenants between 25–44-year-old females are overrepresented in the rent arrears cohort. This would need further exploration, but this is likely due to them having dependent children and the fact that more females are single parents than males. This could be contributing to the financial pressures making them unable to pay their rent. • Ethnic minority groups are more likely to be in rent arrears than their White counterparts. This will be a focus point of analysis going forward to understand what other pressures these residents are facing and whether the service can further support to prevent this from happening. • Again, people with a disability are less likely to be in rent arrears, showing that our prioritisation to ensure people with a disability are supported is working, they are clearly accessing the support they need across the whole service. This means changes to the service should be implemented to make things fair and make the service accessible to other minority groups and groups who can be identified through this data as needing additional support.

Performance Overview (3)

Indicator	Source	Time Period Covered	Commentary
Damp and Mould	NEC	1 st Jan 2023 – 31 st Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This directorate equality plan focuses on houses who raise a damp and mould enquiry, because it relies on people to contact Wolverhampton Homes or the Council, it wouldn't capture every household affected. • Wolverhampton Homes will be putting Damp, Mould and Condensation sensors in homes to try and increase the number of tenants we can identify and help. • We can see that young, ethnic minority, female tenants are more likely to be affected by damp and mould. There are cultural barriers that might mean tenants don't know how to prevent mould growth and lack of education or awareness may be a contributing factor with the younger tenants affected. • Again, people with a disability are less likely to be affected which is positive • Our coverage of gender identity in this cohort is too low to have an impact but our sexual orientation data shows that Bisexual tenants are slightly overrepresented in the damp and mould cohort, it's hard to assume why without further analysis, but it's something to note and monitor.

Performance Overview (4a)

Indicator	Source	Time Period Covered	Commentary
Homelessness Acceptance vs City Population	NEC	1 st Jan 2023 – 31 st Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For our first homelessness comparison we looked at homelessness acceptance vs Wolverhampton's 16+ population to understand if a certain demographic group are more likely to become homeless. • Younger residents are more likely to be homeless as we can see from the higher proportion of 16-34's being accepted as homeless. • Females are also more likely to be in this cohort. The main reason for females becoming homeless is being at risk of having experienced domestic abuse. • For males, the top reason is mental/physical health, however the numbers are much lower compared to females. • For transgender residents who are homeless, the most common reason is also mental/physical health. • Ethnic minorities also seem to be more likely to be homeless, specifically African residents. • Because there are multiple characteristics that make someone more likely to be homeless, as a council we want to ensure people ask for support before things get to that stage, so understanding what types of people are more at risk is useful to help us understand support needs.

Performance Overview (4b)

Indicator	Source	Time Period Covered	Commentary
Homelessness Acceptance vs Rehoused	NEC	1 st Jan 2023 – 31 st Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking to see if there is a disparity between homeless acceptance and rehousing homeless applicants. The data tells us that females are more likely to get rehoused than males, this is likely because of the reason they became homeless and the risk they're facing (most of them coming from living situations where they're being domestically abused). There are some discrepancies in the ethnic group of homeless acceptance and rehousing, White British and Black African residents are more likely to be rehoused than other ethnic groups. We'd need to look further into their situations before we could comment on why this may be. The homeless strategy will have a focus on EDI to ensure a fair and equal service is being provided to all residents, however much like housing there are certain prioritisation criteria that certain demographic groups might be more likely to have.

Performance Overview (5)

Indicator	Source	Time Period Covered	Commentary
Private Sector Housing	NEC	1 st Jan 2023 – 31 st Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would expect to have the highest proportion of service requests in the areas where there's a higher proportion of private sector housing in the city. This would indicate that households that are struggling know how to access support from the service. • We can see that the areas with higher numbers of private rented houses do have higher numbers of service requests and evictions, however it doesn't seem proportional, and we would expect wards such as St Peters to have more, to highlight that they aren't any barriers to accessing support. • Due to lack of demographic data recording on idox, we have to use the city population data to understand the demographic breakdowns of wards to see if there's a reason, we don't have service requests coming in from areas we would expect. For examples, St Peters has a majority (79%) ethnic minority population and a small number of service requests compared to the amount of private sector housing – this could potentially indicate a barrier to accessing support through the service. • We are looking into ways to improve this reporting as part of the directorate equality plans so we can see the actual demographic details per case on idox instead of making an estimation.