

Age, Home and Community: 5 Years on – A Refreshed Strategy Equality Impact Assessment - results

Title of Policy	Age, Home and Community: 5 Years on – A Refreshed Strategy
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	The aim of the renewed strategy is to ensure older people have the right advice, right home and the right support enabling them to continue living independently in their own home as they age.
Directorate: Division: team	Housing and Social Justice Directorate: Better Homes: Housing and Independent Living

Executive summary

The EQIA demonstrates that there are no potentially negative impacts to equality groups resulting from the implementation of commitments identified in the mid-point Age, Home and Community review.

The findings of this EQIA highlighted potential benefits in terms of the overall policy aim.

Background

Age, Home and Community: A Strategy for Housing for Scotland's Older People: 2011-2021 confirmed the Scottish Government's commitment to help realise the aspirations of older people to live independently at home. At the time of publication we agreed to undertake a midpoint review to take account of any policy changes and any new issues that had arisen.

When the Strategy was originally developed, older people told us they wanted to live in their own homes for as long as possible. This continues to be true, and we are taking action to refresh the Strategy and put in place the necessary framework to make this happen. Demographic change and, in particular, the ageing of the population continues to provide an important context for the Strategy. The number of older people in Scotland has increased and is projected to increase further over the next 15 years. Between 2015 and 2020 the number of people aged 60 to 74 is projected to increase by 78,000 and those over 75 by 46,000, giving a total of 124,000 additional people over the age of 60 years (ONS Population Projections, 2014 based). This will place a greater demand for suitable housing and appropriate support to enable individuals with increasingly complex needs to continue to live independently at home.

The Age, Home and Community: 5 Years on – A Refreshed Strategy will replace the previous Strategy and include new and updated commitments to reflect the progress over the last five years, recent policy changes and 2016 manifesto commitments.

The Age, Home and Community: 5 Years on – A Refreshed Strategy contributes to the outcome - Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it.

It will also contribute to a number of national indicators in particular “improve access to suitable housing options for those in housing need.”

The Scope of the EQIA

This EQIA has been informed by the gathering and analysis of data in order to ascertain the on-going and potential impacts of the Age, Home and Community: 5 Years on – A Refreshed Strategy for the eight protected characteristics. In particular:

- Review of evidence gathered from projects carried out during the first five years of the Strategy.
- Contributions from the stakeholders and members of the Age, Home and Community Advisory and Monitoring Group.
- Scottish Household Survey (SHS) data.
- Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ) data.
- Population data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and National Records of Scotland (NRS).

Key Findings

The EQIA process identified many positive areas in the Refreshed Strategy that will benefit older people:

- We will continue work on how we deliver adaptations so that the best service can be provided regardless of tenure.
- We will improve training for housing and health staff. Figures show that in 2016, 75% of social care at home was provided for clients aged 65 plus.
- Recognising the importance of location of housing and access to services and transport links (Social Care Services Scotland, 2016). Statistics in 2015 showed that those aged 65-74 yrs were the least likely of any age group to live in large urban areas; 28% of this age group lived in these areas compared to 35.5% of adults as a whole. This has an impact on the location of housing and access to services. The provision of adequate transport services is particularly relevant as in 2015 single pensioner households were the least likely of any household type to have access to a car; less than half, 43.2%, of this group had access to car compared to 70.1% of all households (Scottish Surveys Core Questions, 2015).
- The Refreshed Strategy will include action on fuel poverty. In 2015, 45% of older households were fuel poor, the highest of any household type (Scottish House Conditions Survey, 2015).
- The Strategy recognises the impact of social isolation on older people. In 2014, 54% of people aged 85 and over lived alone, compared to a total figure of 20% (National Records of Scotland, Household Projections, 2017).

All of these areas have an impact on the ability of an older person to live independently and safely in their own home. No negative issues have been identified as a result of the EQIA process.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The EQIA shows that it is unlikely any equality groups will be disadvantaged as a result of the implementation of commitments in the Age, Home and Community: 5 Years on – A Refreshed Strategy. In fact, it concludes that the Refreshed Strategy has the potential to positively impact on all older people, including those who share certain protected characteristics. In particular, it has the potential to help all older people to live independently in their own homes as long as they choose to do so. In conclusion, we do not believe that any direct or indirect discrimination will arise as a result of the Refreshed Strategy commitments being implemented.