London Borough of Hackney Equality Impact Assessment Form

The Equality Impact Assessment Form is a public document which the Council uses to demonstrate that it has complied with Equality Duty when making and implementing decisions which affect the way the Council works.

The form collates and summarises information which has been used to inform the planning and decision making process.

Title of this Equality Impact Assessment:

Hackney Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy 2022- 2025

Purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment:

This Equality Impact assessment sets out:

- 1. How we have considered how we can meet our public sector equality duties set out in the 2010 Equalities Act, throughout the development process for the Hackney Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy 2022 2025.
- 2. The practical steps we will take to monitor the positive and negative impacts the strategy may have on those with protected characteristics, promoting equality of opportunity, promoting community cohesion, and fostering good relations between people with a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Officer Responsible:	
Name: Sara Kulay	Ext:1883
Directorate: Climate, Homes and Economy	Department/Division: Housing Services
Strategic Director: Steve Waddingtor	n, Housing Services Date:
Comment: This has been approved	d By Steve Waddington (TBC)

STEP 1: DEFINING THE ISSUE

1. Summarise why you are having to make a new decision

We have not had a Resident Engagement Strategy for Housing Services since 2013. Since this time there have been significant changes, both in our local housing context and nationally, which we need to respond to. These include:

• Changes in social housing tenure patterns - there is now much greater diversity of tenure on Hackney's estates, with tenants increasingly living alongside leaseholders, home owners and shared owners. This greater tenure diversification means we need to tailor communication and engagement to meet the needs of different groups of residents, and do more to ensure that *all* residents feel connected as their places and communities change.

- Changes in technology there are now many more ways that we can communicate with each other, with the growth of digital forms of communication such as Twitter, WhatsApp, Zoom, offering new options. In future, we will need to take full advantage of digital engagement but offer different options (and support) to those unable to engage in this way.
- High levels of needs among housing residents residents living in Hackney managed homes have different circumstances, characteristics, and life experiences. But the high concentration of older people and single person and low income households in social housing means that our residents are more likely to experience financial hardship, social isolation and poor health. This means we need to develop stronger partnerships with residents, other services and the voluntary and community sector to develop more estate-based initiatives which can address the wider socio-economic challenges our residents face.
- Major changes in housing legislation The Charter for Social Housing Residents (Social Housing White Paper), has
 significant implications for how we listen to, and engage with, our residents. The Charter highlights the need for greater
 transparency, openness and accountability between landlords and residents, and puts a strong focus on listening to, and
 acting upon, the resident's voice, including the right to 'To have your voice heard by your landlord'.

These issues, along with the ongoing challenges posed by the Covid pandemic and cyberattack, mean that we need to review how we engage, take action to engage (more) residents effectively, and build on work already underway to promote stronger and more cohesive communities on our estates. A clearer strategic framework is needed to achieve these broad aims.

2. Who are the main people that will be affected?

The new strategy will help to shape Housing Services' approach to engaging with all residents living in homes managed by Hackney Council. Given the large number of homes managed by Hackney Housing Services it is likely that the Resident Engagement Strategy will impact on the lives of many people with one or more of the nine protected characteristics: **age**, **disability**, **gender reassignment**, **marriage and civil partnership**, **pregnancy and maternity**, **race**, **religion or belief**, **sex**, **and sexual orientation**. Our aim is to provide equal opportunity for all groups to influence and shape our services and participate in

community activities To achieve this, we will seek to understand and recognise the needs and preferences of different groups and adapt our approach where needed.

In the process of developing the new strategy we reviewed a wide range of Council strategies and plans which impact upon residents living in Hackney managed homes. These included: Hackney Community Strategy 2018, the draft Hackney Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-26, the Young Futures Commission Report 2019, the Ageing Well Strategy 2020 -2025, and Inclusive Economy Strategy 2019-25. We also reviewed our own housing data and research and national reports on digital inclusion. This provided us with a richer understanding of our resident's profile and highlighted a number of issues that we needed to take account of, including:

- Hackney is an ethnically and culturally diverse area with around 40 percent of residents coming from a non-white background. This is reflected in the profile of housing residents equality profiling data on 56 per cent of our households shows that 45 percent of residents are White, 37 percent are Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, 6 percent are Asian/Asian British and 6 per cent are from other ethnic groups.
- Around a third of housing residents who responded to our Resident Engagement CommonPlace survey said that English was not the main language spoken at home. Respondents identified 62 different languages spoken in their homes, with Turkish, French, Yoruba, Portuguese and Spanish reported most frequently.
- Nearly two thirds of older people in Hackney live in social housing. Households with tenants have a much higher proportion of households with occupants over 70 at around 22 per cent compared to non-Hackney households at 13 percent and Hackney leaseholders at 9 percent.
- Research shows that older people are more likely to be disabled, with 60 per cent of those aged over 65 reporting a disability. This rises to 85% among residents aged 85 and over. Older people are also among those groups most likely to be digitally excluded.
- Reading difficulties are prevalent across the population, with one inten UK residents estimated to have dyslexia and one in six estimated to have reading difficulties.
- Local areas in the borough which rank amongst the most deprived in the country tend to be in places where there is a higher amount of social housing

- Social housing tenants have a much higher proportion of households with low income at 49 per cent compared to non-Hackney Households at 16 percent and Hackney leaseholders at 8 percent.
- During the Covid -19 pandemic, Housing Services identified around 14,000 Council tenants as vulnerable. The large majority of the 2,000 households registered with the Council to receive emergency food supplies also lived in social housing
- Many people in Hackney live with common mental health disorders: the prevalence of people with common mental health disorders aged over 16 was measured at 24% in 2017 the highest level in England
- Community engagement work carried out in the borough over the last five years has found that some residents feel disconnected from the opportunities happening around them and feel that their lives here have not changed. Changing tenure patterns on estates and redevelopment can increase the risk of social polarisation within estates and overshadow some of the wider benefits that regeneration can bring. The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown has exacerbated income inequalities between groups in precarious employment or rented property.
- Loneliness affects many people in Hackney. The percentage of adults (in Hackney and the City of London) who feel lonely often, always or some of the time was 21% in 2019/20. Isolation is more likely to be experienced by people in semi-skilled, manual and very low income groups and by tenants of social housing, Muslim and Asian residents
- London has the highest proportion of LGBTQ+ residents in the UK. While the LGTBQ+ community is not homogenous, a major national survey conducted in 2017 found that 41% of LGBTQ+ people living in London had experienced verbal or physical violence, or threats of such violence, in the past year.
- Digital exclusion affects some of the most vulnerable groups, including people registered as disabled, low income groups, and older people, all of whom are over-represented in our homes. The Hackney Residents' Survey 2022 found that while only 6% of Hackney residents do not have access to the internet, this proportion is significantly higher in those aged 65+ (33%), disabled residents (18%), social renters (9%) and those struggling financially (9%).

Much of the available research reinforces the message that deprivation and vulnerability among residents in Hackney tends to be concentrated in Hackney managed homes. Our review has also underlined that we need to do more to strengthen our understanding of the profile of our residents and their needs, both through improved data collection within the service and through analysis of national datasets, such as the 2021 Census results. This will enable us to design and target our services more effectively, and build upon the <u>profile of Hackney households</u> developed to support our strategy development work.

STEP 2: ANALYSING THE ISSUES

3. What information and consultation have you used to inform your decision making?

In addition to reviewing data and research that has an impact on how we engage, we have consulted extensively with housing residents to understand their experiences of resident engagement and how they want to engage.

The initial engagement work was challenging because many community and resident groups who we wanted to engage with during the development of the strategy were not meeting due to the pandemic and some residents were understandably reluctant to engage in face-to- face meetings and focus groups. We therefore used a range of engagement methods to gather as many views as possible, including online focus groups, one to one telephone interviews, reaching out to community groups, attending fun days on estates, and using different types of online surveys. Our approach included:

- 2 focus groups with residents engaged in our involved structures
- 5 focus groups with staff from across Housing Services
- 953 responses from residents received in response to the CommonPlace survey (predominantly online)
- 6,457 responses from residents received in response to the bi-annual Tenant and Leaseholder Survey (STAR) 2021 (both paper / online surveys)
- Engagement with resident groups e.g. Resident Liaison Group, Area Panels, etc
- Engagement with 'seldom heard' groups e.g. Turkish/Kurdish, Somali/Arabic, Chinese/ Vietnamese, Orthodox Jewish (Charedi), people with learning disabilities, young people
- A second phase of work consisting of a series of focus groups bringing together residents and staff supported by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to explore what we could do differently and make recommendations for improvement.

Based on this initial work, a 12-week consultation on the draft Strategy took place between 9 June and 4 September 2022. This provided more opportunities for residents and other stakeholders to give us feedback on the priorities and actions proposed. 478 residents completed a short survey asking their views, with 65% of respondents not currently engaged via formal residents groups.

69% of respondents were council tenants and leaseholders. We also sought views from residents who attended seven roadshows held on estates across the borough, and via re-engagement with seldom heard groups we had consulted in the discovery phase. In total we engaged directly with around 160 residents from our seldom-heard communities through 12 group sessions, 13 one-to-one interviews and 2 cultural events.

The main documents produced included:

- Your Homes, Your Voice: Consultation Consultation Report Final Consultation Report (add link)
- Your Homes, Your Voice: Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-2025 (add link)
- Cabinet Paper Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-2025 (add link)

Equality Impacts

4. Identifying the impacts

In developing the strategy, we identified a number of equalities and cohesion issues related to our current approach to engagement and communication which the strategy needed to consider alongside the findings from our wider research. This included:

- Different groups of residents want to be communicated with in different ways, and this tends to have a strong correlation with age. Older residents had a preference for more traditional forms of communication, such as postal surveys, while younger people had a stronger preference for online communication, such as phone and text surveys.
- While there has been a growth in digital engagement, not everyone can communicate digitally, possibly due to lack of skills, access to affordable wifi/equipment, or confidence or motivation.
- Younger residents tend to be less satisfied with how we engage. Around a third of younger residents aged 16-34 are satisfied that the Housing Service listens to their views and acts upon them compared to 50 per cent for those aged 65 +.

- Outreach to seldom-heard groups often identified a lack of translated information and interpretation facilities as barriers to engagement. Reading difficulties experienced by some residents also underlines a need for information to be presented in easy to read and accessible formats.
- There is scope to develop better links with those community and voluntary groups who have a good understanding of different ethnic majority and faith communities and can provide a 'pathway' to different voices.
- Cost, childcare, and the expense / time associated with travel to venues can be a barrier to participation in community and participation activities. Safety and accessibility of venues may also be more important for certain protected groups.
- We need to collect more data to understand diversity issues related to engagement more fully, and assess whether our approaches are reflecting the views of, and /or engaging, different ethnic majority and faith communities.

4 (a) What positive impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?

The strategy sets out a range of actions to widen the ways residents can engage with and promote engagement activity that strengthens our communities and this will help to address the issues identified above. In particular we commit to:

- Review our approach to language support and translation, including the potential to use digital solutions e.g handheld translation devices
- Invest in digital skills training and support for those residents who want to gain confidence to engage online, including inter-generational training, 'silver surfer' classes, and 'how to guides'
- Identify 'Community Connectors' with Housing Services to engage with, and provide information to, residents from seldom heard communities via the voluntary and community sector.
- Improve diversity profiling to see who is and isn't involved through monitoring the profile of those leading Tenants and Residents Associations and Area Panels to identify sections of our community who may be under-represented and actively work with residents' groups to broaden their reach.
- Actively use our funding to promote inclusivity and reduce isolation, continuing to support and grow our over 50s groups and increasing our investment in projects to support children and young people on our estates.

- Strengthen links with community groups that represent and work with our diverse communities to help us develop projects that better meet their needs and enable us to hear different voices.
- Pilot new estate-based delivery of activities and programmes for residents that support wider strategic priorities, such as health and well-being and employment and skills, in partnership with Council services and other stakeholders
- Actively engage in work to deliver Council strategies and plans which benefit residents, including the Ageing Well Strategy, Young Futures Commission Delivery Plan, and Health and Well-Being Strategy and Parks and Green Spaces Strategy
- Give a greater voice to young people, including identifying a Resident Participation budget for projects for children and young people, directly managed by the new Housing Youth Panel.
- Respond to concerns about cost / accessibility of activities by piloting free use of community halls for trial periods of up to 12
 weeks to test whether a project can become financially sustainable e.g. for health and fitness classes, homework clubs, and
 food projects which actively support residents

Through these initiatives, we would expect to realise a number of benefits, including:

- More residents involved in engagement activity in ways which reflect their personal preferences, including time commitments
- Greater diversity in the profile of residents who actively participate in our formal engagement structures
- Improved levels of satisfaction with how we listen to and engage residents in our service planning and engagement activities
- A better understanding of areas of under-representation that we need to more actively address.
- Improved understanding of the needs / engagement preferences of different communities and how we can respond.
- More involvement of diverse communities in the shaping the future delivery of housing services

4 (b) What negative impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?

The key risks associated with producing a high level strategy like this that could result in negative impacts on equality and cohesion in the borough include:

• That the strategic priorities and overall direction of the strategy are not reflected in the day-to day delivery of Housing Services. Our work has indicated that residents' perception of how well we engage is heavily influenced by whether repairs

are completed in a timely way, or calls answered. If we cannot get this right, residents and other stakeholders may feel that the strategy is not credible, and be reluctant to engage with us to deliver some of the improvements we are proposing.

- That we fail to make sufficient progress towards delivering the strategy for a range of reasons:
 - Wider events which may limit our ability to deliver on these commitments
 - Other service areas and /or community and voluntary organisations do not sign up to the strategy or work collaboratively with us to support its delivery.
 - The Council and its partners may be unable to sufficiently resource the full range of actions committed to in the Strategy
 - New national legislation or new requirements set out by the Regulator of Social Housing in its revised Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Community Consumer Standard may mean redirecting resources to new areas.
 - Future waves of Covid-19 may lead to some activities having to be paused

In the next section we set out some of the actions which help to mitigate against this.

STEP 3: REACHING YOUR DECISION

5. Describe the recommended decision

We recognise that our delivery of this strategy, and our approach to resident engagement more generally, is something we will need to continue to review, take action on and monitor and so we are recommending:

• That the Cabinet and the Council adopt this Strategy as it will help us to proactively meet our equalities duty and embed it into the delivery ethos of the service

- That once the Strategy document has been formally adopted we take steps to make the vision and the direction in the Resident Engagement Strategy more accessible to a wider number of local people, organisations and our own staff including by:
 - Producing an action plan and annual reports feeding back on progress
 - Sharing the plan and regular progress reports across our involved structure, including the Resident Liaison Group, Neighbourhood Panels and tenant and resident groups.
 - Ensuring that all housing residents are kept informed by regular updates on the Council's websites and Our Homes.

STEP 4 - MAXIMISING BENEFITS AND MANAGING RISKS

6. Equality and Cohesion Action Planning

No	Objective	Action	Outcomes highlighting how this will be monitored	Timescale	Lead Officer
1.	Once agreed, we need to increase ownership and understanding of the strategy among housing residents, housing staff and other stakeholders.	Develop a communication plan to promote the strategy to different audiences.	Progress in developing the communications plan and its impact will be monitored by the RES Project Delivery Group. Regular reports on strategy implementation and specific initiatives will be included in key Council publications.	January 2023 / ongoing	Head of RP, TMOs & Communities / Communications

2.	Build confidence in the Housing Services commitment to strengthen engagement and working together with residents	Agree service standards for communication and working together with residents.	Service standards to be agreed and routinely monitored by the Housing Services Management Team and Resident Liaison Group.	January 2023 / ongoing	Head of Housing Transformation
3.	To ensure effective delivery of all strategy actions, including those related to strengthening our approach to diversity and inclusion set out in section 4(a) of this assessment.	Agree an action plan for the strategy and share this with staff and other key stakeholders	Progress on the Resident Engagement Strategy Action Plan will be monitored regularly by the Housing Services Management Team and Resident Liaison Group	November 2022/ ongoing	Strategic Director of Housing

APPENDIX 1: Engagement With seldom heard communities during RES Strategy development and consultation

Note: All the seldom heard groups were also included and engaged with during the seven RES face to face events

Community Group	Organisation / Contact & Date of contacts	Engagement methods	Outcomes of engagement / Progress
Turkish / Kurdish	Derman Services - 19.05.21 Day-Mer Advice Services - 27.05.21 & 21.06.21 Housing Officer, Turkish speaker, 21.06.21 Day-Mer Cultural Festival - 03.07.22	 Flyers translated into Turkish Face to face focus groups with translators - 29.09.21 & 12.10.21 One to one interview - 20.09.21 Strategy consultation stall at the annual festival in Clissold Park 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions used in the final insight report To go back to them with draft strategy for comments - Done via the festival Feedback and suggestions for the draft strategy collected from face to face engagement with residents. Positive response received to the strategy
Older residents	Gascoyne 2 TRA community meal - 13.10.21 Hackney Matters Panel - 14.09.21	 Face to face focus group - 13.10.21 One to one interview - 27.09.21 Online newsletters and promotion of engagement opportunities 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with a draft strategy for comments - Done via RES event at Gascoyne 2 community hall.

Charedi Jewish	Agudas Israel Housing Association, 07.11.21 Heimishe Newsheet, 10.09.21 Public Health Practitioner - 04.06.21 Senior Consultation Officer - 08.06.21 Shomrim Community Day - 08.08.22	 Individual one to one telephone interviews - 16.12.21, 20.12.21 & 21.12.21 Advert in ethnic press Face to face engagement in residents' local areas was preferable. All stakeholders advised that engagement is very hard with this community and that they struggled themselves. Strategy consultation stall at the community event 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with draft strategy for comments - Done via community day Feedback and suggestions for the draft strategy collected from face to face engagement with residents. Positive response received to the strategy
Jewish community	Heimishe Newsheet, 10.09.21 Shomrim Community Day - 08.08.22	 Advert in ethnic press Council communications channels - Hackney Today, website, social media etc. Strategy consultation stall at the community event 	 No / limited response received Feedback and suggestions for the draft strategy collected from face to face engagement with residents. Positive response received to the strategy

LGBTQI+	Estate celebration event (face to face), 20.08.21 Hackney Matters Panel - 14.09.21 Project Indigo - 09.06.21 Rainbow Grow, 18.05.21, 05.08.21 (limited response after contacts) LGBTQI+ Special Interest Group, HCVS - 10.08.22	 Face to face engagement / focus groups Paper / online surveys Community hub closed so users approached for online interviews. Links to online survey sent out Links to consultation sent out. Face to face engagement offered - but not taken up. Online meeting to promote consultation. Links shared with organisations 	 Limited response only through paper and online surveys. All very time poor. Agreed to go back with the draft strategy for comment - done via LGBTQI+ SIG and Project Indigo
East and South East Asian	Hackney Chinese Community Services Centre - 10.06.21 Hackney Matters Panel - 14.09.21 Hackney Chinese Community Services Centre	 Co-hosted small focus group with Chinese Outreach Worker Flyers translated into different languages used in the centre and sent out to social networks. Online and paper consultation surveys shared, face to face 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with a draft strategy for comments - Done via emailed links. A face to face engagement offer to meet was not taken up by these groups.

		engagement offered but not taken up.	
Residents with learning disabilities	Hackney People First - 01.07.21 Policy Officer - 12.05.21 Neighbourhood Conversation meetings - Hackney CVS	 Co-hosted online focus group. Online meetings through networking 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with draft strategy for comments - Done via focus group
	Hackney People First - 19.08.22	Face to face focus group with surveys	Feedback and suggestions for draft strategy collected. Positive response received to the strategy
Muslim - Gujarati and Bangladeshi	Hackney Friends, Asian Women's Group, 16.11.21 North London Muslim Community Centre - 24.06.21 (chased several times - but no response after initial offers to help)	 Co-hosted face to face focus group with translator at their weekly session One to one interviews with English speaking users, 10.12.21, 13.12.21, 16.12.21 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with draft strategy for comments - done via further focus group
		Face to face focus group	

	United Ladies, community group of South Asian ladies - 15.09.22	on the strategy	Feedback and suggestions collected. Positive response received to the strategy
Somalian / African / Arab	Connecting Communities, 18.10.21	 Co-hosted face to face focus group with translators Flyers sent out via support networks - WhatsApp group Attendance at food distribution hub 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with draft strategy for comments
TMO residents (seldom heard / non-involved)	Clapton Park TMO Community funday, 25.09.21 Hackney Matters Panel - 14.09.21 TMO Services Team - 10.06.21	 Face to face event and engagement Paper / online surveys Posters, flyers on estates, in offices Council communications channels - Hackney Today, website, social media etc. 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with draft strategy for comments - Done via emailed online survey links through RP and paper copies at events
Young people and families	Young Hackney Youth Hubs, 08.11.21, 13.11.21 & 15.11.21	 Face to face events and engagement Online and face to face focus groups Paper / online surveys 	 Comments, feedback and suggestions reflected in the final insight report To go back to them with draft strategy for comments - Done

	Hackney Apprentices, 04.10.21 Estate Summer fundays - various dates	 Posters, flyers on estates Council communications channels - Hackney Today, website, social media etc. 	via shared online links and face to face RES events
Seldom heard residents living in Council housing (These organisations were approached and meetings were attended to present and promote the engagement during Phase 1)	Healthwatch Hackney, 17.06.21, 25.08.21 Volunteer Centre Hackney - 06.07.21 Engage Riverside - 01.07.21 Strengthening Local Partnerships, food networks - 01.07.21 Neighbourhood Conversation, Springfield Park - 29.06.21 Neighbourhood Conversation, London Fields - 24.06.21	 Monthly electronic newsletters sent to residents Posters on estate noticeboards, Engage in project work around health and social care - focus groups for specific topics Call out through other partners/officers working on related projects Most organisations are tenure blind so a lot of filtering needed to be done on their part to filter and target Council tenants. Online links to the consultation shared via e-newsletters 	 Various engagement methods and channels were used to directly engage with service users. Difficult to assess if residents then went on to complete surveys after being sent information - as there is no current way to monitor click through rates from email and newsletter links. All comments, feedback and suggestions received reflected in the final insight report

Neighbourhood Conversation, Hackney Downs - 17.06.21 Neighbourhood Conversation, Clissold Park - 10.06.21 Advice Partners Network - 26.05.21	Paper surveys sent out
Other organisations that were contacted for insight and participation: Active engagement was very difficult for a lot of these groups as offices and community centres were closed in the early engagement phase, very few face to face sessions were being held, and resources were limited due to the effects of the pandemic.	African Community School Age UK Carib Eats Children with Voices Citizens Advice Bureau Coffee Afrique Community Africa Network DeafPLUS Fair Finance Hackney Carers Hackney Community Law Centre Hackney Food Network Hackney Marsh Partnership Homerton Hospital and Foundation Trust Kanlungan LGBTQI+ Special Interest Group

	MIND, City & Hackney, Waltham Forest Money A and E Older People's Reference Group, Age UK East Praxis for Migrants Refugee Women Shelter TRAs and Resident Groups in Hackney Woodberry Aid
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