



## Equality Impact Assessment questionnaire

*(covering race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age)*

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) seeks to assess the impacts of your service, function, policy or strategy on people who are legally protected from discrimination (this is people belonging to one or more of these groups: race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age).

Conducting this EqIA will ensure that any positive or negative impacts on people legally protected from discrimination are highlighted and the necessary action are taken to ensure equality in our services.

**This impact assessment must be reviewed at least every three years.**

**Build the next review of this service/policy into your departments' Management Plan.**

<b>Service or Policy Area:</b>	Homelessness
<b>Service Unit:</b>	Planning and Housing Services
<b>Officer Completing Assessment:</b>	Rose Newbury, Housing Manager
<b>Telephone:</b>	██████████
<b>Date:</b>	January 2009

## General

**Q.1** Please provide a brief description of this service/policy including its aims and objectives

Overview: District Council have the statutory responsibility to homeless persons (and those threatened with homelessness) under the Housing Act 1996 (Part VII) – amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. The Council's agents Elgar Housing Association undertake the following KEY responsibilities under this legislation:

- To carry out statutory duties to the homeless (and those threatened with homelessness)
- Homeless Prevention – to provide both a proactive and sensitive homelessness in order to prevent homelessness within the district.
- To assist the Council in the carrying out of the objectives and targets of the Council's Homelessness Strategy and the County's Homelessness Strategy
- Administration of the Choice Based lettings system – including priority banding of homelessness cases

The Council's KEY duties under the above legislation are:

- Making of statutory homeless decisions and notifying applicant of the decision
- To deal with appeals against homeless decisions within statutory guidelines and timescales
- Development, monitoring and review of Homelessness Strategy
- Monitoring of the Agency Services Contract in relation to delivery of the homelessness and waiting list administration
- Undertaking a Rough Sleeper 'count' annually
- Ensuring the Government Homelessness Prevention grant is allocated appropriately

**Q. 2** Please list the main stakeholders/beneficiaries/ recipients of this service/policy

- Residents of the district (and outside the district) who are homelessness or threatened with homelessness
- Vulnerable persons within the community
- Residents seeking general housing advice and assistance
- Specialist bodies eg Youth Groups
- Partners including Social Services; PCT, private landlords, Police, Housing benefits
- Councillors
- Local parishes and town councils

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Estate agents</li> <li>• Private sector landlords</li> </ul>
Q. 3	If this service/policy is provided by another organisation behalf of the Council, please give the names of these organisations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners including Social Services; PCT, private landlords, Police, Housing benefits</li> <li>• Homelessness and Housing Advice also provided by CAB (to which the Council give an annual grant)</li> <li>• Some protocols have been developed jointly by County and other specialists – eg Probation Protocol</li> </ul>

### Consultation

Q. 4	Please list any consultation activity with internal or external customers carried out over the last year: e.g. satisfaction surveys, focus groups or citizens panel exercises etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two major consultation events undertaken in relation to the housing advice and homelessness services – one was carried out with service users and the other was undertaken with service providers. Both centred around the quality of service provided and accessibility to services. An outcome of the surveys was the monthly housing ‘drop in’ advice service provided at Tenbury</li> <li>• Rolling programme of Customer Satisfaction surveys undertaken with regards homelessness services</li> <li>• Feedback survey forms provided for landlords etc at Landlord’s Fayres</li> <li>• Customer Service Charter in place for homelessness</li> <li>• Annual consultation with various agencies, Parish Council with regards Rough Sleeper count</li> <li>• Gypsy and Traveller Assessment undertaken – identified housing needs – lack of suitable sites</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity Assessment undertaken in relation to the Choice Based Lettings scheme</li> <li>• Research commissioned by Festival Housing Group ‘Building Knowledge’ The Housing Needs of the Black and Minority Ethnic Population in Herefordshire and Worcestershire 2006</li> <li>• Major housing advice directory published by Councils Agents in 2008 in consultation with voluntary and statutory organisations within the district</li> </ul>
Q. 5	Please list any arrangements you have made, or are planning for consulting with groups protected from legal discrimination on your service/policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> <li>• Will be consulting with different groups re formatting of feedback questionnaires</li> </ul>
Q. 6	Please list groups protected from legal discrimination you have consulted with
	<p>Wide range of agencies consulted with regarding the district homelessness and housing strategies: eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race Equality Group Worcester</li> <li>• Community Action Group</li> <li>• MIND Worcester</li> <li>• Women's Project Malvern</li> <li>• Age Concern</li> </ul>
Q. 7	Please state how you consult with members of your staff about your service/policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team briefs and Planning Team briefings</li> <li>• Circulation to team of draft policies and strategies for comment etc</li> <li>• Sharepoint</li> <li>• JCC</li> <li>• Agents consult with staff with regards equality training issues</li> <li>• Agents address Equality issues via team briefs, Joint Staff Committees, mgt team meetings, intranet, staff handbook</li> </ul>
Q.8	Please list any changes to your service/policy that you have made, or you plan to make as a result of consultation with groups protected from legal discrimination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address any service issues raised as a concern through homelessness service consultation and customer feedback from Choice Based lettings system</li> <li>• Consult with different groups re design of customer feedback questionnaires</li> </ul>

## Discrimination

Q. 9	Please list any evidence you have of this service/policy having an adverse impact on any groups (internal or
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	external) protected from legal discrimination
	None as far as we are aware But a review will be undertaken of the Choice Based lettings system May be issues with local lettings and rural allocation policies
Q. 10	If the function or policy is discriminatory, is positive action justifiable to overcome the discrimination?
	N/A
Q. 11	Could the function or policy have an adverse impact on relations <b>between</b> groups protected from legal discrimination? If so, please describe
	None as far as we are aware

Service Delivery	
Q. 12	Please list any alternative ways to improve <b>access to your service/policy</b> by groups protected from legal discrimination. <i>Include this in the Action Plan attached.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing advice surgery set up in Tenbury</li> <li>• Hub centres set up in Tenbury and Upton – wide range of housing advice leaflets etc available at these centres</li> <li>• Landlord Fayres</li> <li>• Continuing District wide distribution of housing advice and information leaflets</li> <li>• Mobile Office (Agents)</li> <li>• Updating Information on Website</li> <li>• Updating CBL Website</li> <li>• Hub Computer link up to Agents housing waiting list</li> <li>• Agents planning to set up an IT training opportunity for all residents – this is already in place for older residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agents - Residents Handbook user friendly – translated in Polish – consider further translations</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Facilities already in place: - Agents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign language</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic link</li> <li>• Language line</li> <li>• Hearing loop</li> <li>• Disabled access</li> <li>• Audio tape</li> <li>• Large print</li> <li>• CBL – information printed in 6 languages</li> </ul>
Q. 13	Please list any alternative ways to improve <b>understanding of your service/policy</b> by groups protected from legal discrimination. <i>Include this in the Action Plan attached.</i>
	<b>As above</b>

Monitoring	
Q. 14	Please describe how you monitor of take up of your service/policy
	<p>Monthly statements received from agents with regards outturns on Homelessness grant expenditure in relation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of Sanctuary initiatives set up (ie to protect persons fleeing from domestic violence)</li> <li>• Number of Rent Deposits granted and details of clients assisted</li> <li>• Number of Good Start packages provided and details of clients assisted</li> <li>• BVPI data re homelessness preventions, acceptances are collated monthly and quarterly</li> <li>• Quarter monitoring/review meetings held with Agents</li> <li>• Objects and targets set out in Housing and Homelessness Strategies reviewed annually</li> <li>• Weekly/monthly one to one meetings with appropriate monitoring staff within the service unit.</li> <li>• Web site 'hits'</li> <li>• Number of persons making 'bids' for properties under the Choice Based lettings undertaken and how they bid – ie what type of properties being bid for</li> <li>• Complaints and compliment systems in place</li> <li>• Feedback from Housing Advice workshops – Tenbury and Upton</li> </ul>

Q. 15	How are the results of any monitoring analysed, reported and publicised?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of monitoring reported to managers and Executive Committee and some indicators set out in Council plan</li> <li>• Homelessness Statistics reported on a quarterly basis to Homelessness directorate</li> <li>• Homelessness preventions achieved and homelessness prevention work and outcomes reported to Homelessness directorate annually (this reporting ensures the continuity of homelessness funding to the Council)</li> <li>• Homeless and prevention outcomes reported to County wide Homeless Implementation group</li> <li>• Ethnic monitoring – homeless applications collated and reported to Homeless directorate on a quarterly basis</li> <li>• AGENTS – Performance reports to Board each quarter – allocations and lettings subject to Best Value Reviews; Continuous Recording of lettings surveys – monitors ethnicity details</li> </ul>
Q. 16	Does an analysis of your customer base against baseline population figures for the District show that you reaching groups in your area. If not which groups are adversely affected
	More data required – see Action plan
Q. 17	Please list any performance targets relating to equality in your function
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGENTS: targets set in relation to lettings to BME households</li> </ul>
Q. 18	Please list any plans you have to introduce new targets on equality in your service/policy <i>Include this in the Action Plan attached.</i>
	None

### Miscellaneous

Q. 19	If your function is provided by a private sector or voluntary sector organisation on a contract basis, please list any arrangements <b>you have made or plan to make</b> to make sure that these organisations ensure equality.
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	<p>Our Agents who undertake homelessness service, Elgar Housing Association have an Equality Policy  Agency staff have undertaken Equality training  Agents have also undertaken Gypsy and Traveller training  <b>See also above – re issues addressed by Agents</b></p>
Q. 20	<p>Have you received any complaints about your service/policy in respect of equality issues? If so, please give a brief description</p>
	<p>None</p>
Q. 21	<p>Please list any staff training issues on equality arising from this assessment</p>
	<p>Awareness training needed – On action plan</p>
Q. 22	<p>Does your service/policy result in any financial support being given to people protected from legal discrimination within the voluntary and community sector. If yes, please list organisations and amounts.</p>
	<p>No</p>
Q. 23	<p>How do you plan to publicise the results of this assessment?</p>
	<p>Web Site  Sharepoint  Team briefings – both internal and with Agents  Actions incorporated into Housing Services Mgt Plan</p>

## ACTION PLAN

Please detail any action that you plan to take as a result of this impact assessment

Objective	Action/s	Lead Officer	Completed by
Examine equality issues re refusal of landlords to accept nominations of waiting list	Consult with landlords when a nomination is refused to ascertain by nomination was rejected	EHA – Housing Manager	Sept 2009
Ensure all staff within EHA and housing services are adequately trained re Equality issues and have Equality and Diversity policies and practices in place Inform colleagues of issues and actions in the EQiA through team talk	Both agencies to arrange staff training Obtain copies of relevant policies from partners  Brief colleagues at team briefs and review meetings held with Contractors; Service Mgt Plan, Sharepoint	EHA – Housing Manager MHDC - Housing Manager	Ongoing Housing Manager to undertake training Equality Bill and its implications for housing – August 2009
Ensure equality issues are covered in Feedback forms Homelessness and Monitor take up of service	Revamp Feedback questionnaires – Rent Deposit and Good Start Package schemes and homelessness questionnaires	EHA – Housing Manager	July 2009
Ensure equality of access in more remote areas of Malvern and review and obtain and monitor feedback	Set up housing workshops in Upton and Great Whitley	EHA – Housing Manager And Housing services	Sept 2009
Establish why applicants on CBL do not bid for properties	Set up monitoring systems on CBL Monitor persons coming into housing advice workshops and reasons why	EHA	Dec 2009

<p>Translation of housing information into different languages</p> <p>Publish EQiA</p>	<p>Look at homelessness and housing advice literature – ensure access to printed/electronic information – MONITOR</p> <p>Arrange publication on Website as soon as Assessment has accepted  Include HUB; Contractors; CAB  Include Anti discrimination policy</p>	<p>EHA and housing services</p>	<p>Sept 2009</p>
<p>More data required re customer base against population data</p>	<p>Look at better data collation methods</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>Sept 2009</p>
<p>Ensure we understand the needs of minority groups and continue to consult with customers on service design and delivery</p>	<p>Undertake major reviews of both Housing and Homelessness Strategies objectives and targets in closer consultation with relevant representative local groups</p>	<p>Housing Manager</p>	<p>September 2009</p>