

Template 1 Scoping & Screening

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|---|---|
| Name of the Service, Policy, or Strategy: | Choice Based Lettings |
| Element(s) of the above being assessed. | 1. Access to property adverts 2. Access to the bidding process |
| Date Screening undertaken: | Wednesday 14th January 2009 |
| Screeners: | Ian Barrett, Janette Palmer, Olu Fajuyitan, Eleanor Hodge, Steve Tong, Alan Rickman (TACT – Tenants and Council Together), Caren Ransom (Havant Borough Council), Kerry Hoskins (East Hants District Council), Jo Gabell (East Hampshire District Council), Amanda Grant, Philip Godding, Samantha Williams (Havant BC). |
| File name and location: | Retriever, General management, Diversity & Equality, Impact Assessment |
| Question (See Advice Notes) | Answer |
| the main purpose of the Service, Strategy, Practice or Procedure? | Communicate to those households on the joint housing register a list of property vacancies currently available for reletting and provide the mechanisms by which people can make an expression of interest in these properties. |
| 2. List the main activities of the Service, Strategy, Policy, Practice or Procedure. | Process of communicating which properties are available for customers to bid for within a bidding cycle, options available to customer to make a bid for a property they are interested in. |

3. Using the table below identify who is affected by the Service, Strategy, Policy, Practice or Procedure and decide if they benefit from it or are disadvantaged by it. Give brief reasons and the evidence for your decision.

N.B. You MUST have evidence to justify your decision. Usually this will take the form of monitoring information on who uses a service or is affected by a policy. If you do not have monitoring information – or do, but don't analyse it – then it is unlikely that you can complete this stage now unless you can find other evidence to support your judgement e.g. research or EIAs (Equality Impact Assessments) undertaken by other agencies. Discuss this with the ICE Group and agree a way forward.

'+ve' = Positive impact '-ve' = negative impact '?' = Don't Know or Not sure 'No' = No impact*

***Only tick this box if the customer group is not intended to receive the service or be affected by the policy.**

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|--------|-------------------------|---------|-----|---|----|---|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| GENDER | Women | √ | | | | not affected |
| | Men | √ | | | | not affected |
| | Transsexual/Transgender | √ | | | | If the only way to make a bid was to come into the office this would represent a significant barrier for this group but other alternatives are available. |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|--|---------|---------|-----|---|----|--|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| AGE YOU MAY ALTER AGE RANGES IF APPROPRIATE | Over 80 | | | √ | | <p>The group expressed reservations about the possible impacts of CBL (Choice Based Lettings) on over 65's and especially over 80's. An internet based service may not be as accessible for older groups as they may not have the equipment or the technical knowledge. However, other ways of accessing the service are available.</p> <p>It was felt that (because of health, disability and other factors such as lack of access to internet and transport) this group may rely more on support workers and advocates to operate the system for them. However, there was the option of auto bid if customers were assessed by housing officers as being vulnerable, but officers would prefer to minimize the take up of this option as it removes the element of choice for the customer. Actions should include ensuring auto-bid option explained in Information Leaflets.</p> <p>Concerns were raised over subjective assessments of vulnerability. Actions should include ensuring the User Guide sets out clear guidance on working through the hierarchy of options (1st – on line, 2nd – telephone, 3rd – office visit, 4th – advocate), offered to individuals before arrangements are made to set up auto-bid as the only option which can meet their needs. Improvement Plan action – 5.0</p> <p>Concerns were also raised over the possibility that vulnerability could be missed. <i>Actions should include regular monitoring of those not making bids.</i> <i>Improvement Plan action – 2.0</i></p> |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------|-----|---|----|--|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| | Over 65 | ✓ | | | | Group felt this group generally had the skills and access to an internet based system. However, there are other ways of accessing the service if they do not. |
| | 22-64 | ✓ | | | | As above. |
| | 16 to 21 | ✓ | | | | Although this group may prefer to use texting (as would homeless customers in hostels and the deaf) as method of receiving and responding to information, experience of other organisations have found that this system doesn't operate effectively through text messaging and has therefore been withdrawn as an option. The project team decided not to include it based on this history. |
| | Under 16 | | | | ✓ | Service not available to under 16's as unable to hold a tenancy. |
| RACE YOU MAY NEED MORE DETAIL HERE E.G. A SPECIFIC ETHNIC GROUP | White British People | ✓ | | | | Should be able to use the system unless other factors cause problems. |
| | White European or Other People | ✓ | | | | Provisions have been made for information to be made available in different languages both on the website (using free translators such as Babel Fish) and the automated telephone service which offers 11 languages (including the 8 recognised local languages for Winchester). |
| | Irish People | ✓ | | | | |
| | Black or Black British People | ✓ | | | | Concerns were raised that the 11 languages may disadvantage certain groups, especially given the change in nationality of new accession state immigrants. |
| | Asian or Asian British People | ✓ | | | | |
| | Chinese or Chinese British People | ✓ | | | | |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|-------|-------------------|---------|-----|---|----|--|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| | Mixed Race People | | | √ | | <p>The chosen languages were discussed at some length by the Project team who arrived at the current list of 11 as a compromise.</p> <p>If language needs arise outside of these 11, customer service centres/officers can be contacted for make the necessary arrangements to meet needs. Winchester City Council's policy and procedure requires that the cheaper option of interpretation is considered before translation.</p> <p><i>Option to save money where standard docs – like User Guide – were translated by sharing info on what docs had been translated into which languages.</i></p> <p>Other organisations need to ensure that arrangements are made to respond to requests, especially as offers of alternative formats are made generally in publication strap lines of authorities. <i>Improvement Plan action 7.0. Monitoring of web hits for languages is set out in the Improvement Plan action for the Scheme of Allocations.</i></p> <p>Easy read was proposed as an option which would benefit this customer group as well as those with learning difficulties and poor literacy. However, videos are being prepared of properties on how to complete the bidding process. These can be copied onto DVD's and sent out to customers. <i>Therefore this suggestion will not be taken forward at this stage, it will be kept in mind should monitoring show a group is being disadvantaged. Improvement Plan action – 8.0</i></p> |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|-------|--|---------|-----|---|----|---|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| | Gypsies/Travelers | √ | | | | Feedback is that the opportunity to use a `Dongle' to fit onto mobile phones to access the internet, makes CBL (Choice Based Lettings) a more accessible way for this customer group, who are difficult to contact about vacancies due to the lack of a permanent contact addresses. However, poor literacy & numeracy is still an issue. |
| | People from other minority ethnic groups | √ | | | | Northern Housing Consortium through the spectrum of organisations they work with have a more comprehensive bank of languages, to make it easier to react to changes in recognised local languages. |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|--|------------------------|---------|-----|---|----|---|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| DISABILITY & HEALTH YOU MAY NEED MORE DETAIL HERE E.G. TYPE OF SENSORY IMPAIRMENT | Disabilities generally | | | √ | | <p>Key for this Group was ensuring that advocates and support workers are adequately briefed on the system to operate it or provide support effectively for the benefit of their clients. Other key contacts include Brokers – as they put a package of support measures together which includes housing. <i>IB will supply a list to be contacted for briefings. Improvement Plan action – 3.0</i></p> <p>Concern was raised over the cycle closing at the end of a week-end, advocates are unlikely to be available to change bids for the more vulnerable, should they be concerned their ranking has changed after further bids from those in higher need have been made. However, as few properties are on offer each cycle and each individual has the opportunity to bid on 3, this shouldn't place them in the position of losing the opportunity to bid on less popular properties. <i>Agreed to actively follow-up with customers found not to be bidding and keep under review. Improvement Plan action – 2.0</i></p> <p>There exists some flexibility over lettings times for this group. Sandwell MBC have extended lettings times for the more vulnerable the effectiveness of this option is to be included as an action point for further investigation.</p> <p>Assurances were also given that specially adapted properties would remain within the housing stock and offered on that basis.</p> |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|-------|---------------------|---------|-----|---|----|--|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| | Physical Impairment | | | √ | | Concern was raised that the lack of detail may result in customers making offers for unsuitable properties. It was generally felt that space was available though the different advertising options to ensure that sufficient detail could be provided to prevent this happening and that it was in the interests of the housing organisations to avoid lengthy void periods and lets/bids inappropriate to needs. <i>Action point would be to monitor this. Along with confirming the automated telephone system is able to record sufficient detail. Improvement Plan action – 9.1</i> |
| | Sensory Impairment | | | √ | | Hearing impairment Discussion was held over the lack of options available to this group e.g. no mini-com, text messaging, type talk or paper system. See earlier response for text. Coupons were discussed as an option, but as with texting experience of other organisations who have already adopted CBL is that the problems associated with this as an option have lead them to withdrawing this as an option. Problems are mainly around timing, not able to respond to cycle period. However, there are other ways of accessing the service such as on-line, using an advocate and auto-bid. <i>Actions should include regular monitoring of those not making bids. Improvement Plan action – 2.0</i> |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------|-----|---|----|--|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| | Sensory Impairment | ✓ | | | | <p>Visual Impairment</p> <p>Various measures have been out in place to ensure users with visual impairment can access both the property adverts and the bidding process. The website has been set with the Browse aloud function along with usual website accessibility controls and there is the option of accessing information by telephone (although only Winchester is trailing being able to bid using the telephone at present).</p> <p>If required there is an option to provide large format hard copies on request, however this needs to be considered within the time constraints of the cycle. These provisions along with the ability of people to visit council offices and get help should meet the needs of this group. <i>Regular monitoring will identify access and bidding issues.</i></p> |
| | Long-Term Health Problem | | | ✓ | | Most long-term health problems would not affect a customer's ability to use the system, but some might and alternatives including auto-bid would be offered. |
| | Mental Illness | | | ✓ | | Support workers action point is key |
| | Learning Disability | | | ✓ | | Support workers action point is key |
| SEXUALITY | Lesbians | ✓ | | | | No reasons to think that sexuality will affect ability to use the system. |
| | Gay Men | ✓ | | | | As above |

| ISSUE | GROUP | IMPACTS | | | | REASONS & EVIDENCE |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------|-----|---|----|--|
| | | +VE | -VE | ? | No | |
| | Bisexuals | √ | | | | As above |
| RELIGION & BELIEF | Faith Groups | √ | | | | No reasons to think that faith group will affect ability to use the system. 24 hour nature of the system should make it more flexible to fit in with the festivals of different faiths. |
| | Atheist, Agnostic or Other belief | √ | | | | No reasons to think that these beliefs will affect ability to use the system. |
| OTHER YOU MAY ADD ADDITIONAL GROUPS HERE. | Poor Literacy &/or Numeracy | √ | | | | Options of video's discussed earlier should help meet the needs of this group. EasyRead option to be explored if needed. |
| | Unemployed | √ | | | | No reasons to think that employment status will affect ability to use the system. |
| | Living in rural area | | | √ | | Discussion was around the links between these two elements, and added difficulty accessing service delivery points. However, cheaper options such as using the automated telephone option or contacting their housing officer exist to resolve hardship. Plus property lists will be displayed at various locations. <i>Concerns over possible consequences will require monitoring. Improvement Plan action – 1.0</i> |
| | Low Income | | | √ | | |
| | On Benefits | | | √ | | as above |
| | Marital Status | √ | | | | not affected |
| | Caring Responsibilities | √ | | | | Choice and flexibility of bidding systems should help carers to use the system. |

Now try to complete the rest of the template.

| | |
|--|---|
| 4. Have you identified a <i>negative</i> impact on any group(s)? | YES [] NO [✓] Summarise nature of impact. |
| 5. Is that impact legal? | N/A |
| 6. Is the impact intended? | N/A |
| 7. How significant is the impact on the group(s) affected? (High, Medium or Low) | N/A |
| 8. Is the affected group a priority for the council? | N/A |
| 9. Are there ways to improve the positive impacts of the Service, Strategy, Policy, Practice or Procedure? | No further action identified. |
| 10. If the Service, Strategy, Policy, Practice or Procedure does not currently promote equality or good relations between different groups, can it be improved to do so? | No further action identified. |
| 11. Have you ticked the "Don't Know" box for any customer groups? | YES [✓] NO [] |
| 12. Is a detailed assessment required? | YES [] NO [✓] Summarise reasons for decision. Most groups were judged to benefit from the system and where there were uncertainties, monitoring would be put in place to identify and deal with any disadvantage. The EIA group will meet again to review the operation of the CBL system. |
| 13. Have you identified any quick fixes? | YES [✓] NO [] Summarise on Form 3. |

Now you have completed the Template and Table you should know if discrimination or disadvantage is occurring or may occur.

If you think the screening revealed no discrimination or disadvantage proceed to Stage 5, record the decision on Form 4 and send it to the ICE Group for validation and publication.

If you think the screening did reveal discrimination or disadvantage OR YOU "DON'T KNOW" a detailed assessment will probably be required. (N.B. Alternatively, you may decide to consult with the affected customer group(s) at this stage to determine if negative impacts are occurring.) You must first prioritise the detailed assessment using the process set out in Stage 2; include the work in your work programme/service plan and use Form 2 to notify the ICE Group of the decision, priority and the timescale for completing the assessment.

If you identified one or more "Quick Fixes" record these on Form 3 (Improvements) and send to the ICE Group.