

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of Policy/Service/Function	Decent Homes Quarter Four Performance Report Dec – Mar 2009
Date of Assessment	March 2009
Directorate	Adult & Community Services
Head of Service	Colin Moone
Names and Roles of the people carrying out the EIA	Yasmin Ramjohn Service Manager, Performance. Dave Coleman, Head of Construction. John Lowe, Head of Policy and Development
Why is the Equality Impact Assessment being done?	The EIA has been completed to assess the impact of the Decent Homes programme of works on the quality of council housing stock and on tenants' well being

### **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 It is envisaged that improving the condition and standard of the council housing stock will have a beneficial impact on all tenants. It is delivered through an annual programme of works in consultation with tenants via a combination of information campaigns and community based activity. On the 7 April 2007 an equality impact assessment of the *Decent Homes Strategy* was completed. The assessment concluded that there were no major adverse impacts likely to arise from the implementation of the Strategy. This equality impact assessment is being done to identify any negative impact arising from the delivery of the Decent Homes Programme and identify opportunities for the better promotion of equality.
- 1.2 In equality terms this means that older/elderly people, disabled people, lone parents (the majority of whom are women) and unemployed people (a disproportionate number of whom are from ethnic minority groups and/or have a disability) are key customers for this service.

### **2. Profile of groups affected as customers and/or staff**

#### **2.1 Age Equality**

Older people especially elderly people are a key target group for this service. Waltham Forest is a borough with an aging population; in 2006 approximately 25,000 residents were over 65 years of age. Based on the GLA 2007 lower population projections, that number will raise to approximately 37,000 by 2031 an increase of 32%, compared with an overall population growth of 5.4%. The majority of Council tenants in homes managed by Ascham Homes are aged between 35-

64 (47%), Older tenants aged 65+ comprise 20% and those aged between 16-34 are at 33%.

## **2.2 Disability equality**

Nearly a quarter of households in Waltham Forest include a member with a disability or long-term limiting illness. 10% of tenants declare that they have a disability.

## **2.3 Gender equality**

There are far more women tenants than there are men- 64% and 36% respectively. Lone parents, most of whom are women are a key group for this service. In our new vision for housing in the borough we wish to create safe and secure neighbourhoods. The fear of crime in our communities can often impact disproportionately on women.

## **2.4 Race equality**

Half of all households in the Borough are from BME communities. Over-occupation affects 21.0% of BME households. Ethnic minority people are a target group insofar as they are represented as low-income groups. 54% of Ascham Homes customers are White, 12% are Asian or Asian British, 27% are Black or Black British, 6% are 'Other' and 2% are mixed heritage.

## **2.5 Religion/Beliefs**

The largest faith group amongst tenants is Christian, followed by Muslim, with significantly smaller numbers of Hindu, Jewish and the Sikh faiths. It should be noted that the coverage of the resident profile for 'faith' is lower than for other indicators. Cultural needs of faith communities is an area that has been addressed in terms of the provision of information in a variety of languages and the availability of interpretation services.

## **2.6 Sexual Orientation**

There is very little hard data on the level of non-heterosexual sexual orientation. Customers appear to be unwilling to divulge this information. Ascham Homes is working with the East London out Project to raise customers' confidence in Ascham Homes Evidence from the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual Transgender (LGBT) group indicate that some LGBT residents are more likely to be subject to discrimination and violence, particularly on larger estates where they have been identified. The Housing Services and Ascham Homes are working with LGBT to gain more information on the housing needs of this equality group. The number of customers who have declared a non-heterosexual sexual orientation is too small to draw statistical conclusions.

## **3. Questions this assessment addresses**

**3.1 What kind of equality impact may there be?**

If the Decent Homes programme is not delivered on target, then there will be a negative impact on customers as a whole. If the Programme is delivered unequally and particular groups of customers are more likely to have their home made decent than others there is the potential for discrimination to occur.

**3.2 How significant is it in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?**

Not significant. The profile of customers whose homes have been made decent matches very closely the profile of customers as a whole, indicating that the programme is being delivered evenly to all customer groups.

**3.3 Is the impact positive or negative (or is there a potential for both)?**

In the main, the impact is positive for diverse customer groups. There are ongoing surveys to check satisfaction with the quality of services received as well as the impact of the new improvements. It is a requirement of the decent homes standard that accessibility of the property will not be reduced and Ascham Homes will monitor this and also look for opportunities for improving the access. The impact on tenants of decent homes work will be continually monitored for any potential adverse impacts on any particular group

**3.4 On what aspects of the Equality Duties will this impact be?**

This will impact on the duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity under the Disability Discrimination act

**3.5 Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination?**

No

**3.6 What further information is required to gauge the probability and extent of the impact?**

Monitoring data from ongoing satisfaction surveys, *by each diversity grouping* would allow us to assess whether all groups are equally satisfied with services.

**3.7 Where and how can that information be obtained?**

Data showing customer satisfaction with the decent homes programme is held on an Excel database. It is sorted by name and address. Data

on the profile of LBWF Council tenants is held on Ascham Homes iWorld housing management IT system. It can be exported to excel and is sorted by Unique Property reference Number. The information is obtainable, however the differing means of sorting data may mean that a less than perfect match is made between the two sets of data.

#### 4. Action Planning Questions

##### 4.1 What action do we need to take to reduce negative impact?

None

##### 4.2 If the action proposed will not fully mitigate adverse consequences for equality, or if the decision is to take no action, why is this, and can we justify it?

NA

##### 4.3 Can any further action be taken to promote equality of opportunity in relation to any of the equality strands?

Yes, analyse customer satisfaction by diversity strands (age, disability, gender and ethnicity and faith) to confirm that all customer groups are equally satisfied with the delivery of decent homes.

##### 4.4 Do we need to undertake any further consultation or research?

No

#### 5. Conclusions and Next Steps

##### 5.1 Action Plan

Action required	Lead Officer	Time Scale	Comments/Outcomes
1 Evaluate whether the iWorld resident profile data can be properly 'matched' with satisfaction data.	Dave Coleman	June 2009	
2 If 'yes' to 1 above then identify whether diverse groups (age/ethnicity/gender/disability) are equally satisfied with the Decent Homes Programme. If there are significant differences in levels of satisfaction then develop an action plan to address this	Dave Coleman	June 2009	
