

Equality Impact Assessment

Title of the policy	Discretionary Housing Policy
Date	30 March 2011
Lead Officer	Daren Nowlan
Who else is involved in undertaking this assessment?	Nicola Pedge Beryl White Chris Funnell

Step 1 – Overview of policy/function being assessed

A. Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (specify aims and objectives)
The policy specifies how Oadby and Wigston Borough Councils' Revenues and Benefits Service (RBS) will operate the Discretionary Housing payment scheme (DHP) and indicates some of the factors that will be considered when deciding if a DHP can be made.
B. What specific groups is the policy designed to affect/impact?
Benefit claimants who qualify for Housing or Council Tax Benefit* who need additional financial support. This covers customers from all groups within the community. <i>* Council Tax Benefit means, Main Benefit and does not include the Alternative Maximum Council Tax Benefit often described as Second Adult Rebate</i>
C. Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
None – this needs to be undertaken. This policy was created in 2001 and updated recently to accommodate legislation changes.

Step 2 – What we already know and where there are gaps

A. List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender, transgender etc.
Data/information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation ▪ Previous Equality Impact Assessments ▪ Demographic information ▪ Anecdotal and other evidence
Monitoring sample from benefit claims taken from Nov 10 to Mar 11 ONS data on customer groups in OWBC Poverty mapping from LSR
B. What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (please list)
Need to review this data and find any trends from the data that will provide meaningful information to plan services.

Step 3 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?

A. In light of the answers you have given in step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.
Welfare rights groups such as CAB or Helping Hands Customer groups / forums and access groups Customers who did not apply for DHP

Step 4 – Assessing the impacts

	In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative on the groups specified and provide an explanation for your decision. (please refer to the general duties on the front page)
Age	Negative – Cannot be applied for unless over 16 years of age due to benefit legislation Negative – We discriminate against under 35 years old as required by benefit legislation in respect of single room rents Positive – We take into account the specific extra demands on pensioners in our assessments, for example that they are on fixed incomes Positive - We also operate a customer care plus service. Positive – We provide additional support to bereaved pensioners through signposting and aid renewing claims Positive – Council is actively taking part in Tell Us Once
Disability (physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	Positive – We allow additional awards for people who have rooms for carers and we set aside disregarded income paid to carers or for constant attendance or mobility Positive - We also operate a customer care plus service. Positive – We pay landlords direct in vulnerable cases
Gender / Sex	None – we treat male and females equally
Religious Belief	Negative – We discriminate against people who are wholly maintained by religious orders as they cannot claim benefits, this in line with legislation.
Racial Group	Positive – We offered interpretation services for all languages
Sexual Orientation	None – we treat sexual orientation equally
Transgender	None – we treat transgender cases equally
Other protected groups (pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	Positive – We recognise civil partnerships within the benefits that we pay Positive – We will seek to support pregnant women in families with imminent child birth who are over accommodated by a single bedroom
Other socially excluded groups (low literacy, priority neighbourhoods,	Positive – We assist with the completion of claims and documents, we offer telephone contact services, face to face, visiting services and SMS text messaging. We also operate a customer care plus service. Positive – The assistance we give is directly targeted at reducing socio-economic discrimination.

socio-economic, etc)	
All	We offer the same access to services to all.

Step 5 – Action Plan

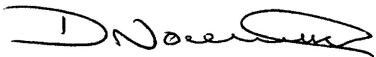
Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan			
Question Number (Ref)	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1,2 and 3	Consultation with customer groups and welfare rights needs to take place	Beryl White	March 2012
1,2 and 3	Analysis of the data obtained from the monitoring and consultation needs to take place and be translated into actions.	Daren Nowlan	March 2012
1,2 and 3	Ongoing monitoring	Daren Nowlan	Ongoing

Step 6 – Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees		
Service users (potential service users)	✓	Website and information publicised in reception (posters and leaflets) Advertising
Partners and stakeholders	✓	Through meetings and stakeholder groups and council meetings and reports Officer training, equality and diversity and staff awareness
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication		

needs/concerns are there?		
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Step 7 – Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service Head)

Please delete as appropriate
I agree with this assessment / action plan
If <i>disagree</i>, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:
Signed (Service Head): 
Date: 4 April 2011