

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Housing and Council Tax Benefit take up policy

Question	Response/ findings
What are the main aims and objectives or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function that you are assessing?	To increase the take up of Housing and Council Tax Benefit
Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where this is more than one person, team, department, or body – and include any outside organisations who deliver under procurement arrangements	The Housing and Council Tax Benefit teams Derby Direct The Council Tax teams Derby Homes
Question	Response/ findings
Who is affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered? Such as, who are the external and internal customers, groups, or communities?	All residents of Derby on a low income
What outcomes do we want to achieve, why and for whom? For example, what do you want to be providing, how well, what changes or improvements, and what should the benefits be for customers, groups or communities?	We want to maximise entitlement to Housing and Council Tax Benefit for all residents of Derby. This can be achieved by awareness and publicity, specific targeted campaigns and by working closely with partners.
Question	Response/ findings
What existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function are there? For example, Best Value Inspections, policy reviews, research into the effects of a policy or practice.	Performance Standards assessment. Enabler E38 and 39
What did they tell you?	
Identifying potential equality issues and factors	
Question	Response/ findings

What do you already know about the equality impact or need? For example, from research, feedback, consultation or any performance monitoring	Statistics are quoted nationally about take up of Housing and Council Tax Benefit. We have no local figures and they would be very difficult to estimate. Our starting position is poor because our monitoring of ethnicity of Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims is weak
Question	Response/ findings
Is there any evidence of higher or lower take up under the policy or practice, or of the service or function for any particular groups? For example, who uses the service, who doesn't and why not?	Because of the difficulties described above this is hard to measure. However we are aware of the influx of new communities into Derby.
Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? For example is the population changing, and if so, how and what might that mean for the service or function?	We are aware of demographic changes as new communities are coming to live in Derby. Our knowledge of the numbers claiming Housing and Council Tax Benefit, and of those not claiming who could be entitled is limited
Question	Response/ findings
Is there an indication that any of the policies or practices involved with the service or function creates particular problems or difficulties for any groups of customers or communities?	Not that we are aware of. We employ an Ethnic Liaison Officer whose role is specifically to encourage take up of Housing and Council Tax Benefit amongst harder to reach communities. We also have a range of Housing and Council Tax Benefit information leaflets which have been translated into Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi.
What information or data exists? For example, statistics, customer feedback, complaints, research, monitoring – who keeps it and can you get hold of it?	Our Ethnic Liaison Officer keeps some statistics on the ethnicity of the customers who visit her at her surgeries. Our monitoring of ethnicity of Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims is weak
Question	Response/ findings
Does any equality or diversity objectives already exist? If so, what are they and what is current performance like against them?	Our take up policy includes a section for dealing with customers whose first language is not English

Is the service having a positive or negative effect on particular people in the community, or particular groups or communities?

There are no negative effects from encouraging take up of Housing and Council Tax Benefit. Our take up policies and plans ensure that high take up of benefit is encouraged from all groups

Collecting the information and data about how the policy, practice, service or function, impacts on communities

Please record your information and data in this table and think about:

what information or data you will need
 using both quantitative and qualitative data
 making sure that where possible there is information that allows all perspectives to be considered
 identifying any gaps in the information/ data and what it can tell you

Data or information	When and how was it collected?	Where is it from?	What does it tell you? You need to consider all six equality strands where you can	Gaps in information
Customer feedback and complaints	Customer feedback box which invites comment. ‘Have your say’ feedback forms. Very few completed and there is no ethnic monitoring of these. Corporate complaints procedure. Opinion meter. No comment yet on Housing Benefit issues. Could be used for other issues.		If the customer chooses to complete this in the complaints form it can provide us with their age, gender and limited information relating to their ethnic origin	Little on Housing and Council Tax Benefit take up and data is not split by ethnic group

Consultation and community involvement	September 2006 and January 2007.	Housing and Council Tax Benefit customer survey	A range of questions about customer satisfaction.	The survey records the ethnicity of the respondents in the overall breakdown on number, but does not give individual replies by ethnic breakdown
Performance information including Best Value				We do not have an accurate breakdown of the Housing and Council Tax Benefit caseload.
Take up and usage data	We record the ethnicity of Housing and Council Tax Benefit claimants	Recorded in the Academy software	Housing and Council Tax Benefit caseload broken down by ethnic group.	We have doubts over the accuracy of the data
Comparative information or data where no local information	None			
Census, national or regional statistics	Census information may give statistics on the overall ethnic breakdown in the City which could be compared to our Housing and Council Tax Benefit breakdown			We have concerns over the accuracy of the Housing and Council Tax Benefit data

Access audits or assessments such as DDA assessments	N/A			
Workforce profile	N/A			
Where service delivered under procurement arrangements – workforce profile for deliverers	N/A			
Monitoring and scrutiny outcomes	N/A			

Analysing the information and data and setting equality objectives and targets

Please give your detailed findings in this table

Service or function	Policy or practice	Findings	Which groups are affected and how	Whose needs are not being met and how?

Objectives - process, impact or outcome based

Please give your proposed objectives/ targets in this table

Objective/Target:	To analyse the data currently held in the Academy system to assess its accuracy
Specific	To check what we record and how, to monitor its suitability and assess why it is considered unreliable
Measurable	We can test the accuracy of data on a sample basis
Achievable	Needs to be planned into the work of the P&D team
Relevant	We need to know our starting point before we assess what more work needs to be done
Timed	Needs to be planned into the work of the P&D team

Objective/Target:	To run comparison between the Academy data and local demographic breakdown within Derby
Specific	The ethnic breakdown of our Housing and Council Tax Benefit caseload by % can be compared with the ethnic breakdown in Derby and comparisons analysed.
Measurable	Easily measurable by comparisons
Achievable	Needs to be planned into the work of the P&D team
Relevant	This will give us the data we need to address low take up of Housing and Council Tax Benefit by specific ethnic groups.
Timed	Needs to be planned into the work of the P&D team

Objective/Target:	
Specific	
Measurable	
Achievable	
Relevant	
Timed	

Monitoring and reviewing - incorporating into performance management

Please summarise your objectives and targets in this table with your proposed monitoring and reporting arrangements

Objective	Planned action	Target performance			Responsible lead officer	Reporting cycle, for example, quarterly
		2005/6	2006/7	2007/8		
To analyse the data currently held in the Academy system to assess its accuracy	To check how we currently record ethnicity.			<i>By February 2008</i>	<i>Maurice Curtin</i>	
To run comparison between the Academy data and local demographic breakdown within Derby	<i>To identify the current demographic breakdown in Derby and run comparisons with the breakdown of the Housing and Council Tax Benefit caseload to identify areas of under claiming</i>			<i>By April 2008</i>	<i>Maurice Curtin</i>	