

# **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

Supporting People

November 2007

## Context

Supporting People pays for Housing Related Support Services for a wide range of client groups. These services are contracted for by the Derby City Council on behalf of the Supporting People Partnership by the Supporting People Team.

The vision for Supporting People is...

*“To provide housing related support services that meet the needs and aspirations of vulnerable people in Derby”*

The role of the Supporting People Team is to:

- Develop and maintain an effective Supporting People Partnership in Derby City
- Procure services using appropriate processes
- Manage Supporting People contracts appropriately
- ensure that payments to providers are timely and accurate
- ensure that services continue to offer value for money
- ensure that services are of a good quality using the Quality Assessment Framework
- ensure that providers implement continuous improvements
- ensure contract compliance by monitoring performance indicators
- implement the outcomes of fairer charging assessments
- carry out validation visits
- consult with all stakeholders with an interest in Supporting People
- carry out supply and needs analysis and gap analysis in consultation with stakeholders
- commission research into Housing Related Support Needs as appropriate
- gather information about the outcomes being achieved by Supporting People
- develop a strategy for housing related support needs and take a strategic lead in future development of the sector in consultation with other stakeholders

## The Equalities Impact Assessment Team

The team to carry out this equalities impact assessment has been put together in line with the October 2005 guidance for carrying out equality impact assessments. The team includes a range of staff from within the Team...

Ryan Eason – Supporting People Monitoring Officer  
Gemma Ashby – Supporting People Officer  
Linda McCay – Commissioning and Review Manager  
Andrew Humberstone – Supporting People Manager

## Scope of the Assessment

Current service development priorities include...

* Customer focus	* Minority Issues
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Taking these into account it was decided that the focus of the assessment should be upon

the front facing areas of work carried out by Supporting People, that is, those that are accessed directly by vulnerable service users and/or the general public...

- Consultation
- Events and conferences
- Validation visits
- Publicity materials
- Office contact
- Phone contact
- Newsletter
- Website

Relevant policies and procedures identified were...

- Validation visit procedure
- Consultation Plan
- Customer services standards
- Website guidance
- Council Equal Opportunities Policy
- Plain English guidelines

## **Assessment**

Consultation –

There are some areas of strength...

- an annual plan is produced each year in consultation with key stakeholders
- capacity building for service users
- service user involvement for example through peer reviews
- diverse and inclusive focus group

The main concern is that we need to improve our approach to making use of accessible venues and dealing with special requirements such as dietary requirements and become more proactive in identifying and dealing with accessibility barriers.

Events and conferences –

There are some areas of strength...

- use of DDA compliant venues
- provide signers when needed
- always ask for feedback following events
- history of positive feedback about events and venues
- history of provider involvement in planning events

One of our main concerns in this area is that although we have a reasonable circulation list we do not feel that we reach everybody that we ought to and that it could be improved.

Validation visits -

There are some areas of strength...

- respond to communication needs with signers/interpreters
- provide relevant staff training

The main concern is that the service could be more proactive in identifying and responding to needs that are causing a barrier to accessing a service. Identified actions in the action plan relate to this.

Publicity materials –

There are some areas of strength...

- use of corporate information box to let people know our leaflets/publicity materials can be provided on other languages.
- use of pictorial communications

Our main consideration here is that use of pictorial communications is a knowledge area that needs to be developed within the team and plans should be made to fill this knowledge gap.

Office and telephone contact

Areas of strength...

- use of Minicom and relevant staff training
- use of signers and interpreters

Again the main concern was that although we are good at responding to needs when they are identified, we are not too good at proactively identifying and removing barriers. Actions to deal with this are included in the action plan.

Website

Areas of strength include...

- Simple webpage construction means people without broadband can access the information

However, we don't know much about who uses the website or why they use it.

Tendering –

Areas of strength are...

- staff have been trained in procurement and are aware of good practice in procurement and also how this relates to equality issues and inclusion issues

Although we are aware that good practice means that we should involve tenants in all stages of the procurement process our practice in this regard is patchy.

## Action Plan

Action	Who responsible	By end of
Include webpage consultation on new consultation plan for 08/09	AH/JG	May 08
Include language box on validation visit paperwork sent out to services	GA/HD	June 08
Devise a brief Service user validation visit feedback form	GA/HD	June 08
Devise new validation visit planning form including section asking about requirements	GA/HD	June 08
Identify and access training about how to use pictorial images for 2/3 team members to attend and use to improve publicity material	LM	Aug 08
Contact Ann Webster to identify relevant person to attend a team meeting to tell us about Language Line and interpreters	AH	Feb 08
Devise a Event organising and venue booking procedure, including equal opps monitoring section on event feedback form, and use of language box on all publicity	AW/Admin/GA	Feb 08
Develop SP team standards for arranging meetings at Council House and receiving visitors	RE	Dec 08
Identify an employee self assessment tool for equal opps to include on staff induction	GA	Dec 08
Develop a list of target organisations dealing with minority groups to include on circulation list for all event/ information	LM	March 08
Produce guidelines about service user involvement in tenders	AH	March 2008