

Dale & Valley Homes

Equality Impact Assessment

Decent Homes



Equality Impact Assessment Template

General Information

Date	09 June 2009
Directorate	Property Services
Name and Job Title of Responsible Officer	Terry Cranston Decent Homes Manager
Policy Under Consideration	Decent Homes Function

Identify the aims and the objectives of the policy.

What is the title of the function that is under consideration?

Decent Homes Function

What are the aims and objectives of the policy?

The function is for Dale Valley Homes to deliver the Decent Homes programme to all of its customers by 2112, to encourage resident participation, produce efficiency savings and cost effectiveness, to protect the environment and promote safety standards.

The Government has set a target to ensure that all social housing meets standards of decency by 2012. A Decent Home is one that is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities. And one which;

- Meets the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System
- Is in a reasonable state of repair.
- Has reasonable modern facilities
- Provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Is an EIA required?

Yes

State why?

Considering that the Decent Homes works could have an impact on the entire housing stock; **it has** the potential to have an effect on all groups of customers. The opportunity to refuse to have the internal works carried out exists and it may be that certain households will find the prospect of work more difficult than others.

There is a potential that some households will be more likely to refuse to take up the opportunity to modernise their homes. This could be for a number of reasons and there is a responsibility to minimise refusals, and to adapt our policies and procedures to enable all households to take up the works.

The potential barriers/discrimination target groups could be across all of the 7 strands;

Stage 1

Establish Whether the General Equality Duties are Relevant

Is the policy relevant to the General Equality Duties?

Yes

Which ones?

(tick as appropriate)

General Duties

Race	
eliminate unlawful racial discrimination	√
promote equality of opportunity	√
promote good relations between people of different racial groups	√
Disability	
promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons	√
eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act	√
eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities	√
promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons	√
encourage participation by disabled persons in public life	√
take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons	√
Gender	
eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex AND transgender	√
promote equality of opportunity between women and men	√
(not to discriminate on the grounds of marital status)	√

Age, Sexuality, Religion and / or Belief	
eliminate direct discrimination	√
eliminate indirect discrimination	√
eliminate Harassment	√
eliminate Victimisation	√

Stage 2

Give brief details of the type of barriers / discrimination faced by target groups?

Race

- Correspondence; i.e. letters may not offer translation into the main BME languages.
- Poor links with the local community, in terms of promotion of the service.

Disability

- The service may **not** be aimed at disabled people
- **No** option for translation of correspondence into other formats such as large print, Braille or audio tape.
- Venues for customer launch events and end of scheme reviews may be inaccessible (not DDA compliant)
- Could be mobility issues for customers during the refurbishment.
- Could be harassment directed towards disabled people
- Non-positive attitudes directed towards disabled people
- Could be discrimination if customers are decanted into non-suitable temporary accommodation (bungalow - 2nd floor flat)

Learning Difficulties

- People with learning disabilities (impaired understanding of written information) may need other references to aid understanding.

Gender

- Sole tenants (female) may be discriminated against.
- Potential for safety issues regarding sole tenants (female customers)
- Disengagement by Male customers

Age

- Problems with elderly/infirm customers not wanting the 'upheaval' concerned with the works
- Elderly may have no where to re-locate during the works

Sexuality

- No information is gathered concerning sexual orientation
- If someone has a differing sexuality, they may face prejudice if decanted into a 'new' area.

Religion/Belief

- Working predominantly to the Christian Calendar, by definition it may impact on those groups or individuals if appointment times are not offered to meet religious requirements.

Stage 3

Evidence Gathering

Please give the source and a brief summary of the information that you are using for the EIA.

Evidence includes data from Customer Profile; VMS satisfaction surveys; any recent consultation on this function; Complaints data; Status Survey 2008; Individual & Housing Support data on vulnerability; LPI and Service Standards data. **If there is not sufficient evidence, in your EIA Action Plan detail evidence to be gathered.**

Type of Evidence

Evidence (show details)

Evidence:

Total stock of 4300 Properties, may require 'Decent Homes' works.

Total completed to date; 1000 Nr

Total Nr of Refusals; 99 Nr

Why refused? see annex 1

Decent Homes Customer Satisfaction Target is 95%

Decent Homes Customer Satisfaction Achieved is currently 96%

Race

Dale and Valley Homes documents can be produced in other languages; Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Urdu and Polish (the above statement is included on all documentation sent out to our customers)

There are good links with the local community groups in terms of promoting the services; Resident/Action Groups etc.

Disability

There are advantages for customers with a disability (61%) when receiving works, because this can trigger an assessment from social services (OT's) which in turn can introduce adaptations to aid their independence, for example - Flat-floor showers or bespoke kitchens designed to take account of

height or mobility (34%) difficulties, can be fitted in conjunction with the Decent Homes works.

Around 13% of tenants report sight impairment and a further 13% have hearing difficulties. Dale and Valley Homes documents are available in other formats such as Braille or large print, or on audiotape or CD-Rom. (the above statement is included on all documentation sent out to our customers)

Learning Difficulties

DVH provides tenancy support to a range of vulnerable people living in our homes (however this service is not funded to provide extra support during the works) however; Dale & Valley Homes have 2 Resident Liaison Officers who undertake this function

In addition there are several other floating support and social services care services in place across the district.

Pictorial references could be used for with people who have severe learning disabilities.

Gender

The majority of sole tenants are female, where there are joint tenancies the lead tenant is generally male with the second tenant being female.

There is already a provision of extra female presence as an option when works are taking place. Two female resident liaison officers offer a guarantee of an individual visit to every tenant.

Age

The **overall** customer profile shows that households containing tenants who are over 65 years of age form the largest group of tenants (42%) There is evidence from the Decent Homes programme that shows that it is older tenants who are more inclined to refuse for works to be done, therefore resources need to be directed to this group to assist them in decision making and to reassure about the disruption and inconvenience.

Sexuality

Dale & Valley Homes now collects details (from, October 2008) in terms of sexual orientation; we now need to shape future services around their needs.

Religion/Belief

Although Individual requirements for worship are not accommodated within decent homes works, the programme is flexible enough to allow some choice regarding washing facilities.

Dale & Valley Homes now also hold a Faith, and Diversity Calendar

Refusals

From the 99 Nr. refusals (with signed, waivers) we hold customer profile information on 77 Nr. households (78%);

Based on the above 77 Nr profiles;

Males & Females

- A total of 57 Nr are aged 60 years or over. (74%)

Males

- 28 Nr. are aged 60 years or over
- 39 Nr. where males are the main tenant
- 17 Nr. with mobility problems
- 6 Nr. with sight impairment
- 9 Nr. with hearing difficulties
- 5 Nr. with sight and hearing disabilities
- 4 Nr. with sight, hearing and mobility disabilities

Females

- 29 Nr. are aged 60 years or over
- 38 Nr. where Females are the main tenant
- 20 Nr. with mobility problems
- 9 Nr. with sight impairment
- 8 Nr. with hearing difficulties
- 2 Nr. with sight and hearing disabilities
- 2 Nr. with sight, hearing and mobility disabilities

Services/Supporting People.

From the **overall** population of the customer profile the following needs can be summarised:

- about half of tenants are aged over sixty five
- 700 of this older group live alone
- 34% of tenants have mobility problems
- 13% respectively have a hearing or sight related disability

At this stage there is no evidence to suggest that those with disabilities are receiving a poorer service however their disability can prove a barrier to accessing services/information and therefore not receiving the full service they are eligible for in terms of property upgrades and support/advice.

The evidence gathered as part of the assessment does not confirm that there is a less favourable service delivered to any community of interest or individual however, consideration of the numbers of people with disabilities and other support needs suggests that there is scope for this to occur unless Dale and Valley Homes:

- provides a range of options for customers to access information
- seeks support from other agencies to provide advice to vulnerable
- customers to make sure they access all services e.g. use of advocates.
- is very proactive in identifying customers with these needs

- maintains a detailed database of customer needs/profiles

The lack of clear procedural guide as to how DVH will address the needs of certain equality groups could result in some customers receiving a less favourable service and result in officers failing to assess cultural, social and other equality needs as part of service delivery.

Age

There will be direct benefits for older people who have works carried out in that their health could improve if new more efficient heating systems are installed

It is important that positive action is taken to ensure that this group are not excluded from the programme and its associated benefits due to vulnerability; lack of information or support.

Religion/Belief

The service needs to offer a wide range of appointment times in order to meet religious requirements.

Continuous Monitoring

Take account of the evaluation of the "controlled delivery" - that is the next phases of Decent Homes works', this will take particular note of how customers were communicated with, any complaints they had, if those who elected not to receive works or had any particular communication/cultural or other diversity requirements.

The evaluation will also produce any further procedures which can be used to ensure that individuals who have extra support needs such as households containing someone with a physical disability can receive the same level of service as other households and make informed choices.

Consultation carried out to date in respect of this policy or function

Summarise details of consultation, attendees and outcomes

The “Dale and Valley Decent Homes Standard” has already been the subject of detailed consultation with the following groups:

- Customer Panel
- Resident Groups
- Officers and Councillors of Wear Valley District Council
- Stakeholder groups and partners such as Age Concern, PCT, Sure start, Police, Community Network (local voluntary sector agency), Social Services.

If you think the consultation has not been robust enough, **in your EIA Action Plan detail further consultation required**

Stage 4

Consider the Disproportionality

Based on evidence are there any signs that: -

one or more groups of people either **are experiencing** or **could experience** a less favourable service than other groups; ✓

OR

the needs of one or more groups are not being met.

(Please tick as appropriate)

Give Details

99 people who refused the works have a common profile of being elderly and disabled.

Differential Impact or Proportionality

There is evidence that one or more groups of people **could** experience a less favourable service than others. For example there are significant proportions of Dale and Valley Homes tenants who may require specialist support and communication measures:

Give details: -

The action plan attached is going to test whether there is evidence of bias through the profiles of the 901 customers who agreed to have the works carried out.

If there is disproportionality, consider an alternative way forward

Can the policy/function be amended or changed in order to address the issues that have been identified and to ensure that the original aims of the policy are met?

Do we need a positive action programme?

Give details

See above

Stage 5

Draw up action plan based on findings

What disproportionality has been identified?	How will you address it?	What outcome do you expect to see?	How will you monitor this?	How will you evaluate this?	Who will be responsible for making sure this happens?	What timescales are you working to?	Are there any resource implications?
<p>Monitoring shows there is evidence that it is the older and/or disabled tenants who are more inclined to refuse the works to be carried out.</p>	<p>Customer profile Information will be collated on the 901 customers who have proceeded with the 'Decent Homes' works. This information will then be mirrored alongside the 99 refusals.</p> <p>RLO's will liaise with customers who have refused to have the works carried out, in order to identify what (if anything) can be done in order for the works to proceed.</p>	<p>Similar age groups have gone ahead with the works. or These may be found to be unique set of customers - if so immediate action will be required.</p> <p>Identification of possible supportive measures that if followed through could lead to an increase in the uptake of customers going through with the refurbishment.</p>	<p>Data will be produced and analysed</p> <p>Speaking to customers who have declined the service. Keeping records of conversations.</p>	<p>Depending on data will determine next steps</p> <p>Number of people speaking to.</p> <p>Produce a report giving recommendations.</p>	<p>Decent Homes Manager with support from Resident Liaison Officers (RLO's)</p> <p>Decent Homes Manager with support from Resident Liaison Officers (RLO's)</p>	<p>End June 2009</p> <p>End October 2009</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Staff time.</p>

	RLO's will liaise with older/vulnerable customers who have had the works carried out, in order to seek their views on how they coped during the works and what the benefits have been.	A better understanding of the process. An improved understanding of how to market the scheme	Speaking to customers who have successfully gone through the process. Possible connections between those who have had the works carried out explaining the benefits to those who initially refused the works; e.g. New, more efficient heating systems could improve the customer's health and also reduce their fuel costs.	Evidence of meetings between RLO's and older/vulnerable customers.	Decent Homes Manager with support from Resident Liaison Officers (RLO's	End November 2009	Staff time
Review EIA	Review to determine progress on action plan	Next steps to determine indirect discrimination	Review EIA	Findings from review	Decent Homes Manager	December 2009 – January 2010	Staff time

Under the terms of the Equality Duty Dale & Valley Homes is required to make arrangements for publishing the results of the assessment and consultation that has been carried out.

Please indicate how you recommend that this should be undertaken: -

Website, Corporate Equality Group, ACC Working Group, Customer Panel, PSD Committee and Board.

Confirmation

Signature of Completing Officer

..Terry Cranston, Decent Homes Manager...

Signature of Director.....Jack Hurst.....

Date.....22 June 2009.....

Once completed please return to Louise Butler, Equality & Diversity Officer