

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. In all appropriate instances we will need to carry out an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment.

This form:

- can be used to prompt discussion when carrying out your impact assessment
- should be completed either during the assessment process or following completion of the assessment
- should include a brief explanation where a section is not applicable

Directorate: Environment and Neighbourhoods	Service area: Housing Support
Lead person: Kathryn Bramall	Contact number: 0113 224 3296
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: 30 October 2012	

1. Title: Tenancy Strategy for Leeds 2013 - 2015
Is this a:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Is this:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New/ proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Already exists and is being reviewed <input type="checkbox"/> Is changing
(Please tick one of the above)

2. Members of the assessment team:

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team e.g. service user, manager of service, specialist
Kathryn Bramall	LCC	

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:

The Localism Act requires local authorities to publish their Tenancy Strategy by January 2013. The Strategy sits alongside the council's Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Lettings Policy. These policies are subject to separate Equality Impact Assessments prior to approval.

The Tenancy Strategy will be used by Registered Providers when they develop their own tenancy policies which set out their management procedures in more detail which the council expects will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). This EIA focuses on the council's decisions in relation to the Tenancy Strategy.

The Tenancy Strategy makes reference to the needs of specific customer groups, for example, older, disabled and vulnerable tenants.

The Tenancy Strategy sets out the matters to which Leeds' Registered Providers must have regard to when developing their policies:

Flexible Tenancies

- The council does not propose to introduce flexible tenancies, and will continue to offer introductory tenancies (which will normally become secure tenancies). Any decision to introduce flexible tenancies would only be taken following an options appraisal, stakeholder consultation and approval of the Executive Board.
- However, the council recognises that Registered Social Landlords are free to introduce flexible tenancies. In this instance, the Tenancy Strategy provides guidance on the factors they should have regard to, and sets out situations where the council does not support the use of flexible term tenancies, including for disabled tenants.

The introduction of Affordable Rent

- Some Registered Providers intend to introduce Affordable Rent, which will be set at a higher level than traditional social rent but at less than market rent. The aim is to offer an alternative to full private market rents.

Discharging the homelessness duty into the private rented sector

- The council has a new power to discharge its duty to homeless customers by making an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector. The property must be available for a minimum of a 12 month period and be suitable for the homeless household. If the household loses the accommodation within a 2 year period through no fault of their own, the council will still have a duty to secure accommodation for them.

Policy on granting 'discretionary succession' rights

- The Localism Act abolishes the right to succession and assignment (other than by way of a mutual exchange) to anyone other than the deceased's spouse, civil partner or partner, and joint tenants. Other family members will no longer have an automatic right to succeed to a local authority tenancy.
- The council's current tenancy agreement (2008) allows wider family members to succeed. Registered Providers may wish to consider allowing wider family members to succeed or, where appropriate, offering a flexible tenancy.

4. Scope of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment
 (complete - 4a. if you are assessing a strategy, policy or plan and 4b. if you are assessing a service, function or event)

4a. Strategy, policy or plan (please tick the appropriate box below)	
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes and the supporting guidance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A specific section within the strategy, policy or plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide detail:	

4b. Service, function, event please tick the appropriate box below	
The whole service (including service provision and employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific part of the service (including service provision or employment or a specific section of the service)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procuring of a service (by contract or grant) (please see equality assurance in procurement)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide detail:	

<p>5. Fact finding – what do we already know Make a note here of all information you will be using to carry out this assessment. This could include: previous consultation, involvement, research, results from perception surveys, equality monitoring and customer/ staff feedback.</p> <p>(priority should be given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration related information)</p> <p>A copy of the draft version of the Tenancy Strategy was sent to Registered Providers in Leeds for comment in the summer 2012.</p> <p>The council manages approximately 58,000 properties and the Registered Providers manage a further 16,000 properties in Leeds. The Tenancy Strategy covers a number of</p>
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tenancy management issues.

The Localism Act give local authorities and Registered Providers a number of new powers to change the way they manage their stock. The majority of changes to tenure type will only apply to new social housing tenants. Other changes which would involve reviewing the council's lettings policy or tenancy agreement would be subject to further consultation and separate approval.

Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information

Please provide detail:

The council does not hold equality information about Registered Providers' tenants.

Action required:

Registered Providers are expected to complete an equality impact assessment of their tenancy policies.

6. Wider involvement – have you involved groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested

Yes

No

Please provide detail: The council consulted on the draft Tenancy Strategy with Registered Providers in Leeds, Leeds Tenants Federation, tenants and residents. This included a Talking Point survey signposted from the Leeds Homes flyer, press release and from Leeds City Council website homepage.

Action required: Further consultation would be required for changes to the council's lettings policy or tenancy agreement.

7. Who may be affected by this activity?

please tick all relevant and significant equality characteristics, stakeholders and barriers that apply to your strategy, policy, service or function

Equality characteristics

Age

Carers

Disability

Gender reassignment

Race

Religion or Belief

Sex (male or female)

Sexual orientation

Other

(for example – marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background, education or skills level)

Please specify: Income

Stakeholders

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Services users | <input type="checkbox"/> Employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Unions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partners | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members | <input type="checkbox"/> Suppliers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Tenants and customers on the Leeds Homes Register | | |

Potential barriers.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Built environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of premises and services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information and communication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Timing | <input type="checkbox"/> Stereotypes and assumptions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultation and involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function | |

Please specify

Registered Providers should publish their policies on their website and make copies available free of charge to anyone who requests a copy.

8. Positive and negative impact

Think about what you are assessing (scope), the fact finding information, the potential positive and negative impact on equality characteristics, stakeholders and the effect of the barriers

8a. Positive impact:

Flexible tenancies

- Current council and housing association tenants will retain their existing security of tenure
- The council proposes to maintain the use of introductory and secure tenancies in its stock meaning new tenants enjoy same terms as existing tenants, and encourages Registered Providers to offer the most secure form of tenancy in the majority of situations

- The strategy includes a number of factors that any provider considering introducing flexible tenancies to take into account when implementing and reviewing them, including protection for vulnerable customers. Examples include offering disabled and older tenants more secure forms of tenancy rather than a flexible tenancy. This will assist tenants to maintain their independence in their own home.

The introduction of ‘Affordable Rent’

- Rents remain below market rents and offer good quality accommodation as an alternative to private renting
- Existing tenants who move to an Affordable Rent property as a management transfer would retain their existing rent

Discharging the homelessness duty into the private rented sector

- Offers an alternative to waiting for a long time for social housing
- Could reduce costs of temporary accommodation and disruption to homeless families

Policy on granting ‘discretionary succession’ rights

- Under the council’s tenancy agreement, younger family members (eg grown up children) and older family members (eg parents) who are not the same generation as the tenant retain the right to succeed, subject to meeting certain criteria, as do other family members (eg siblings) who would not qualify to succeed under the new legislation.
- Allowing wider family members to succeed is positive where the home has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled family member, meaning they can maintain their independence in their home and not face the disruption of moving to another property.
- The council will consider cases individually, and take into account the reasons for a family member wanting to remain in the local area, eg children’s schooling
- Other household members who are not the spouse, civil partner or partner or related to the tenant, (eg carers) may also request to remain in the property.

Action required:

- Publication of the final Tenancy Strategy and dissemination of a summary to customers and tenants.
- Development of Tenancy Policy for Leeds to give more detailed information on operation of tenancy management issues.

8b. Negative impact:

Flexible tenancies

- The council’s decision to maintain the use of introductory and secure tenancies in its stock for new tenants could mean it will take longer for new applicants to be rehoused

The introduction of ‘Affordable Rent’

- Rents are set above the traditional social rent and may not be affordable for households in low paid work or on benefits

Discharging the homelessness duty into the private rented sector

- Homeless households would be offered a tenancy with less security than a traditional social housing tenancy

Policy on granting ‘discretionary succession’ rights

- Allowing wider family members to continue to succeed may result in larger family accommodation being under occupied and the new under occupying tenant may be affected by the forthcoming changes to benefits resulting in them having a shortfall to make up in their rent.

Action required:

The introduction of ‘Affordable Rent’

- Properties let at Affordable Rent must be clearly advertised as such, and the landlord should undertake a financial assessment of the prospective tenant’s ability to pay the rent.
- Housing costs should not be a barrier to employment for households in receipt of benefit.

Discharging the homelessness duty into the private rented sector

- The council to develop guidance on how it will use the new power to discharge duty to homeless households

Policy on granting discretionary succession rights

- The council will review its policy on non-statutory succession when it next reviews its Tenancy Agreement. Any review will be subject to consultation with tenants, a separate Equality Impact Assessment and relevant approval. In the meantime, the council will continue its current policy which allows wider family members to succeed.
- Under occupation arising from succession can be mitigated by the use of Ground 16 Housing Act to require an under occupying tenant to move out of the property (subject to certain safeguards) into a smaller property

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

Action required:

10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other (e.g. in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)?

Yes

No

Please provide detail:
Action required:

11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Please provide detail:
Action required:

12. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration action plan

(insert all your actions from your assessment here, set timescales, measures and identify a lead person for each action)

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy Publication of the final Tenancy Strategy and dissemination of a summary to customers and tenants and development of Tenancy Policy for Leeds to give more detailed information on operation of tenancy management issues.	January 2013	Tenancy Strategy approved by Executive Board December 2012 to be implemented from January 2013	
Affordable Rent Properties let at Affordable Rent must be clearly advertised as such, and the landlord should undertake a financial assessment of the prospective tenant's ability to pay the rent.	Ongoing	Monitoring of new lets to Affordable Rent through nominations to Registered Providers	
Affordable Rent Housing costs should not be a barrier to employment for households in receipt of benefit.	Ongoing	Development of procedures for assessing affordability of rents	

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
<p>Discharging the homelessness duty into the private rented sector The council to develop guidance on how it will use the new power to discharge duty to homeless households</p>	By January 2013	Development of guidance	
<p>Succession rights The council will review its policy on non-statutory succession when it next reviews its Tenancy Agreement. Any review will be subject to consultation with tenants, a separate Equality Impact Assessment and relevant approval. In the meantime, the council will continue its current policy which allows wider family members to succeed.</p>	Next review of council's Tenancy Agreement (date to be confirmed)	Tenancy Agreement reviewed following consultation	
<p>Succession rights Under occupation arising from succession can be mitigated by the use of Ground 16 Housing Act to require an under occupying tenant to move out of the property (subject to certain safeguards) into a smaller property</p>	Ongoing	Monitoring of use of Ground 16 and outcomes	

13. Governance, ownership and approval

State here who has approved the actions and outcomes from the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment

Name	Job Title	Date

14. Monitoring progress for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration actions (please tick)

- As part of Service Planning performance monitoring
- As part of Project monitoring
- Update report will be agreed and provided to the appropriate board
Please specify which board
- Other (please specify)

15. Publishing

Date sent to Equality Team	
Date published	