

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment for Benefits Section

Service/Policy	Benefits	Section: Benefits	Person responsible for the assessment	Dev Gopal		
Name of the Policy/Service to be assessed	Housing Benefits (HB) & Council Tax Benefits (CTB)	Date of Assessment	August 2009	Is this a new or existing policy/service?	Existing	
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service		<p>To provide a service that is accessible for all, that pays the correct amount of benefit to the right person at the right time.</p> <p>To provide a comprehensive service, using up-to-date technology that ensures easy access to the benefits service.</p> <p>To promote HB/CTB and to encourage take-up so that all customers entitled to benefit are made aware of their eligibility and are encouraged to apply.</p>				
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy/service, please explain		None				
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way		Eligible claimants of HB/CTB to assist with the payment of rent and/or council tax.				
4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service ?		An efficient and effective service, providing assistance and support where needed.				
5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?		IS systems and process failure. Staff shortages and legislative changes. Severe economic downturn resulting in significant increase in workload.				
6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service ?	Benefit claimants Private landlords Registered Social Landlords Citizens Advice Bureaux Dept. for Work & Pensions Other Council Depts, e.g. Housing	7. Who implements the policy/service and who is responsible for the policy/service ?	Council management and officers			

	Y/N	Concern	Evidence to Support Yes/No Assessment
12. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to their age	N		
10. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to disability	Y	Effective communication with visually impaired or deaf people	
9. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to gender reassignment	N		
Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to their marital status (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)			
Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to pregnancy and maternity			
8. Are there concerns that the policy / service could have a differential impact on racial groups?	Y	Communication problems where language barriers exist	History of a diverse community
Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to their religion or belief			
11. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to sex			
11. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation	N		

14. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to them having dependants/caring responsibilities?	N		
15. Are there concerns that the policy / service could have a differential impact on people due to their offending past?	N		
16. Could the differential impact identified in 8-18 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy / service	N		<p>The potential for adverse impact in relation to language and communication for some disabled people and some ethnic minority groups does not actually mean there is adverse impact on the equality groups.</p> <p>The council takes proactive steps to prevent discrimination and ensure no group is disadvantaged. For example, the council offers translation facilities, uses Language line and interpreters, offers to produce information in alternative formats including Braille, and makes other reasonable adjustments for disabled people.</p>
17. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason			
18. Should the policy proceed to a partial impact assessment?	N		19. If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EqIA?
			20. Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by

Signed (Completing officer) Sheila Brown

Signed (Lead Officer) Dev Gopal