

1. Introduction

This report briefly summarises how the generic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) the Older Persons Housing Action Plan was undertaken, its scope and the key findings.

There was an initial discussion between Jacqui Evans and Ian Barrett, (who is the consultant advising the City Council on EIAs), about whether this action plan should be assessed and it was decided that it should.

The assessment was undertaken by 2 officers drawn from Strategic Housing. One of these had extensive training on EIA, Debbie Rhodes, the other officer had written the action plan. An external 'critical friend' (Mike Chambers who is the Local Supporting People Co-ordinator at Hampshire County Council and who has wide experience of social housing, support and care), was then sent the information on the EIA for his comments. The meeting with the two officers took over 2 hours and subsequent checking the form and researching some points that arose took several weeks.

The recently equality impact assessed Housing Strategy was used as a template for this action plan because this sits underneath the Housing Strategy and there were several commonalities.

It should also be noted that the Older Persons Housing Action Plan will be refreshed later on in 2009.

2. Process.

It was agreed at the meeting that the Older Persons Housing Action Plan would be assessed.

Initial discussions considered the range of groups and organisations consulted prior to the Older Persons Action Plan being drafted and the sources of evidence used to inform the content.

The officers worked through the Screening and Scoping document. In deciding if a customer group would or might be disadvantaged by the Older Persons Housing Action Plan we based our conclusions on the following:

- Monitoring evidence where this was available, in particular the evidence from the data collected by the allocation and homelessness services, and from the Housing Registers
- National data from POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information System), Hampshire County Council data used in the Wellbeing strategy and findings and data from the Supporting People Strategic Review
- Evidence from the recent Housing Market Assessment.
- The results of EIAs on the Housing Strategy and other housing "sub-strategies".

The meeting with the critical friend was positive and his key recommendations were:-

- Older people with learning disabilities were mentioned within the Improvement Plan but there was no specific mention of this client group within the Scoping and Screening document or action plan.
- Some actions where Supporting People were principle partners may not be appropriate.

- To include RSL stock numbers within the Summary document.

These recommendations have been incorporated.

3. Findings

The officers agreed that the Older Persons Housing Action Plan was relevant to all the customer groups but primarily due to nature of the action plan its emphasis was on the over 65 years of age. The officers did not find any evidence to suggest that any of the customer groups would be negatively impacted by the action plan. The Older Persons Action Plan was considered to have a positive impact on most groups.

However, it was acknowledged that there was insufficient evidence to decide if some groups whilst not being discriminated against or considered to be disadvantaged by the Older Persons Action Plan would receive a positive benefit. These were older people, people with mental illnesses and learning disabilities, and also all groups within the sexuality strand and all groups within the religion and belief equality strand.

The officers concluded that a detailed assessment was not required but a number of actions would form the improvement plan. They are grouped into three areas: research and evidence; communications; and training. Some of the training requirements and some action points within communications are corporate issues which will need to be picked up by the Equality Working Group.

4. Key Recommendations

The action points set out in the improvement plan apply to allocations and homelessness services and landlord services. It is therefore important that all the housing services within Winchester City Council consider the action plans of their Equality Impact Assessments together. The key action points are:

- To develop greater understanding of the needs of households with specific housing needs particularly the following: older people with mental illness; learning disability; religion and belief; and sexuality.
- To ensure there is a robust evidence base to inform decisions on affordable housing and other housing needs.
- To ensure housing options are communicated effectively especially with regard to the needs of the 6 Equality groups.
- To ensure officers receive training and are aware of equality and diversity issues particularly in relation to housing services.

5. Monitoring

Each action point has a named lead officer and a target date for completion. The longer term actions will be included in Business or Service Plans. The Improvement Plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to senior officers within the council.

6. Conclusions.

6.1 Detailed Assessment

No detailed assessment is required.

6.2 Improvement Plan

Thirteen Key Actions were identified to address the issues that arose during the assessment. These are summarised in the table below.

If you have any comments on this impact assessment. Please contact the officer responsible for the Older Persons Action Plan; Jacqui Evans on jevans3@winchester.gov.uk or 01962 848218.

The Older Persons Action Plan has been sent with these documents.

Older Persons Housing Action Plan Equality Impact Assessment

Improvement Plan for Older Persons Action Plan:

Actions Required to Achieve Improvement	Responsibility		Target Date	Resource Implications	Links
	Lead	Support			
<p>1. Research and Evidence</p> <p>Ensure there is a robust evidence base to inform decisions on affordable housing and other housing needs in order to improve access to affordable housing and housing choice</p>					
1.1 Develop greater understanding of the needs of households with specific housing needs particularly the following: older people with mental illness; learning disability; religion and belief; and sexuality.	Landlord services	Strategic Housing	2009/10	Staff time; existing resources. Research may need to be commissioned; consultancy fees	
1.2 Investigate how to better meet the needs of people with multiple or complex needs. Ensure there are no gaps in the information available and there is signposting to advice and services.	Strategic Housing	Landlord Services	2009/10	Staff time; existing resources. Research may need to be commissioned; consultancy fees	
1.3 Investigate and monitor the use of advocates in relation to care and support services and housing choices for older people with either mental illness or learning disabilities.	Strategic Housing	Landlord Services	2009/10	Staff time: existing resources	
1.4 Use evidence from the PCT and Hampshire Partnership Trust on projections of people with long term health needs to anticipate their housing needs.	Strategic Housing	Landlord Services	2009/10	Staff time: existing resources	
1.5 Undertake a review of relevant research on older persons housing needs of the following	Strategic Housing	Landlord Services	2009/10	Staff time; existing resources.	

Older Persons Housing Action Plan Equality Impact Assessment

Actions Required to Achieve Improvement	Responsibility		Target Date	Resource Implications	Links
	Lead	Support			
equality groups: religion and faith; sexuality; mental illness and learning disability.					
1.6 Improve the way that information is recorded about mental illness and/or learning disability to identify support needs both at the time of application for housing and when housing is provided.	Strategic Housing	Landlord Services	2008/09	Staff time: existing resources	
2. Communication Ensure housing options are communicated effectively especially with regard to the needs of the 6 Equality groups					
2.1 Improve accessibility of information on housing options and care and support for older people with multiple needs. As well as to increase awareness of 'easy to read' options to assist people with poor literacy or language skills and for people who do not have English as a first language.	Landlord Services	Strategic Housing	Date to align with Comms EIA	Staff time; existing resources	This is covered by the Communications EIA key recommendation number 4.
3. Training Ensure officers receive training and are aware of equality and diversity issues particularly in relation to housing services					
3.1 Flag up need for training on equality awareness	Corporate		2008/09		In Communications EIA Key Recommendations 7 and 8

Older Persons Housing Action Plan Equality Impact Assessment

Actions Required to Achieve Improvement	Responsibility		Target Date	Resource Implications	Links
	Lead	Support			
3.2 Managers to identify specific housing related training around equality and diversity	Strategic Housing/ Landlord Services		2008/09	Staff time through appraisal process and supervision	In Communications EIA Key Recommendations 7 and 8
3.3 Ensure all existing and new officers are aware of and receive training on the translation and interpretation service	Corporate		To tie in with corporate target	This should happen as a result of the Translation and Interpretation Policy and Guidance	