

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Revised June 2009



(Equality target groups are those which cover the 6 equality strands: race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religious belief)

Part 1 Aims & implementation of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

This section is the title of what is being assessed, responsible officers, purpose, where it fits within the council's wider aims and how it supports the legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities. *(please refer to the guidance for additional information)*

1.1 What is being assessed

Revised allocations policy for the Isle of Wight Housing Register

1.2 Officer(s) and section or service responsible for completing the assessment

Valerie Bell, Housing Needs Manager, Housing Services

1.3 What is the main purpose or aims of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

The allocations policy defines how members of the Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership will allocate their stock.

1.4 Who is affected by the service, policy, procedure, practice or project? Who is it intended to benefit and how?

Main stakeholders to the allocations policy are the Isle of Wight Council, Medina Housing Association, South Wight Housing Association and Vectis Housing Association who will benefit by being able to demonstrate they are promoting equality in their allocations.

All those registered for housing are stakeholders who will benefit by being empowered to make informed choices regarding their housing.

Other stakeholders include support and care professionals as well as housing providers who fall outside of the existing Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership who will benefit by being able to assist empowering their service users to making informed housing choices.

All stakeholders share a common desire for a clear, transparent and fair allocations policy where no client group is disadvantaged.

1.5 Has the service, policy, procedure, practice or project been promoted or explained to those it might affect directly or indirectly?

The Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership has facilitated four seminars for stakeholders in which the revised allocations policy was explained and feedback sought. Additionally, four seminars for members of the public were carried out across the Island.

Consultation done with service users and stakeholders as identified later in the document.

Information was also disseminated in the July 2009 Housing Services Newsletter, which was distributed to all those applicants currently registered on the Isle of Wight Housing Register.

1.6 How does the service, policy, procedure, practice or project contribute to better community cohesion?

The revised allocations policy will enhance community cohesion through empowering applicants on the Isle of Wight Housing Register to make more informed choices on their housing.

1.7 How does the service, policy, procedure, practice or project fit in with the council's wider aims?

The Council's commitment to introduce Choice Based Lettings to the Island was confirmed in its Housing Strategy 2007, Homelessness Strategy 2008 and contributes to the following Eco Island themes: A healthy and supportive Island and Modernising the Council.

Having a transparent process for allocating accommodation supports the Council's corporate social responsibility to improving outcomes for vulnerable people.

1.8 What is the relevance of the aims of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project to the equality target group and the council's duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity?

Allocations are inclusive of all people across the six diversity strands. A transparent process ensures fair access to accommodation for all across these strands. Transparency ensures that all can see the process is fair.

1.9 How is, or how will the service, policy, procedure, practice or project be put into practice and who is responsible for it?

It is intended that the revised allocations policy will be implemented in April 2010, the Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership has the overall responsibility with the Council as the lead partner.

Part 2 Consideration of data and research

To conduct the assessment, you will need information about service users and staff that provide the service. This section is to help you identify the sort of information that will be needed to help you assess whether there may be barriers to different equality groups who access your service, policy, procedure, practice or project. *(please refer to the guidance for additional information)*

2.1 List all examples of quantitative and qualitative data or any consultation information available that will enable the impact assessment to be undertaken

When revising the allocations policy, consideration has been given to the following:

- Consultation with service users in July 2008 and July 2009
- Consultation with stakeholders in December 2008 and June 2009
- Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings, Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities – August 2008
- Single Equality Bill
- Choice Based Lettings and people with learning disabilities - February 2008
- Race Equality Foundation Briefing Paper - October 2007

2.2 Equalities profile of users and beneficiaries

According to the 2001 census, 96.76% of Isle of Wight residents considered themselves to be white British, this being slightly higher than average for the South East. Comparative analysis of the Isle of Wight Housing Register shows that 93.9% of applicants consider themselves to be white British.

The 2001 census also shows that the Island had a higher than average proportion of persons with a limiting long term illness, 21.9% as opposed to 15.4% across the South East.

21.8% of applicants on the Isle of Wight Housing Register are aged 60 or over, whereas 28.3% of Island residents are aged 60 or over according to the census 2001.

2.3 Evidence of complaints against the service, policy, procedure, practice or project on the grounds of discrimination

None available – this will continually be monitored

2.4 What does the consultation, research and/or data indicate about the negative impact on the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

Through our consultation, concerns have been raised over the accessibility of the new housing register for some service users, particularly those deemed vulnerable due to age, disability or race. The Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership have reviewed all the comments raised and have ensured that procedures are in place to ensure that the revised policy will not disadvantage any client group.

2.5 What does the consultation, research and/or data indicate about the positive impact on the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

Consultation with our key stakeholders has shown that 90% agree that the revised allocations policy is easy to understand and that 83% agree that it will also give applicants greater choice over their housing options. 80% of those surveyed also agreed that it was clear how applications to the housing register would be assessed.

Part 3 Assessment of impact

Now that you have looked at the purpose etc of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project (part 1) and looked at the research (part 2), this section asks you to assess the impact, positive and negative, of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project on each of the 6 strands of diversity covered in the Authority's single equality scheme.

3.1 Complete this section with the following information – relating to all of the identified groups: *(please refer to the guidance for additional information)*

	Reason, evidence, comment					
	Race	Disability	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Age	Religious Belief
Barriers, negative impact	✓	✓			✓	
Neutral impact						
Positive impact			✓	✓		✓

Part 4 Measures to mitigate disproportionate or adverse impact or improve on neutral or positive impacts: (please refer to the guidance for additional information)

4.1 If there is any negative impact on any target equality group identified in part 3, is the impact intended or legal?

The negative impact shown above, is not intended or legal

4.2 Specify measures that can be taken to remove or minimize the disproportionate or adverse effect identified in part 3. if none were identified, identify how disproportionate or adverse effect could be avoided in the future

When households join the Isle of Wight Housing Register, we will check each application for indicators that suggest the applicant might have difficulty engaging with the procedures involved. We will contact all those applicants to ascertain what support can be given to eliminate any barriers.

The process is going to be reviewed so changes may be made following any identification of issues that may create a barrier for certain groups of people accessing the service to eliminate these barriers.

4.3 If there is no evidence that the service, policy, procedure, practice or project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improves relations within equality target groups, what amendments can be made to achieve this?

All partners in register are required to promote equality; transparency will ensure that any deviation from this will be quickly identified.

4.4 If a neutral or positive impact has been identified, can that impact be improved upon (continuous improvement)?

As identified in the Homelessness Strategy 2008, Housing Services will be carrying out additional research with identified BME groups on the Island, to investigate any specific housing issues.

4.5 How will any service, policy, procedure, practice or project be implemented?

The Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership are currently working with the IT provider to develop the scheme, a test system will be available early 2010 with an intended live date of April 2010. In early 2010, all existing applicants will be required to re-apply to the new register, to ensure that all information is up to date to enable accurate assessments of housing need. We will work with our stakeholders to support applicants through the process.

4.6 As 4.5 above please identify training requirements

All staff, stakeholders and service users will be offered training on how the allocations policy will work in practice. All service users will be issued with a scheme guide which will further explain the policy, this guide will be developed in partnership with stakeholders such as the Learning Disability Team.

Part 5 Conclusions & recommendations

This section ensures that what ever we are impact assessing, whether it be a service, policy, procedure, practice or project that ensure that we abide by the general and specific duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. *(please refer to guidance for additional information)*

5.1 Does the service, policy, procedure, practice or project comply with equalities legislation?

Yes

5.2 What are the main areas requiring further attention?

The Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership must ensure that no client groups are disadvantaged through not having access to the list of available properties. Through robust reporting methods, users that are not partaking in the housing register will be identified and offered assistance to overcome any barriers.

5.3 Summary of recommendations for improvement

The policy to be reviewed regularly and changes made where deemed necessary.
The introduction of a service user group to work in partnership with the Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership to offer suggestions as to where the policy could be reviewed.

5.4 What equality monitoring, evaluation, review systems have been set up to carry out regular checks?

After a suitable period of time, we will be able to report on those applicants not actively applying for any properties. These applicants will then be contacted to asses whether there are any barriers or whether this is through choice. We will work with the service user and any support provider to overcome this barrier. Additionally, we will monitor successful allocation to ensure parity.

5.5 When will the amended service, policy, procedure, practice or project be reviewed?

It is a condition of the service level agreement that the Isle of Wight Housing Register Partnership meet quarterly to discuss the operation of the register, it is intended that the policy will be reviewed after 12 months and again after 2 years.

Part 6 Action / improvement plan

The table below should be completed using the information from the equality impact assessment to produce an action plan for the implementation of the proposals to:

1. Lower the negative impact, and/or
2. Ensure that the negative impact is legal under anti-discriminatory law, and/or
3. Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups, i.e. increase the positive impact

Please ensure that you update your service/business plan within the equality objectives/targets and actions identified below:

Area of negative impact	Changes proposed	Lead officer	Timescale	Resource implications	Comments
Race	Monitoring of applications Assistance offered in completing process	Val Bell	Ongoing	Additional officer time to ensure the needs of the service user is being met.	
Disability	Monitoring of applications Assistance offered in completing process	Val Bell	Ongoing	Additional officer time to ensure the needs of the service user is being met.	
Age	Monitoring of applications Assistance offered in completing process	Val Bell	Ongoing	Additional officer time to ensure the needs of the service user is being met.	
Religious and Philosophical belief					
Gender					
Sexual orientation					
Geographical location					
All of the above					

Part 6 continued – Equality Impact Assessment – Summary report

The results of equality impact assessments must be published. Please complete this summary and the publish your report using the Equality and Diversity pages of the Intranet. Your summary information and a copy of your completed report will then be made available to the public on the Council’s website.

Date of assessment	August 2009		
Officer’s name	Val Bell	Role	Housing Needs Manager
Service, policy, procedure, practice or project that was impact assessed	Revised Allocations Policy		
Summary of findings	Ongoing monitoring and review is required with service users, stakeholders and partners to ensure equality is promoted through the process and any barriers to accessing the service are identified and removed.		
Summary of recommendations and key points of action plan	Monitoring of applications, allocations and assistance provided to service users to complete the process		

Groups that this policy will impact upon

Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>