

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Area Covered by EIA	<b>Choice Based Lettings</b>
Name of Service	Housing Service
Date of Assessment	January 2008
Head of Service	Colin Moone
Name of Assessor	Dave Bourne
Why is the EIA taking place?	A New Allocation Scheme has been in operation for 8 Months

### **1. Introduction and Background**

As well as having a new method of allocating Council housing (Choice Based Lettings Oct 2003) the Council recently introduced a new allocation scheme that changed the relative priority of applicants within the scheme (May 2008). Points were introduced into the Reasonable Preference Band and agreed homeless households no longer given a three months additional preference bidding period, when initially agreed as a priority.

This had the potential to significantly change which applicants were successful when bidding for permanent social housing and could have had an impact on the diversity groups discussed within this assessment.

After the operation of the new scheme for eight months, it was appropriate to assess whether there had been any changes in the pattern of lettings, assess the reasons for any changes or anomalies and address them.

This assessment covers the eight months since the scheme was introduced on 18.5.2007. After a full year of operation of the scheme, the figures will be split into two six monthly periods and monitored every six months thereafter.

### **2. Profile of groups affected as customers**

#### **Race Equality**

The following chart shows the numbers of applications by ethnic group who were

- 1) On the housing register as at 25.1.2008.
- 2) Those households housed into permanent social housing in the full financial year prior to the new scheme being introduced
- 3) Those households housed since the scheme started on 18.5.2008.

The chart shows numbers on the register by ethnic background and the percentage of each group on the register or housed in that period.

Figures relate the first person on each application only.

During the early part of 2008 a full review of the housing register was undertaken and information on religion, sexuality and disability requested for the first time. Information on these areas cannot therefore be compared to previous periods. While the housing service has always dealt with requests for accommodation based on health/ disability grounds and given appropriate priority, this review was the first time the specific question was asked, "Do you consider yourself or a member of your household to have a disability as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995".

**ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF REGISTER AND REHOUSING BEFORE AND AFTER  
INTRODUCTION OF NEW SCHEME**

<b>ETHNICITY</b>	<b>HOUSING REGISTER 25.1.2008</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE ETHNICITY OF TOTAL APPLICANTS</b>	<b>PERMANENT REHOUSINGS 1.4.06 - 31.3.07 PRIOR TO NEW SCHEME</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL APPLICANTS REHOUSED</b>	<b>PERMANENT REHOUSINGS 18.5.07 - 25.1.08 AFTER SCHEME CHANGE</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL APPLICANTS REHOUSED</b>
Any Other Asian Background	919	7.7%	88	9.3%	54	9.4%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	135	1.1%	5	0.5%	5	0.9%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	164	1.4%	8	0.8%	6	1.0%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	682	5.7%	31	3.3%	30	5.2%
Black or Black British: African	1967	16.5%	151	16.0%	102	17.7%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	1408	11.8%	123	13.0%	61	10.6%
Black or Black British: Oth Black Bkgrd	765	6.4%	79	8.4%	38	6.6%
Chinese	48	0.4%	4	0.4%	2	0.3%
Mixed: Any Other Mixed Background	211	1.8%	13	1.4%	8	1.4%
Mixed: White and Asian	33	0.3%	7	0.7%	1	0.2%
Mixed: White and Black African	60	0.5%	7	0.7%	1	0.2%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	128	1.1%	13	1.4%	6	1.0%
Not Stated	376	3.2%	58	6.1%	27	4.7%
Others	636	5.3%	32	3.4%	31	5.4%
White Any Other White Background	1560	13.1%	86	9.1%	44	7.6%
White British	2719	22.8%	226	23.9%	154	26.7%
White Irish	117	1.0%	14	1.5%	6	1.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	11928		945		576	

With the relatively small numbers involved within some groups, it is inevitable that there will be a degree of variation in the percentages for the groups housed in any period, with the total numbers of those groups on the register. Bearing this in mind, there are surprisingly similar percentages of each group housed before and after the introduction of the scheme, in comparison to the percentages on the register.

The largest variations are with White (Any Other White Background) which represent 13.1% of the housing register but share only 7.6% of lettings under the new scheme (-5.5%) and White British representing 22.8% of the register and 26.7% of recent allocations (+ 3.9%).

### **Gender Equality**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>HOUSING REGISTER AT 25.1.2008</b>	<b>REHOUSING 1.4.2006 – 31.3.2007</b>	<b>REHOUSING 18.5.2007 – 25.1.2008</b>
FEMALE	59.3%	61.7%	59%
MALE	40.7%	38.3%	41%

Generally, 60% of all main applicants for housing are female and this is carried through consistently in both allocation periods monitored in this report.

### **Age Equality**

<b>AGE RANGE</b>	<b>HOUSING REGISTER AT 25.1.2008</b>	<b>REHOUSING 1.4.2006 – 31.3.2007</b>	<b>REHOUSING 18.5.2007 – 25.1.2008</b>
16 - 17	0.7%	0%	0%
18 - 19	2.9%	2.6%	5.7%
20 - 24	14.0%	18.4%	12%
25 - 44	58.2%	47.2%	46.2%
45 - 60	16.0%	15.7%	17.4%
61 - 65	2.4%	3.1%	2.3%
66 - 74	3.1%	5.6%	9.9%
75 +	2.6%	7.4%	6.6%

No acceptances were recorded for the age range 16 and 17 year old. Although these applicants are allowed to register, they cannot hold a tenancy until they are 18, unless they have a rent guarantor.

There is an increase in successful bids from 18 – 19 year olds at the expense of the 20-24 year age range. This may be because the new scheme has a greater emphasis on housing need, rather than length of time on the register, which was the dominant feature of the previous scheme,

There is a greater number of lettings to 66 – 74 and 75+ age groups than are represented on the register but these groups are more likely to attract priority as homeless applicants. They are more likely to attract high medical need and have access to sheltered housing units, designated specifically for this age group.

### **Religion/Beliefs**

<b>RELIGION MAIN APPLICANT</b>	<b>HOUSING REGISTER AT 25.1.2008</b>	<b>REHOUSING 1.4.2006 – 31.3.2007</b>	<b>REHOUSING 18.5.2007 – 25.1.2008</b>
BUDDHIST	0.4%		0.2%
CHRISTIAN	26.2%	6.5%	22.4%
HINDU	0.9%	0.1%	1.6%
JEWISH	0.2%	0.3%	0%
MUSLIM	14.9%	3.2%	17.9%
NONE	7.0%	1.4%	3.8%
OTHER	2.0%	0.2%	2.4%
SIKH	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
UNKNOWN	48.3%	88.3%	51.6%

The review has increased the amount of information known about applicant's religion/beliefs than previously. In the group who were housed in 2006/7, details were available for 11.7% of heads of

households. The percentage for those housed since the review was 48.4%. Percentages of those rehoused are generally in line with percentages of groups on the register.

### **Sexual Orientation**

<b>SEXUALITY MAIN APPLICANT</b>	<b>HOUSING REGISTER AT 25.1.2008</b>	<b>REHOUSING 1.4.2006 – 31.3.2007</b>	<b>REHOUSING 18.5.2007 – 25.1.2008</b>
BISEXUAL	0.7%	0.1%	
GAYMAN	0.5%		0.5%
HETRO	39.4%	11%	33.9%
LESBIAN	0.2%		0.2%
TRANS	0.02%		
UNKNOWN	59.2%	88.9%	65.5%

Details are now known about 40.8% of main applicants on the register and 34.5% of those housed since May 2007. Percentages of households housed are broadly in line with those of households on the register.

### **Disability Equality**

Initial figures relating to those who answered the question “Do you consider yourself or a member of your household to have a disability as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995” were very limited, especially bearing in mind the number of high priority medical cases the Housing Service deals with. While people with medical needs do not necessarily see themselves as disabled, we need to establish whether this data is accurate before we report further.

#### **What further information is required to gauge the probability and extent of the impact?**

The Housing Service undertook a public consultation exercise by inviting a wide range of organisations and individuals to a public meeting when the new allocation scheme was proposed. The response was very limited. No consultation with community groups has been held since, to help understand the difficulties clients have placing bids for advertised accommodation.

We are establishing which high priority applicants have not taken the opportunity to submit bids to establish why. This may be because of language or mobility difficulties, a failure to understand the need to bid or a variety of other reasons. This exercise will be undertaken within the next few months but much more extensive consultation is required on the service in general.

#### **Where and how can that information be obtained?**

All community groups need to be consulted regularly to ensure that they understand how systems operate and so that the Council are made aware of customers needs.

#### **What action do we need to take to reduce negative impact?**

Undertake consultation and engagement work with our partners, Ascham Homes and community groups within LBWF.

### **5. Action Plan**

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Comments/Outcomes</b>
Arrange consultation and engagement exercises with disabled service users, younger	D Bourne	2008	Identify alternatives in partnership with users.

service users, BME groups and women			
Produce list of high priority applicants who are not bidding and establish why	D Bourne	April/May 2008	Establish whether applicants fully understand mechanics of bidding system. Are they hindered by language or physical/mental ability. Consider developing support sessions if resources can be identified.
Better publicity on supply of social housing and realistic prospect of achieving successful bid.	D Bourne	May 2008	Provide more information on allocations performance to allow applicants to better understand their rehousing prospects.  Encourage applicants to consider other options to meet their housing needs.
Introduce surgeries to support clients with bidding advice, either at Cedar Wood House or at outreach surgeries.	D Bourne	2008 resources permitting	Additional resources may need to be identified to undertake this work.