

# 1. Equality Impact Assessment – Star Chamber

What do you think are the main issues relating to diversity within each of the services within your directorate?

Consider:

**How does the service currently meet the different needs of communities in Waltham Forest?**

## **Adult and Social care and Health**

Take-up of OP Services by BME Groups is good. We provide some culturally specific services such as day services, and are encouraging more BME care providers to establish themselves in the Waltham Forest care market. Equal and fair access to services is reinforced through the Commissioning Strategy, and contract monitoring is robust on equalities issues.

There are no culturally specific services provided for people with physical disabilities or sensory impairment. However, BME groups are appropriately represented in users of the services.

The Disability Resource centre run by disabled people for disabled people has over 70% of its users from BME groups. In addition we have a BME forum, which meets quarterly and gives local groups the opportunity to discuss issues to do with social care as well as corporate and other services.

## **Housing and Neighbourhoods**

### *Temporary Accommodation*

Further research needs to be commissioned to effectively consider the impact of the new allocations scheme, this includes the choice based scheme and the scheme overall. The current draft EIA for allocations recommends wider consultation. This is currently not funded or resourced.

### *Housing Partnerships*

There is a Black & Minority Ethnic strategy for the borough. This needs to tie in with the wider regional approach and be tested by consultation.

## **Culture and Leisure Services**

Cultural Services provide a multiplicity of opportunities for community engagement and building social cohesion.

The library, museum, gallery, leisure centres, the classroom and the arts venues and festivals provide the physical settings for community interaction that enable formal and informal voluntary societies to emerge and achieve sustainability.

The Arts and Events Service reflects the cultural diversity of the borough through a range of activities. Specific provision is made for black and ethnic minority cultural traditions. Eid, Vasaki and Diwali events mark specific religious calendar events relevant to the Asian community. The annual Mela is of particular relevance to the Asian community. The Young Peoples Caribbean Carnival gives representation to this black art form. Both events enjoy diverse audiences. The Service works with the disability resource centre and the Disability Arts Forum to secure improvement to the promotion of Council arts activities

and to increase take up of services by all sections of the disabled community. Specific provision is made for black and Asian art forms in youth arts and for disabled and older people in arts funding to the voluntary sector. Under the commissioning process provision is also made for activities that celebrate black history month. Service providers are required to demonstrate disability access plans and to use fully accessible venues. Service monitoring includes an assessment of spend against specific target groups as set out in the Arts Strategy.

The Library Service has undertaken community-profiling exercises for 11 of its libraries examining census data within 1 mile radius of each site and comparing to known user data extracted from the annual surveys. Further work is required to profile service users by service used eg to examine active borrowers by ethnicity, age, and gender to determine whether communities are being served by current book stock or whether they are accessing other services. Investment has been made in a new Libraries Management System in late 2005/06, which will generate data to support this exercise. The Library Service provides a range of specialist materials that relate to specific section of the community. This includes, materials customised for use by disabled people, literature in community languages and gay and lesbian literature. Data currently available shows that the profile of library visitors in each community library area fits the broader area ethnic breakdown as provided by the census.

A key deliverable for the Museum, Gallery and Archives Service is community access to the collections. Curriculum-related educational programmes have been developed for school visits to the museum and gallery. On-site surveys show that general visitor profiles reflect national trends and illustrates that the proportion of visitors from black and minority ethnic groups is lower than the demographic profile of the borough. Specific events and activities, such as family learning days, have been used to engage with more diverse audiences.

The sites are not fully DDA compliant. The service is now implementing plans to use ICT to enable users to view those elements of collections not currently accessible. The collection policy itself is subject to review and the desire is to better reflect the diversity of cultural heritages within the borough. Temporary exhibitions offer an opportunity to engage with diverse communities and contribute to community cohesion. Currently there is an exhibition to celebrate black history. Vestry House Museum has travelling exhibitions available for loan, including those, which illustrate the history and contribution of different communities to the development of the borough.

The William Morris Gallery contributes to the annual Mela in Lloyd Park.

The Sports and Leisure Service offers programmes to meet the needs of a wide range of users. In addition to the core service, activities are delivered to young and older residents, and specific community groups, for example women-only swimming. The Pool and Track leisure centre has facilities designed for disabled users. Where appropriate, pricing structures at leisure centres and events are determined to enable participation by a wide audience.

**Are there any obvious barriers to services in terms of race either in the aim of the service or in the way it is delivered?**

**Adult Social Care and Health**

No, but groups have reported that access is difficult to some services because of the way they are configured or because of lack of information.

**Culture and Leisure**

None.

**What improvements do you think can be made and how?****Adult Social Care and Health**

Further improvement in access to information; translated material easier and quicker to access.

Increased level of staff awareness and understanding of the cultural needs of people from different BME groups.

**Culture and Leisure**

Access into buildings needs to be improved in order to meet the requirements of disabled users and the DDA.

Increased level of staff awareness and understanding of the cultural needs of people from different equalities groups.

**What do other stakeholders (internal and external) think about the initial view that you have developed?****Culture and Leisure**

Stakeholders were consulted during development of the Cultural Services Strategy, which highlights actions relating to equalities.

**What are your plans to consult with stakeholders as a part of the assessment process****Adult Social Care and Health**

Consultation will take place on any proposed closure or reduction of specific service provision for black and minority ethnic groups, and also general consultation on reduction or closure of service will also take into account the views of BME groups.

**Housing and Neighbourhoods**

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**Culture and Leisure Services**

Consultation will take place on any proposed closure or reduction of specific service.

**Based on your analysis what is the proposed Impact Assessment Level (high, medium, low) of your proposals?**

The proposals in Adult Social Care impact on frail elderly people and those with dementia, adults with learning and physical disabilities and mental illness.

The proposals in Housing Services impact on the Gypsy and Traveller community in the

Borough and homeless families.  
The Culture and Leisure Services bids target all residents of Waltham Forest.

**What do you think are the main issues that could hinder the effective implementation of race equality/diversity within the areas covered by your plans?**

**Adult Social Care and Health**

The reduction of supportive day services for older people from black and minority ethnic groups could result, at a later stage, in an increase of older people from those groups needing residential/nursing care admission.

**Housing and Neighbourhoods**

Resources to measure conclusions will depend on this work being carried out.

**Culture and Leisure Services**

Financial restrictions have a direct bearing on the ability to implement effectively programmes and events for diverse groups.

**Statistical Evidence - Housing and Ethnicity**

**Homelessness approaches in LBWF by ethnicity**

Ethnicity of homelessness approaches within LBWF is monitored in accordance with national government guidelines. The table below shows a breakdown of approaches for 2006/7:

	% population (2001 census figures)	% of homeless approaches
Asian	14.75%	14.76% (482)
Black	15.45%	37.32% (1219)
Mixed	3.55%	4.28% (140)
White	64.49%	34.1% (1113)
Other/unknown	1.76%	9.55% (312)
Total	100%	100% (3266)

This demonstrates that homelessness is disproportionately high amongst BME groups, which reflects the national picture.

NB The population figures come from the 2001 census, and it is likely that the proportion of BME groups has increased since that time.

**Housing register in LBWF by ethnicity 2006/7**

	% population (2001 census figures)	% of housing register applications

Asian	14.75%	13.5%
Black	15.45%	34.9%
Mixed	3.55%	4.6%
White	64.49%	38.4%
Other/ unknown	1.76%	8.4%
Total	100%	100%

### **Allocations in LBWF by ethnicity 2006/7**

	% population (2001 census figures)	% of housing Allocation
Asian	14.75%	18.24%
Black	15.45%	40.22%
Mixed	3.55%	4.51%
White	64.49%	30.46%
Other/ unknown	1.76%	6.6%
Total	100%	100%

### **Asylum Seekers in LBWF**

On the 14th August 2000, responsibility for all new single adults and families seeking asylum became the responsibility of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). This means that local authority housing departments no longer have responsibility for providing asylum seekers with accommodation. Furthermore, asylum seekers are not allowed to apply to the housing register

#### **Asylum seekers - the role of NASS.**

At the end March 2006 there were 55 asylum seekers being supported and provided with accommodation in LBWF by the National Asylum Support Service. This represents a significant reduction when compared with 80 at the end of March 2005 and 145 at the end of March 2004. At the end of March 2006 there were also 470 asylum seekers in LBWF being provided with subsistence only (ie no accommodation), compared with 660 at the end of March 2005 and 940 at the end of March 2004. (figures obtained from Home Office National Asylum Statistics – see <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html> for further information)

#### **Asylum seekers –the role of Housing**

If asylum seekers are granted leave to remain, they are entitled to apply to Housing Services in the same way as any other person. However, in order to avoid people having to go down the homelessness route, Housing Services staff are working with their private landlords to enable them to stay in their private tenancies.

Households whose homelessness cannot be prevented or who do not find their own alternative accommodation are entitled to apply for housing from the local authority. They will then be assessed in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (amended 2002) to establish what duty, if any, the local authority has to secure accommodation for them. If they are eligible, in priority need and are unintentionally homeless, there will be a duty to secure accommodation.