

Equality Impact Assessment Full Assessment Form

Service:

Housing Services (HCL Partnership)

Title of policy, function or service:

Home Choice Lincs (HCL)

Lead officer:

Head of Housing Services

People involved with completing the EIA:

Corporate Projects Officer, Shoreline Housing Partnership

Type of policy, function or service:

Existing:



New/proposed



Changed



STEP 1 - Make sure you have clear aims and objectives

What is the aim of your service?

Home Choice Lincs is a Choice Based Letting Service provided by a partnership consisting of three registered social housing providers (Shoreline Housing Partnership, North Lincolnshire Homes and L&H Homes) and two Local Authorities (North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire). Choice Based Lettings services are provided throughout the country and are designed to:

- Provide a more efficient single access route for housing applicants in Northern Lincolnshire.
- Ensure consistency and transparency in the way applicants are treated by all partners
- Help to tackle homelessness and community sustainability
- Give help to people needing to move within the area to another landlord if necessary or from one local authority area to another

Who is the policy or service going to benefit and how?

The organisations involved in this partnership will benefit from the service along with other stakeholders including staff and Board members of each of the partners, customers and potential customers, other partnering organisations who may provide guidance and support to both the scheme and applicant's examples of these may include PCT, probation, Social Services, Humbercare etc.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

We want to ensure that the HCL service is fair and transparent, accessible, appropriate and sensitive to the needs of users and potential users of the service.

What barriers are there to achieving these outcomes?

Barriers may include budgetary constraints which could mean that additions to the service to deliver the above outcomes are put at risk.

STEP 2 - Collecting your information

What existing information/ data do you have?

Information used to complete this EIA includes actions from previous EIAs, reports drawn from the HCL and provider systems, general demographic information and statistics from various commissioned reports

Using your existing data what does it tell you?

- On Review several actions from the previous EIA's conducted during 2010 have not been completed. These actions still need to be addressed and should be done as a priority.
- A higher proportion of people from minority ethnic communities are registering (7.16%) and bidding (7.59%) with HCL than anticipated, however there are a disproportionately low number of lettings to these groups at SHP (6%)
- A disproportionate number of disabled people are being let properties (29.64%) at SHP than are registering (20.31%) and bidding (23.01%)
- The age group 18-25 are not being let a proportionate % of properties at SHP (22.92%) compared to registering (25.13%) and bidding (26.27%)
- The age group 60+ has a low % of bidding (13.94%) compared to registering (18.62%) and SHP lettings (17.98%)
- The largest minority ethnic nationalities registered on HCL are Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian

Step 3 – What's the Impact?

Is there an impact on some groups in the community?

Age

- Access to computers and IT knowledge may not be sufficient to allow bidding every week
- SHP current tenants consist of 36% 60+, however Census 2001 information suggests the local profile of this age group constitutes 17% of the community (Census figures should be used with caution as they are 10 years out of date. New Census data will be available to use by the next EIA review)
- There may be discrimination within lettings to those from the age group 18-25, however this may be due to stock availability (e.g. a higher proportion of older persons properties) therefore further investigation will need to be conducted.
- With reference to outstanding actions from the previous EIA the system for 'flagging up' 16-18 year olds may not be robust.
- There is likely to be an increase in under 35's registering on the website following Welfare Reform changes

Disability (think about those people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities and those with poor mental health)

- The website may be inaccessible to those with certain disabilities, however current information from the HCL system indicates that a proportionate number of disabled people are registering and bidding compared to Census 2001 disability data (Census figures should be used with caution as they are 10 years out of date. New Census data will be available to use by the next EIA review)
- Disabled people are receiving a higher percentage of lets than anticipated compared to registrations and bidding. This will need to be investigated to see the possible causes for example availability of stock etc
- The facility for large text and Browsealoud are available on the HomeChoiceLincs website.
- The colours on the website and posters etc (defining different property types) need to be reviewed with a user group consisting of visually impaired customers to ensure that they can be easily read

Ethnic Origin or people with particular nationalities

- The proportion of lettings to minority ethnic groups are not comparative to registrations and bidding, this will need to be investigated to ensure that there is no discrimination
- With reference to outstanding actions from the previous EIA, from an SHP perspective staff have not attended any minority group meetings/ events. However SHP work closely with York Housing (Minority ethnic support service) and have held workshops to help them assist their customers. Notes are kept on the applicants CRM if they require translation services however this is not routinely monitored.
- The most fundamental action from the previous EIA in terms of racial/ national equality has also not been completed. There is no translation facility or alternative language strapline on the HCL website. This needs to be addressed to ensure equality of opportunity.
- There is likely to be an increased number of A8 applicants to HCL following legislation changes. These are the largest group of ethnic minority customers and further work within the communities and with local partners will be required to assess the potential housing needs of these groups.
- Free text within the local connection section needs to be analysed along with gypsy traveller ethnicities to determine whether this is being taken into consideration as per the initial EIA

Gender

- Access arrangements for single parents with access are taken into consideration during the lettings process
- The processes associated with victims of domestic violence and children in need should be reviewed to ensure that they are not discriminated against in terms of Local Connection

Transgender

No issues identified, however it should be noted that there are a surprising number of people who have registered on HCL who define themselves as trans (23). Given that this section of the community does not generally like to disclose this type of information it is encouraging for the partnership and its reputation within the LGBT community.

Religion/ Belief

- Free text within the local connection section needs to be analysed along with religion to determine whether this is being taken into consideration as per the initial EIA

Sexual Orientation

No issues identified

Marital Status/ Civil Partnership

- o The previous EIA determined that marital status should be asked as a specific question on the HCL application form, however reports have been developed to enable SHP to determine this status through 'relationship to applicant'

Pregnancy/ Maternity

N/A

Other socially excluded groups e.g. those on low income, single parents, carers, homeless people, people with low literacy etc.

- o Auto bidding is not being advertised for those who are determined as vulnerable.

STEP 4 – What are the differences?

Are any groups affected in a different way to others as a result of the policy, project or service?

HCL aims for all communities and groups to access its services equally. However it can be seen from the evidence above that this isn't always happening

Does your policy, project or service either directly or indirectly discriminate?

Yes



No



Additional information - If yes how are you going to change this?

- o The primary issue to be addressed to ensure that discrimination is eliminated is to provide a language strapline to the website and all associated documents (including poster, guides etc). The partnership should also investigate the addition of a translation tool to the website to ensure that it can be accessed equally by all ethnic groups/ nationalities
- o There may be other less obvious discrimination occurring but further performance monitoring will need to be conducted to confirm this

STEP 5 – You're almost there - now you need to consult!

Who have you consulted with?

If you have not consulted yet please list who and how you are going to consult with specific groups or communities

Consultation groups need to be established, and will focus groups will be delivered as part of the ongoing EIA process.

STEP 6 – Make a decision based on steps 2-5

What changes or benefits have been made as a result of your consultation?

If you are in a position to change or introduce the policy, project or service clearly show how it was decided on

If you **are in a position to introduce the policy, project or service but still have information to collect or actions to complete to ensure all equality groups have been covered please list with timescales**

The HCL service has already been introduced however actions which need to be completed are:

- o Increase the promotion of HCL to minority ethnic groups through community groups/ forums/ events
- o Develop reports to monitor the up take of translations through the HCL service
- o Provide language straplines to the website and all associated documentation
- o Provide an alternative language function on the website
- o Conduct research into the potential housing needs of the increasing migrant population and the impact this will have on HCL
- o Continue/ increase promotion of local IT provision and skills awareness courses for older people
- o Monitor and report HCL E&D performance on a quarterly basis to Policy and Ops (at a minimum) to determine trends in satisfaction, registration, bidding and letting data. Subsequent action plans may be applicable
- o Monitor the numbers of under 35's registering with HCL to determine their housing needs.
- o Free text under local connection needs to be analysed along with religion and gypsy traveller to see if there are any trends and to ensure that these groups needs are being adequately met
- o Review the processes associated with victims of domestic violence and children in need to ensure that they are not being discriminated in terms of local connection.
- o Advertise auto bidding to assist identified vulnerable customers
- o Ensure lettings figures are provided by all partnering landlords

[Timescales for these actions to be determined by the HCL Board](#)

If you **are not in a position to go ahead what actions are you going to take? (Please list actions with timescales)**

How are you going to monitor the policy, project or service, how often and who will be responsible?

The service E&D Performance monitoring should be done on a quarterly basis and reported to Policy and Ops. Responsibility for this should lie with the partnership as a whole.

STEP 7 - Congratulations you've made it! - Now just publish your results



Send an electronic copy of the EIA to the Business Improvement Team who will publish it on the website

This EIA has been approved by:

Business Improvement Team (SHP)

Date:

28/09/2011

Contact number

01472 572282

