

Equality Impact Assessment Recording Form

This is a new and important process that will require different perspectives to be considered and, in some cases, difficult decisions may need to be made about policy and service delivery.

Whilst it is necessary to identify a lead officer, it is advised that they do not undertake the impact assessment on their own, but set up a group comprising a diverse range of staff responsible for delivery the service, there may also be an opportunity to include a customer, stakeholder, partner or critical friend to get a more rounded understanding of the full implications of the policy, practice, service or function.

For more information on carrying out the assessment please refer to the guidance notes or contact the Equalities and Diversity Officer or your Department's Equality Champion.

STEP1 Equality Impact Assessment Team

Name of Policy, practice, service or function: Communications Strategy

Business Plan-Mission, vision, values.

Assessment Manager Name: Jill Ward

December 2009

Directorate Responsible: Corporate Services

Service Area: Communications

Other members of the assessment team:

Name	Position	Area of Expertise
Jill Ward	Communications Manager	Communications
Heather Summers	Community Involvement Manager	Community involvement
Marcus Bishop	Business Development Manager	Business development
Alan Jess	Chair of Federation of N.E.Derbyshire Tenants and Residents	Service User and Tenant involvement
Lorraine Dung	Secretary of Federation of N.E.Derbyshire Tenants and Residents	Service User and Tenant involvement

STEP2 Identifying the aims/objectives of the policy, practice, service or function

Questions

1	<p>What are the main aims and objectives or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function?</p> <p>To make sure that all tenants, leaseholders and users are aware of and can access the services provided by Rykneld Homes. To increase all tenant and user involvement and satisfaction, improve a sense of community, promote consultation and evaluation and improve performance. To keep staff, Board and partners informed and involved in developments at Rykneld Homes.</p> <p>What outcomes do you want to achieve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase tenant satisfaction with the way Rykneld Homes communicates information to them • Achieve high levels of tenant awareness about the services provided by Rykneld Homes • Improve staff satisfaction with how they are communicated with and how well they feel informed and motivated about the work of Rykneld Homes and their role within the organisation. • Raise the profile of Rykneld Homes with tenants and the wider community in order to promote the image and reputation of the organisation. • Make sure all publications are consistent and of a high standard
2	<p>Are there any associated services, policies or procedures? Yes</p> <p>If 'Yes' please list below</p> <p>All policies and strategies as approved by Board should have a commitment to communications. Specific policies include: Communications Strategy and Service Action Plan.</p> <p>Communications is both an external and internal facing service and is based on the needs of tenants, users, Board, staff and partners.</p>

Questions

3	<p>Who is affected by this policy, practice, service or function, or by the way it is carried out? i.e. Who are the internal and external customers, groups, communities or any other stakeholders?</p> <p>All service areas within Rykneld Homes All Tenants, Leaseholders, Housing Applicants, vulnerable people Partner organisations – NEDDC, Local Strategic Partnership – CHART, Police, Primary Care Trust, Derbyshire County Council, MPs, Trade Unions, government organisations such as the Audit Commission, Homes and Communities Agency All staff and staff groups Community Groups and Tenant Groups, Tenants Fed who are active within North East Derbyshire External contractors</p>
4	<p>Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where more than one person, team, department or body? – and include any outside organisations who deliver under procurement arrangements etc.</p> <p>RH Staff within each service area as set out in the Business Plan and Communications Strategy Co-ordination by the Communications team North East Derbyshire District Council Communications team Partners working within the community of North East Derbyshire Editorial Panel External contractors</p>
5	<p>Is the policy, practice, service or function affected by external drivers for change? e.g. new legislation, national policy, external inspection etc. No Statutory duty to communicate but:</p> <p>See Business Plan- Communications promotes all areas of company activities/plans/policies Government expectation on communication with tenants to increase satisfaction and promote inclusion TSA framework for regulatory standards Audit commission (KLOE's) – expectations on communications</p>

Questions

- 6
- What existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function are there? E.g. Best Value Inspections, policy reviews, research into the effects of a policy or practice.
- Staff Survey November 2008 – questions about methods of communications and their effectiveness
- Survey Homing In August 2009 – survey asking about style and content of Homing In magazine and the usefulness and content of the Rykneld Homes website.
- Word on the Road – August 2009 – asked staff to feedback their comments on how effective Word on the Road was for communicating information within the organisation.
- Tenant STATUS survey of 2008 asked about the effectiveness of communications
- 2008 Pre-Inspection Service Assessment
- Mini STATUS Survey 2009.
- What did they tell you?
- Feedback from the external surveys showed that tenants were satisfied with communication levels and how well informed they felt about Rykneld Homes. Service developments such as improvements to Homing In and the creation of a website are welcomed as positive and helpful.
- Internal communication weaknesses were identified in the staff survey of 2008. Measures were put in place such as Core Brief and SMT/staff meetings to address issues.
- 2008 Pre-Inspection Service Assessment;
- Weaknesses
- The ALMO is not ensuring a consistent corporate branding approach. Some work has begun on this through the appointment of the new communications manager. However, this remains a gap – such as the new Govmetric satisfaction cards only referring to NEDDC, with no reference at all to Rykneld and other documents not referring to RH.
 - some staff feel that there is no systematic approach to involving them in decision-making and communication channels are inadequate (although improved - 'Word on the Road'). There have been occasions where staff have been briefed on changes by tenants. (As noted on site, these are staff perceptions you will wish to test further in the staff survey due to be undertaken).

Questions

- Lack of written customer information on repair priorities and service standards
- Choice move website provides useful customer information.
- Customer information does not provide details of support for vulnerable customers
- Customer information about asbestos is limited. A generic leaflet is available for customers and there have been articles in Homing In, but customers are not provided with information about their own home and the results of any surveys (we note work is being done to improve this).

Strengths

- Varied communication methods are promoted and used as part of the support process including texting.
- Staff we have spoken to consider the ALMO now has a much clearer sense of direction and purpose. This has, they feel, led to more focus on pulling in the same direction and better communication, having a clearer aim to deliver improvements to customer services.
- Customer information generally well written and clear – all customer facing documents are reviewed by a customer editorial panel – this includes information for the general public on harassment, illegal eviction, potentially homeless are available.
- Website provides useful customer information.

These strengths and weakness have been addressed in the Communications Strategy and attendant Service Action Plan.

Mini STATUS Survey 2009 reported - 83.2% of Tenants thought Rykneld Homes was good at keeping them informed.

7 How is information about the policy, practice, service or function publicised?

RH Ltd Communications Strategy and Plan

Word on the Road – internal newsletter

Editorial Panel

Web

Intranet – contains Communications section

Questions	
	Communications Group meetings with NEDDC Meetings with external partners such as contractors Homing In – tenant magazine

STEP 3 Equality Impact Assessment

Although this form is set out under the six strands of equality we are focusing on (race, disability, gender, age, religion and belief and sexuality), consider any impacts/barriers that might cross over between race/disability, gender/religion and belief, sexuality/age etc. or all three. Use the boxes on the next couple of pages to indicate where the policy, practice, service or function could have a positive or negative impact for different groups and your reasons.

Race

This question looks broadly at adverse impacts/barriers in terms of race, whilst the next page considers adverse impacts/barriers which may be particular to people from one ethnic group.

Question 9 considers impact/barriers for different ethnic groups within the five broad census headings.

8	Identify any adverse impacts/barriers of the policy or procedure on people who may be disadvantaged because of their race	
	<p>Status survey identifies 98.41% white British,</p> <p>No identified adverse impact but RHL provides and promotes a translation service. RHL has translated a copy of its Tenancy Agreement and guidance into Polish on request.</p>	
9	Broad categories used in 2001 census	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of the policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their race
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian or Asian British 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black or Black British 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Heritage 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other people 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsies and Travellers 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum Seekers and Refugees 	
10	<p>Where do you think improvements could be made for people of different racial groups?</p> <p>RHL promotes Community Cohesion through its Community Cohesion Communication Plan</p> <p>As part of the Strategy we already commit to providing a translation service.</p>	

Gender

It is worthwhile remembering that women and men have different priorities in relation to what services they want and different needs for how these are provided. Men-only or women-only delivery for some services could be an option.

11	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their gender.	
	Women	No identified adverse impact in terms of communication due to gender
	Men	No identified adverse impact in terms of communication due to gender
	Transgender	No identified adverse impact in terms of communication due to gender
12	Where do you think improvements could be made for people experiencing disadvantage because of their gender? No identified adverse impact in terms of communication due to gender	

Disability

All service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, including physical features of premises, so it is advisable to anticipate any adjustments that may be required. Consider the barriers faced by different groups of people with disabilities as listed in the boxes below. Note also that changes to legislation mean that conditions such as MS, HIV and cancer are now included under the DDA from the time of diagnosis.

13	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their disability.	
	People with physical or mobility impairments	Ensure tenants/leaseholders are able to join the Editorial Panel by holding meetings in DDA compliant buildings and allowing participation via email and post.
	People with sensory impairments (hearing, visual and speech)	<p>We offer to produce information in Braille and large print. We also provide Homing In as a downloadable audio file on our website and are looking to produce our tenant handbook and service standards as an audio format. We also provide the Browsealoud service on our website and allow users to read text in three different print sizes. We have surveyed tenants identified with visual impairment on our Tenant Profile to find out which format they would prefer to receive Homing In – large print or CD.</p> <p>We will respond to tenant requests to make the translation advert in Homing In larger and easier to read.</p>
	People who use mental health services	Communications promotes the work of Rykneld Homes to all service users. RHL communications promotes the support available through the Tenancy Support worker.
	People with learning disabilities	Provision of information in audio format, large print, Browse aloud facility on website. Communication and promotion of displays/exhibitions about RHL services etc to help inform tenants and users with learning disabilities.
	People who have a non-visible condition such as epilepsy or diabetes	As above

14	<p>Where do you think improvements could be made for people experiencing disadvantage because of their disability?</p> <p>RHL promotes Community Cohesion through its Community Cohesion Communication Plan</p> <p>Be more pro-active in recruiting people with a disability to get involved. Follow up on the potential of creating a dedicated disabled involvement group which could input into communication issues. Could work more closely on communication issues with the NEDDC Disability Users Group.</p>
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Age

When answers the following questions consider the needs of the wider age range of District

15	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their age.	
	0-9	
	10-15	<p>These are the tenants of tomorrow. Need to engage with more young people by promoting relevant events, publicising success stories in Homing In and press releases, case studies, in NEDDC and partner publications. Communicate in most appropriate way e.g. texting.</p> <p>We will undertake to use those Tenant Groups across the district that have young people regularly attending their meetings in order to raise RHL issues and topics relevant to younger people.</p>
	16-19	School leavers. Potential to communicate more information at schools about housing options and Community Cohesion/ASB diversionary projects. Communicate in most appropriate way e.g. texting.
	20-29	Direct more communications at identified areas of concern such as Tranches of Domestic Violence – apply ASB strategy, high levels of HB dependency-Rents service standards, time availability of busy lifestyles, work and family, more information on the website.
	30-44	Direct more communications at identified areas of concern - Tranches of DV-apply ASB strategy, as above. Time availability of busy lifestyles, work and family more information on the website.
	45-59	Direct more communications at identified areas of concern - Employment discrimination-Rents/leasehold service standards, Strategies/Policies, Corporate debt recovery policy
	60-64	
	65-74	
	75-over	

16	<p>Where do you think improvements could be made for people experiencing disadvantage because of their age?</p> <p>RHL promotes Community Cohesion through its Community Cohesion Communication Plan</p> <p>Staff to consider the above when developing and implementing policies and when organising events or involvement activities. Need to ensure we communicate in a number of different ways to reach all target audiences.</p>
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Religion and Belief

17	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their religion or belief.	
	All stats taken from the tenant profile 27/11/09	
	Christian	78.74%
	Buddhist	0.25%
	Hindu	0%
	Jewish	0.04%
	Muslim	0.13%
	Sikh	0%
	Other	3.55%
No religion or belief	17.29%	
18	Where do you think improvements could be made for people experiencing disadvantage because of their religion or religion? RHL promotes Community Cohesion through its Community Cohesion Communication Plan No adverse impact identified.	

Sexuality

19	<p>Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their sexuality. RHL promotes Community Cohesion through its Community Cohesion Communication Plan</p>	
	Lesbian, gay or bisexual people	Promote the over-arching anti-discrimination policy within the Single Equality Scheme.
20	<p>Where do you think improvements could be made for people experiencing disadvantage because of their sexuality? See 11 above Plus: add in an anti-discrimination statement within the strategy.</p>	

Other Categories

21	Rural/Urban We promote all our service in our Area Housing Offices which are based in communities throughout the district. We promote our services on the website and through Homing-In which is delivered by post to all tenants and leaseholders.
22	Any other

Customer Access

23	<p>How do customers currently access the service i.e. what are the access channels e.g. web, telephone, letter etc.</p> <p>Web – email Letter Telephone Membership of Editorial panel Tenant meetings</p> <p>What improvements can be made? The website has being made easier to navigate since the Pre-Inspection Service Assessment in Nov 2008.</p>
	<p>Are there any physical barriers to accessing the service? See rural section above 21.</p>
	<p>What customer involvement in setting the customer service standards i.e. opening hours, response times, availability etc.</p> <p>Editorial Panel.</p>

STEP 4 Collecting the information and data about how the policy, practice, service or function impact on communities

Please record your information and data below with reference to:

- Deciding what information or data you will need or desire
- Using both quantitative and qualitative data
- Ensuring that where possible there is information that allows all perspectives to be considered
- Identified any gaps in the information/data and what it can tell you

Data or information	When and how collected	Source	What it tells you – please consider all 6 equality strands where possible	Gaps in information
Tenant, leaseholder views	Homing In response	Customer feedback on external communications - Survey	Match to tenant profile.	Low response rate.
Staff views	Annual Staff Survey	Staff Feedback on internal communications - Survey	Anonymous – need collect diversity information on response	Low response rate.

STEP 5 Monitoring

For this step it is important to refer to any monitoring information which is already held. As stated in the guidance notes arrangements need to be set up for effective monitoring if this is not already taking place.

	<p>How do we know whether our service is accessible to all groups?</p> <p>Homing In posted to the homes of all tenants/leaseholders.</p> <p>Homing In regularly contains information booklets/guides – posted to all homes</p> <p>New Tenant Handbook to be posted to all tenant’s homes</p> <p>Collection of Profile data for both staff and Tenants, analyse service data held and systematically relate back to the delivery of policies and service standards.</p> <p>Complaints process</p> <p>Number of newly involvement tenants encouraged to join Editorial Panel</p>
	<p>If there is a lack of information, what research will be carried out, and for which groups?</p> <p>As above</p>
	<p>If this is a new policy, or one not currently monitored, what are the arrangements to begin monitoring the actual impacts of the policy?</p> <p>Customer satisfaction surveys</p> <p>Tenant STATUS survey – communications function</p>

STEP 6 Consultation

	<p>What have service users/non-users or other stakeholders (including employees) already told you about the policy and negative impacts?</p> <p>Who has been consulted and what methods were used?</p> <p>Survey contained in the August Homing In 2009 asking tenants/leaseholders if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the magazine and the Rykneld Homes website. Invited comments.</p> <p>Involvement Working Grp asked to decide on format of the new Tenant Handbook</p> <p>Editorial Panel involved in the development of the new Tenant Handbook</p> <p>Satisfaction surveys that have been processed throughout the year from April 09.</p>
	<p>If you need to carry out further consultation, who will you be consulting with and by what methods?</p> <p>Staff Survey 2010 – benchmark to 2008 survey</p> <p>Tenant focus group – to look at quality/accessibility of external communications</p>

STEP 7 Equality Action Plan

Problem/barrier identified

Actions to overcome problem/barrier

Resources required Responsibility Target date –

see **SIPS –Business Plan 2009/10**

See Communications Service Action Plan