

Brief Equality Impact Assessment Appendix H (for minor and operational changes to services or functions)

This form is designed to briefly highlight the potential impacts of minor and operational changes to Stevenage Borough Council services and functions on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The impact of proposed changes should be thoroughly considered so that well-informed decisions can be made and action is taken to mitigate any potential adverse impacts. For guidance refer to the Equality Impact Assessment templates on the intranet or talk to Michelle Sheriff (Programme Co-ordinator, Equality and Diversity, Michelle.Sheriff@Stevenage.gov.uk, ext 2363).

Service area	HRA savings bid		
Decision or change being considered	Assessing the impact of a range of savings on customers or groups of customers		
Date of full EqlA on wider service area (planned or completed)	Not applicable		
Form completed by	Beryl Condra	Date	29 November 2011

Who are the users of this service/function? Who is affected by it and by the way it is carried out? Note any evidence of adverse or disproportionate impact on any particular groups of people.

The savings bid contains a range of proposals to reduce costs and this analysis summarises the impact on customers:
 Base adjustments - no perceived impact
 Revenue savings -salary expenditure related -no perceived impact (but see separate assessment for RI team member reduction)
 Revenue savings -service related - no perceived impact (but see separate assessment for online access to annual rent statements and charging for gas and electrical checks for Mutual Exchanges)
 Revenue savings -transition related - no perceived impact (but the restructure savings arising as part of the transfer of SHL staff to SBC will be subject to further consultation and a separate assessment)

Consider the impact of the change to the function/service on groups relating to the following factors. If impact is unknown or not fully understood, consider consulting the group on the likely impact.

	Possible negative impact	Possible positive impact
Age	n/a	n/a
Gender	n/a	n/a
Ethnicity	n/a	n/a
Disability	n/a	n/a
Sexual orientation	n/a	n/a
Religion/belief	n/a	n/a
Transgender	n/a	n/a
Pregnancy/maternity	n/a	n/a
Socio-economic	n/a	n/a
Other	n/a	n/a

If a negative impact has been identified, consider actions to mitigate this impact and integrate these actions into planning. In addition, consider actions to further positively impact on equality groups.

Action	Who is responsible? How will the impact and the action be monitored?	Timeline for implementation

If significant negative impacts have been identified, consider the completion of a full Equality Impact Assessment (template available on the intranet).

Date completed:

Signed by Head of Service:

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Service area	Tenancy Services Mutual Exchange		
Decision or change being considered	charging for gas and electrical safety checks for mutual exchanges		
Date of full EqIA on wider service area (planned or completed)	Completed November 2011		
Form completed by	Beryl Condra	Date	28 November 2011

Who are the users of this service/function? Who is affected by it and by the way it is carried out? Note any evidence of adverse or disproportionate impact on any particular groups of people.

Using the 87% data capture across the main seven protected characteristics the analysis of mutual exchanges over the past two years indicates that there are on average 170 mutual exchanges per year. Of these approximately two thirds are within the 25-44 age group (only 7% are under 25), and predominantly female (71%) and is only slightly higher than the overall customer gender profile. Disabled service users account for less than 2% of the total and service take up anomalies for this group were looked at carefully in the full EIA to ensure that proportionate actions are in place for this minority group such as providing assistance with the application and bidding process and rewriting the CSC script. We know that the largest group of customers in rent arrears are in the under 29 age group and suggests that this group would struggle to clear arrears and fund the additional costs of safety checks. However this is again a small minority of service users when taken as a whole and the ability to clear arrears would in itself be a barometer of tenancy sustainability and entirely proportionate. Early debt interventions have been implemented by the Income Maximisation team as a result. BME service users at less than 5%, is in keeping with the overall customer BME profile. LGBT figures are too low for statistical comparison but the full EIA indicated that figures are in keeping with the overall LGBT customer profile. Less than 5% of exchanges are between 1 bedroom properties and this suggests that families are the biggest users of the service. Unfortunately there is no correlated data on housing benefit recipients for more detailed socio economic analysis at this time.

Consider the impact of the change to the function/service on groups relating to the following factors. If impact is unknown or not fully understood, consider consulting the group on the likely impact.

	Possible negative impact	Possible positive impact
Age	under 29 groups	None
Gender	Not significant	None
Ethnicity	None identified	None
Disability	None identified	None
Sexual orientation	None identified	None
Religion/belief	None identified	None
Transgender	None identified	None
Pregnancy/maternity	None identified	None
Socio-economic	Under 29 age group specifically and those dependent on benefits	None
Other	None identified	None

If a negative impact has been identified, consider actions to mitigate this impact and integrate these actions into planning. In addition, consider actions to further positively impact on equality groups.

Action	Who is responsible? How will the impact and the action be monitored?	Timeline for implementation
Under 29s	Income maximisation team implemented early interventions universally to combat the number of male single evictions from this group	Completed

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Service area	Income Maximisation (IM)- annual rent statements		
Decision or change being considered	Online rent statements		
Date of full EqIA on wider service area (planned or completed)	November 2011		
Form completed by	Beryl Condra	Date	28 November 2011

Who are the users of this service/function? Who is affected by it and by the way it is carried out? Note any evidence of adverse or disproportionate impact on any particular groups of people.

All tenants are users of this service and currently receive quarterly statements. The proposal is to reduce these to one annual statement for those tenants not in arrears although those in arrears (2500) will continue to receive statements as now, the remainder (5800) would receive statements annually with access online in the intervening period. The impact will be felt most by those without access to the internet at home or at work. We know that over 1000 Stevenage Homes website hits per month are directed to the "What happens if you don't pay your rent" page although how many of these are duplicate visits is not known. Around 600 hits per month are directed to the "How to pay your rent" page and there are 1862 (as at 2 Nov 2011) online customer accounts which gives access to rent information. This represents over 22% of tenancies but only a third of these have accessed their accounts during the last six months. We do know from choice based lettings data that 97% of bids are made via the website and suggests that internet access is possible even for those applicants without direct internet access at home or work.

Younger tenants are more likely to be in arrears and therefore will continue to receive statements and regular contact from the IM team. Older tenants are less likely to have internet access but are also less likely to be in arrears and so will be impacted by this proposed change although sheltered scheme tenants generally have access to internet through the SHOs or donated communal computers. Interestingly the highest tenant group with email addresses are within the 40-49 age group followed by the 30-39 age group (728). 644 tenants aged between 60 and 79, have provided us with email addresses and 40 tenants over the age of 80 have done so. In total almost 28% of individual tenants have provided a contact email address.

None of this is sufficient to conclude no adverse impact on older customers who are less likely to have rent arrears and therefore be affected by these proposals and further research and consultation is needed to make that determination. There is a slight risk that under 29 year olds who are likely to have more personal debt will fall into arrears without more regular statements but this would be mitigated by team intervention. This aspect of the proposal would need careful monitoring if implemented.

Consider the impact of the change to the function/service on groups relating to the following factors. If impact is unknown or not fully understood, consider consulting the group on the likely impact.

	Possible negative impact	Possible positive impact
Age	Older tenants	None
Gender	Not significant	None
Ethnicity	None identified	None
Disability	None identified	None
Sexual orientation	None identified	None
Religion/belief	None identified	None

Transgender	None identified	None
Pregnancy/maternity	None identified	None
Socio-economic	Not significant	None
Other	None identified	None

If a negative impact has been identified, consider actions to mitigate this impact and integrate these actions into planning. In addition, consider actions to further positively impact on equality groups.

Action	Who is responsible? How will the impact and the action be monitored?	Timeline for implementation
Older tenants	Income maximisation team will need to conduct further consultation to determine adverse impact on this group	To be agreed

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Service area	Resident involvement		
Decision or change being considered	Reducing the number of resident involvement officers by 1		
Date of full EqIA on wider service area (planned or completed)	Completed November 2011		
Form completed by	Beryl Condra	Date	28 November 2011

Who are the users of this service/function? Who is affected by it and by the way it is carried out? Note any evidence of adverse or disproportionate impact on any particular groups of people.

This is largely a function used in tandem with other services although there are a range of services delivered direct as the team service the Customer Scrutiny Group, FOSTA and Disability Advisory Panel as part of our housing governance structure. The manager has already planned sufficient adjustments to maintain all existing direct and corporate functions but will utilise resources from other services to pick up any slack from the loss of personnel. For example attendance at resident groups etc. will fall entirely to the Tenancy Services team. Decent Homes' consultation will continue to be a joint effort with the Investment team providing the majority of resource needed.

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	Possible negative impact	Possible positive impact
Age	None	None
Gender	None	None
Ethnicity	None	None
Disability	None	None
Sexual orientation	None	None
Religion/belief	None	None
Transgender	None	None
Pregnancy/maternity	None	None
Socio-economic	None	None
Other	None	None

If a negative impact has been identified, consider actions to mitigate this impact and integrate these actions into planning. In addition, consider actions to further positively impact on equality groups.

Action	Who is responsible? How will the impact and the action be monitored?	Timeline for implementation
None identified		

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