



**IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR ALL
H&F HOMES TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS**

**CORPORATE
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**The Future of Housing
Services Management
Resident Consultation**

Our vision is to ensure that our service users have equal access to the services we provide.

H&F Homes is committed to meeting its statutory duties on equality and diversity and providing services that meet the needs of our residents. This section focuses on initial planning and risk assessment to make sure that the basic requirements are in place to carry out a robust and meaningful equality impact assessment which can improve the way a particular policy, service or function is delivered.

Name of service/policy/function policy (please include an attachment of the appropriate policy etc)

Consultation with residents to seek their views about the Management of Housing Services after the end of the ALMO Housing Management Agreement in March 2011.

Department

Housing Services

Lead Officer

Orla Gallagher (Director of Housing Services - Interim)

Date of Assessment

June 2010 – August 2010

We need to understand how our services, policies and practices impact on our customers, ensure that they are not discriminatory in any way and satisfy our statutory and legal requirements in equality and diversity.

Please think carefully before answering the following questions.

Understanding the Service, Policy or Function

Is this a new or existing policy, service or function?

In line with CLG guidance any changes to the management is conditional on a positive outcome from resident consultation. In 2003 the Council consulted with residents about their desire to set up an ALMO to secure Decent Homes funding.

The methodology used was a postal ballot sent to all residents. CLG guidance recommends that the consultation methodology used be the same as or more robust than the methods used to create the ALMO.

The current consultation process is an intensive and mixed methodology based programme. The aim of the programme is to maximise all resident's awareness that the consultation is taking place and to make it as easy as possible for residents to take part. Therefore, the consultation is not a new function but the process has been considerably improved since the last large scale consultation with residents about Housing Services Management.

Methodology

- 1) Postal survey: Each year H&F Homes completes a survey of varying complexity to gauge tenant and leaseholder satisfaction. This survey will be added to and incorporated into the consultative process. In September 2010 we will conduct a 100% postal survey of all tenants, including tenants in sheltered schemes and leaseholders. We will ask all residents their views about the future of the ALMO. A postal survey is the most cost effective and efficient method for reaching all 18,000 residents. It is a positive alternative to a ballot as it allows us to send reminder letters and support to individual queries. In addition, it will attract a much wider response rate and feedback from a diverse range of residents.
- 2) Telephone survey: This approach will target the younger tenants, who may have a busier life style and not have the time to complete a full survey but willing to answer questions by phone. Telephone surveys will also be used for tenants with disability or literacy issues. We will commission CITAS to support tenants where English is not their first language.
- 3) Focus Group: This approach is an effective tool and can assist in connecting with staff, customers and other stakeholders. The focus group structure is a relative inexpensive research method. We will carry out a range of focus groups with a diverse range of uninvolved residents.
- 4) E-Panel: The panel was set-up in March 2010 and consists of a diverse range of 150 tenants and leaseholders who are happy to be consulted via e-mail. Regular communication via e-mail will be used throughout the process.
- 5) Formal involvement structure: We are fortunate to have an extensive involvement structure in place from recognised Tenants and Residents Associations to Area Forums, the Leasehold Forum and the Borough Forum. We work with HAFFTRA to timetable consultation and feedback sessions with the various groups. We will aim to co-ordinate with the timetabled meetings already in place to avoid unnecessarily meetings being held.

1) Describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy, service or function (including how it fits in to wider aims or strategic objectives of HF Homes?)

In order for the consultation process to be meaningful it is essential for residents to know that the consultation is taking place, and for the consultation to provide as many opportunities as possible for residents to express their views. The Council is proposing to create a single fully integrated Housing Department. The aim of the Consultation Programme is primarily to find out what residents' views are regarding the Council's proposals.

The Consultation also seeks to find out residents opinions about how to improve Resident Involvement structures and how to increase overall customer satisfaction with Housing Management services.

The consultation supports H&F Homes objectives of putting residents first and promoting value for money.

2) Who is intended to benefit from the policy, service or function and in what way?

All customers of the team who have been noted as follows:

- All residents - Residents will be able to shape and influence the resources allocation of any future Housing Services Management Structure (specifically how Resident Involvement Services are delivered).
- The Central Services Team - The findings from the consultation process will help the Central team create the Resident Involvement work plan.

3) What are the intended outcomes of this policy, service or function?

To provide a comprehensive picture of residents views regarding the Council's proposal to create a single integrated Housing Department. The findings from the Consultation process will be used to inform the Cabinet's decision in January 2011.

Moreover, as the consultation also asks residents about their current levels of satisfaction with the services provided by H&F Homes analysis of the consultation findings will support H&F Homes performance monitoring regime.

4) What do you think are the main issues relating to the 6 Equality Strands within the policy, service or function? (Please give details against each Strand)

4.1 Race:

Race Relations Act 1976

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Residents

The Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey report (14/06/08) reported that BME groups (particularly Chinese & mixed) satisfaction 2% below overall satisfaction.

A key element of the consultation process is targeted focus groups with residents from BME back grounds. These include residents (for who English is not their first language). The focus groups explore participants' satisfactions with services and methods for encouraging resident involvement in BME groups.

4.2 Gender:

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999

Gender Recognition Act 2004

Equality Act 2006 (duty to promote gender equality)

Residents

The Consultation process includes women only focus groups. Women from some socio demographic groups are sometimes less likely to prefer attending gender mixed meeting. Therefore, we have conducted a series of women only focus groups to discuss resident's views about how to improve services and the Council's proposals to create a single Housing Department.

4.3 Disability:

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005

Residents

The mixed methodology of the consultation process, including face to face interviews, telephone, postal and online surveys and a telephone helpline means that residents with physical, visual and audio impairments will be able to provide their input to the consultation through at least one of the elements of the consultation process.

Moreover, the post test of opinion is available in Braille, and audio text. Therefore, it is envisaged that there is no impact identified for disability.

4.4 Sexual Orientation:

Employment regulations 2003

Equality Act 2006 (prohibition on discriminating in regard to goods, facilities and services on the grounds of sexual orientation)

Residents

Whilst all residents benefit from improved services, there is no potential impact identified specifically for sexual orientation

4.5 Age

Residents

We have conducted focus groups with young people to discuss their views about how to improve services and the Council's proposals to create a single Housing Department.

There is no impact identified specifically for different age groups

4.6 Religion

Equality Act 2006 (prohibition on discriminating in regard to goods, facilities and services on the grounds of faith, religion or belief)

Residents

There is no impact identified specifically for different religious groups.

5. The Impact - EIA Results (Test of Relevance)

Assess the potential impact that the policy/function or service could have on each of the target groups. The potential impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you have assessed negative potential impact for any of the target groups you will also need to assess whether that negative potential impact is high, medium or low.

a) Identify the potential impact of the policy on men and women:

Gender	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
Women – Residents			✓	There are no particular equalities benefits for men or women, or any negative equalities impacts from the consultation process. If the outcomes from the consultation leads to improvement in Resident Involvement mechanisms this will have an equally positive outcome for all residents.
Men – Residents			✓	

b) Identify the potential impact of the policy on different racial groups:

Race	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
			✓	There are no particular equalities benefits for residents from any specific ethnic group, or any negative equalities impacts from the consultation process. If the outcomes from the consultation leads to improvement in Resident Involvement mechanisms this will have an equally positive outcome for all residents.

c) Identify the potential impact of the policy on disabled people:

Disability	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
			✓	All residents benefit from improved services, particularly services which are

				more responsive to tenants' and leaseholders' needs; however there is no particular equalities benefit or detriment for residents of a particular sexual orientation.
Disability - Residents				

d) Identify the potential impact of the policy on different age groups:

Age Group (specify, for example younger, older etc)	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
Residents			✓	There are no particular equalities benefits for residents from any age group, or any negative equalities impacts from the consultation process. If the outcomes from the consultation leads to improvement in Resident Involvement mechanisms this will have an equally positive outcome for all residents.
Younger – Residents			✓	

e) Identify the potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people:

Sexual Orientation	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
Lesbian – Residents			✓	All residents benefit from improved services, particularly services which are more responsive to tenants' and leaseholders' needs; however there is no particular equalities benefit or detriment for residents of a particular sexual orientation.
Gay Men – Residents			✓	
Bisexual – Residents			✓	
Heterosexual – Residents			✓	

f) Identify the potential impact of the policy on different religious and faith groups:

Religious and Faith Groups (specify)	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
Residents			✓	All residents benefit from improved services, particularly services which are more responsive to tenants' and leaseholders' needs; however there is no particular equalities benefit for residents of a particular religion. There is no equalities impact of the restructure on religion for staff.

g) As a result of answering question 5 a-f above what is the potential impact of the policy, function or service? Please circle

High

Medium

Low

h) Could you minimise or remove any negative potential impact that is of medium or low significance? Explain how.

Strand	Residents
Gender	N/A
Race	N/A
Disability	N/A

Age	N/A
Sexual Orientation	N/A
Religious or Faith Groups	N/A

I) if there is no evidence that the policy, service or function promotes Equal Opportunity – Could it be adapted so it does? How?

The Consultation Process promotes equal opportunities through endeavouring to strengthen Resident Involvement by asking residents which services matter the most to them and how they like would to get involved in shaping the services.

The Consultation programme targeted various socio demographic groups (including women, young people, BME groups, involved residents, Voluntary Sector and community groups).

Identifying Impact

6 What systems do you have in place to find out who uses the service and what they think?

The core purpose of the consultation process is to find out what service users think. The action planning process illustrates how the consultation will comprehensively seek to gain the views of all residents.

7 What qualitative and quantitative data do you have on different groups (E.g. results of previous consumer satisfaction surveys, feedback exercise, Diversity Monitoring Booklet or evidence from other authorities or ALMO's understanding similar work)?

Customer satisfaction trend data and resident profile information. This data will be used to compare the response levels to the ALMO consultation with previous responses to large scale surveys.

8 Where there are negative impacts, can they be justified?

There is no likely negative impact of the consultation process for tenants or leaseholders. If any particular group demonstrates unexpectedly low response rates, the ALMO consultation team will actively seek to conduct face to face interviews with a representative sample of the group.

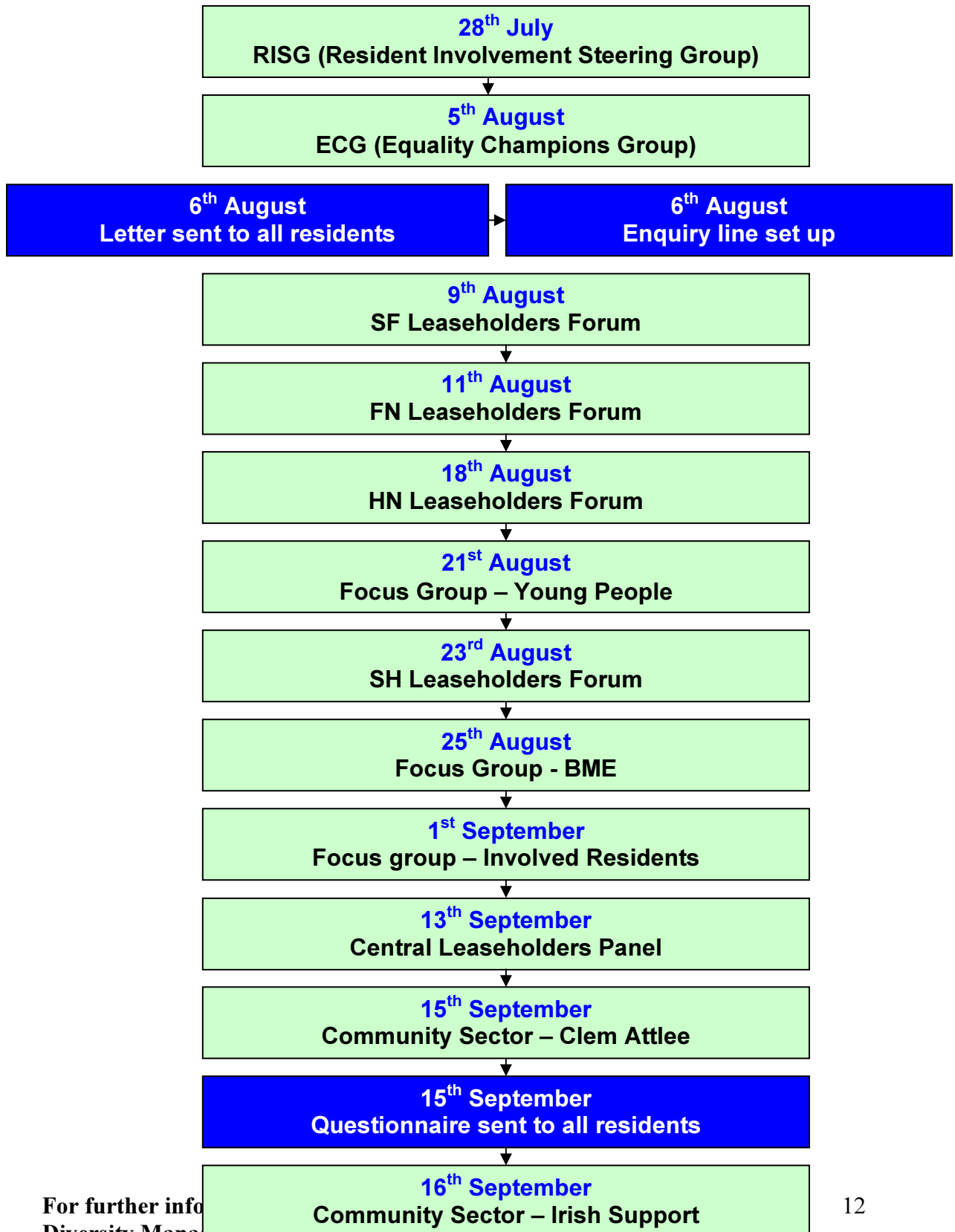
If these views differ from the general population they will be reported to the Cabinet in January.

9 Action Planning

Use the table attached to identify and record any objectives and targets resulting from the EIA analysis. Please ensure that all actions are included in the attached action plan and in the Business Unit or Area Equalities Plans.

10. Please indicate the groups including staff you will be consulting with in relation to this assessment?

ALMO Consultation Timeline



For further info
 Diversity Manager Telephone 020 8765 1172 or email
 Nivene.powell@hfhomes.org.uk



16. Signing Off Procedure

Form must be signed off by the Equalities and Diversity Manager

Signature: Nivene Powell	Date: 01.10.2010
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Please e-mail completed assessment form to Nivene Powell or via the internal post to Equalities Team, Ground Floor, Riverview House and keep a copy for your file.

Action Planning Process

Issue	Actions	Lead Officer	Consultation Groups	Expected Outcomes	Completion Date	Sign Off Date	Comments
Awareness Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter to all residents - Attend, RSG, Leaseholder Forums, ECG - Set up webpage - FAQs - Staff and Board Briefings - Telephone helpline 	Interim Housing Services Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Tenants Leaseholders Community Groups HAFFTRA 	All residents aware that the consultation process is taking place and their responses will help influence service delivery in the near future.	September 2010		
Obtaining a statistically valid response to the tenants' test of opinion regarding the Council's proposal to bring services back in-house.	Quantitative survey sent to all residents. The survey requires 990 respondents to be statistically valid (to +/- 3%)	Interim Housing Services Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants Leaseholders 	Survey to provide an accurate reflection of tenants views regarding the Council's proposal to integrate.	October 2010		
Understanding how residents would like to improve services and increase resident involvement	Series of focus groups with Young, Elderly, BME, Women, Disabled and other mixed groups.	Interim Housing Services Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Groups Residents 	<p>Analysis of the qualitative consultation process will be used to inform the desk top review of Resident Involvement that will take place in December 2010.</p> <p>The findings from the research will also feed into the action plans for the Housing Services and Property Services teams.</p>	November 2010		
Review Date and Comments							

For further information, please contact Nivene Powell, Equalities and Diversity Manager Telephone 020 8753 4779 or email Nivene.powell@hfhomes.org.uk