



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Summaries

April 2009 - March 2010

Policy Being Assessed	Employee Volunteering Scheme
Lead Officer	Greig Lees
Reason for EIA	New Initiative
Date Completed	28.04.09
Summary	<p>Northwards are introducing a scheme to allow all employees one day off per year to volunteer to work on projects that benefit local communities or the environment.</p> <p>It is hoped the scheme will help deliver further benefits to communities, local groups and the environment; and will also promote the image of the organisation to residents, partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>The EIA concluded that in all areas there would be a positive impact. Northwards will be providing time/resources to support local groups to meet their aims and objectives. In some cases this will help contribute to improving cohesion and integration.</p>
Further Action	Northwards will work to ensure that the range of projects / groups promoted for support locally is as wide and diverse as possible.

Policy Being Assessed	Decorating Policy
Lead Officer	Anne Duffield
Reason for EIA	Revised Policy
Date Completed	12.05.09
Summary	<p>The policy outlines the provision of decorating vouchers for new tenants and for concessionary decorating.</p> <p>The EIA raised issue of provision of vouchers to</p>

	<p>elderly or disabled people who could not carry out decorations themselves. At present the policy does not currently allow Northwards to decorate for those that cannot decorate for themselves. This would be an aspiration but not currently possible given budget constraints.</p> <p>For concessionary decorating the budget was again limited and priority has been given to those groups most in need split across ages and rates of benefit. Again, the budget is not sufficient to meet need.</p> <p>However, Northwards are one of a very few organisations who run any such scheme and this is not a statutory function, it was taken up as an initiative to benefit to tenants.</p>
Further Action	The policies cannot be amended due to current budget constraints. However an annual review will be undertaken of demand and available resources.

Policy Being Assessed	Home Improvements No Access Policy & Procedure
Lead Officer	Claire Tyrell
Reason for EIA	New Policy
Date Completed	31.05.09
Summary	<p>The policy and procedure outlines steps that need to be taken when tenants do not allow Northwards to access to their property to carry out home improvement works.</p> <p>The policy and procedure ensures that Northwards makes contact with all tenants who do not allow access to their properties to carry out home improvement works. This will enable Northwards to make sure that there are no underlying issues as to why the tenant is not allowing access, in particular safeguarding children issues or issues because the tenant is vulnerable and in need of assistance.</p> <p>The EIA did not indicate any negative impact for equality groups, but stressed the importance of taking care needs into account around people who are elderly or disabled.</p>
Further Action	Known support agencies or individuals will be contacted to alert them of relevant issues.

Policy Being Assessed	Gas Servicing escalation procedure
Lead Officer	David Travis
Reason for EIA	Existing policy review
Date Completed	25.06.09
Summary	<p>The escalation process is implemented to ensure that Northwards are able to gain access to residents' homes for yearly gas safety check.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that the contractor may not be aware of communication needs of residents at an early stage in the escalation process. It was also suggested that the letters may not be easy to read.</p> <p>It was suggested that more knowledge of timings of religious festivals may help when planning access to homes.</p>
Further Action	<p>Template letters used are to be reviewed in plain English.</p> <p>Officers will check CIVICA at early stages of the process to ensure there are no communication needs for tenants where there is no access.</p> <p>Northwards to use Customer Profiling data when planning visits at particular times of the year where there could be religious festivals that could clash with access (For example in August/September during Ramadan). Information is to be shared with contracting partners.</p>

Policy Being Assessed	Community Sponsorship Fund
Lead Officer	Claire Tyrell
Reason for EIA	Revised Policy
Date Completed	31.10.09
Summary	<p>Northwards Housing is committed to building thriving neighbourhoods. Part of this commitment is to make funds available to groups or individuals who want to undertake a project or activity that will benefit their community. The Eric Hobin Community Sponsorship Fund is one way that we can make funds available.</p>

	The EIA indicated no adverse impacts for any equality group. The fund can be accessed by a range of individuals and groups, including BME and disabled groups.
Further Action	Review EIA in line with next policy review.

Policy Being Assessed	Concessionary Gardening Policy & Procedure
Lead Officer	Claire Tyrell
Reason for EIA	Policy Review
Date Completed	31.10.09
Summary	<p>One of Northwards Housing's objectives is to provide an attractive environment within north Manchester, contributing to the pride and well being of local communities. One way of achieving this is to provide a free gardening service to some tenants who are unable to carry out work for themselves.</p> <p>The policy positively benefits elderly tenants, and tenants with a disability, by providing assistance to carry out gardening works.</p> <p>The EIA identified no negative impacts for other equality groups, the service is open and accessible to all.</p>
Further Action	Review EIA in line with next policy review.

Policy Being Assessed	Communal Heating Procedure
Lead Officer	Kevin Smith
Reason for EIA	Formalising of existing procedure
Date Completed	11.11.09
Summary	<p>The procedure includes residents' access to obtaining heating credits, provision of energy advice and also notification of price increases.</p> <p>The EIA indicated that some 'points of sale' could be difficult for people with mobility problems to access. It was advised that this would be responded to on a case by case basis (recent examples include family members/carers purchasing credit on behalf of the tenant).</p> <p>Following the instalment of new metering equipment it was recognised that the programme manual was very</p>

	complicated and not very accessible. Northwards have produced an easy-read manual which was well received by tenants.
Further Action	Development of a survey to monitor satisfaction.

Policy Being Assessed	Equipment & Adaptations Procedure
Lead Officer	Kevin Smith
Reason for EIA	Formalising of existing procedure
Date Completed	02.02.10
Summary	<p>The purpose of the Equipment & Adaptations procedure is to provide clear guidance to all members of the team when dealing with adaptations to properties that are programmed to have major work undertaken as part of the Home Improvements Programme.</p> <p>It is the intention of Northwards Housing and Manchester Equipment and Adaptation Partnerships (MEAP) to work together in a coordinated approach to ensure that elderly and disabled residents can benefit from adaptations to their homes.</p> <p>The EIA indicated that the procedure has a positive impact for elderly and disabled people. The procedure was not found to have any differential treatment and the needs of all groups are being met</p>
Further Action	Information from the Home Improvement 'Customer Satisfaction Survey' will be used to be monitor performance and to any adverse feedback used to make improvements.

Policy Being Assessed	Asbestos Management Plan
Lead Officer	Simon Roffey
Reason for EIA	Policy Review
Date Completed	01.02.10
Summary	<p>Northwards Housing operate an asbestos management plan in order to comply with United Kingdom legislation & guidance specific to Asbestos. Breathing in elevated levels of airborne asbestos fibre levels can lead to the development of asbestos related diseases, a universal effect.</p>

	<p>Positive impacts were identified in the areas of age and disability. Where asbestos removal is required (as part of decent homes works for example) and the resident is elderly or disabled then specific arrangements are made with the resident. For example notice in advance, agreed date of works, respite flat / facilities if available and other arrangements such as stopping with a neighbour / family for the duration of the works. Asbestos works within occupied individual dwellings are usually limited to half a day.</p> <p>The EIA raised concerns around how information would be communicated to people whose first language is not English. It was found that an asbestos information leaflet "Asbestos in your home" is made available on the Northwards website and other asbestos information on the tenants DVD. There are non English language options on the DVD and non English / large print, Braille and CD on the leaflet.</p>
Further Action	<p>Asbestos register information is available on request at the moment to Northwards Housing residents. There is national debate about how proactive this dissemination of information needs to be, and at present there is no common best practice amongst housing providers. There is ongoing discussion between the Housing Quality Network & the Audit Commission re expected standards. Once this issue is clarified the EIA will be reviewed.</p>

Policy Being Assessed	Comprehensive Equality Policy
Lead Officer	Tara Kelly
Reason for EIA	Policy Review
Date Completed	24.08.09
Summary	<p>The Comprehensive Equality Policy supports Northwards Housing's organisational aims and objectives in relation to equality, and outlines the organisation's approach to tackling discrimination and prejudice in the workplace and in the local community.</p> <p>The policy has been updated in line with recent changes to equality legislation. It has positive impacts for all equality groups in terms of promoting equality, ensuring fair and equal access to services and also tackling any direct or indirect discrimination.</p>
Further Action	Review EIA in line with next policy review.

Policy Being Assessed	Surveying & Design – Good Practice Guide
Lead Officer	Steve Kirkham
Reason for EIA	Review of Guide
Date Completed	14.01.10
Summary	<p>Prior to the works commencing, a condition survey relating to the proposed works is carried out to individual properties. This will also take into account design factors, for example kitchen and adaptation works.</p> <p>The EIA found that older and disabled resident's needs are being accounted for in the design stage. Access and translation problems are also being responded to, as are cultural and religious requirements.</p> <p>The EIA cites some positive practice around responding to access requirements. Whilst working on two retirement housing schemes residents raised concerns about the fact that they can't reach into kitchen wall units as they were placed to high.. Following investigation by the Home Improvements Team a product was sourced which allowed the wall units to be fixed at varying heights.</p>
Further Action	Positive practice has been included within the guide. The guide will be regularly updated through the document review group.

Policy Being Assessed	Communications Strategy
Lead Officer	Louise Huntington
Reason for EIA	Policy Review
Date Completed	03.11.09
Summary	<p>The EIA did not raise any concerns for equality groups and that the needs of our all customers were considered when writing the strategy.</p> <p>For example, all of Northwards' publications will be made available in a range of formats (i.e. on DVD, Braille, CD and large print on request and within reason) as per the Translations Policy. They can also be made available in nine community languages – Albanian, Arabic, Czech, Chinese, French, Kurdish, Portuguese, Somali and Urdu plus other languages if requested.</p> <p>The EIA demonstrated an awareness of the needs of the</p>

	various age groups of our customers. For example, this can be seen in the various ways Northwards look at emerging technology in communications specifically social media, which is popular with younger people.
Further Action	Review EIA in line with annual strategy review.

Policy Being Assessed	Estate Services Policy
Lead Officer	Claire Tyrell
Reason for EIA	Revised Policy
Date Completed	31.01.10
Summary	<p>The policy outlines services provided by or on behalf of Northwards Housing to maintain green spaces and communal areas. This includes open spaces within Northwards estates, communal areas of buildings and where applicable gardens of properties.</p> <p>The EIA found no negative impacts for any equality group.</p>
Further Action	Review EIA in line with next policy review.