

# Equality Impact Assessment Foyer Project

## 1. Summary

This report sets out details of the equality impact assessment undertaken in relation to the project to develop a Foyer in Bromley.

This EIA identifies actions to be taken in order to mitigate the projects potential adverse effects on people for whom the scheme is targeted - i.e. single people in housing need aged 16 to 25 and whom would benefit from and engage in the wider support and services provided through a Foyer scheme.

## 2. Background

2.1 The Housing and Homelessness strategies, The ACS Portfolio Plan and Strategies in the CYP Dept include the aim to develop a Foyer in Bromley. The Foyer scheme would also reflect and support the achievement of objectives within other Portfolios and the Council around improving health, educational attainment, responsibility, safer communities and choice.

2.2 The Foyer project was commenced in 2007 with reports to various Portfolio Holders and PDS Committees to gain support. A site was found and a report went to the Executive of the Council to consider support for disposal of the site for a housing scheme which included a Foyer.

2.3 Under the Race Relations Act 1976 (amended in 2000 and 2003) all local authorities must have due regard to the need:

- to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- to promote equality of opportunity
- to promote good relations between persons of different race

The Act requires public bodies to assess the impact of all functions and policies on the promotion of race equality. Bromley Council has broadened the scope of impact assessments to include gender, age, disability and sexuality. Equality Impact Assessments, which are carried out for any proposed new policy, are intended to ensure that policies do not discriminate and that, where possible, they actively promote equality.

## 3. Relevance to Equality

3.1 The Foyer Project is relevant in relation to its potential impact for the following equality groups.

- 3.2 **Ethnicity/race:** Black and Minority Groups are known to be over-represented in the numbers presenting as homeless.
- 3.3 **Disability.** Some single young people approaching the Housing service or leaving care or other institutional provision are disabled.
- 3.4 **Gender:** young single people in housing need are both male and female and any scheme needs to cater for all genders.
- 3.5 **Sexual orientation:** young single people in housing need can be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender including, for example, those affected by domestic violence or violence from others in or around their home.
- 3.6 **Age :** the current homeless service does not provide for single people over the age of 17 - unless they have a proven special need that makes them more vulnerable than the average person.

#### 4. **Areas of Focus for the Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 4.1. The project would not directly discriminate in terms of any of the relevant legislation (Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act and Human Rights Act).
- 4.2 The focus of the assessment is therefore to consider whether the project might indirectly discriminate against any of the equality groups in any of the following ways:
  - by excluding a specific equality category or sub group
  - by affecting some equality categories or sub-groups disproportionately
  - if the service cannot be accessed equally by all equality categories
  - if there are barriers that might inhibit access to the service or its benefits
- 4.3 Arising from this analysis, a number of issues have been identified where the project might have an adverse effect on one of more of the equality categories and appropriate action has been identified to mitigate each effect. (See Appendix A).

#### 5. **Information and Data**

- In carrying out the assessment, a number of data sources were used. These included:
- information available from the Housing service in respect of single young people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or seeking housing advice,
  - young people in care of social services or under the Probation Services
  - Young people in other low support housing schemes

## **6 Consultation**

Consultation to inform this assessment has included the following:

- Service users, Housing Association, other partners and staff were all consulted in the course of homeless service reviews during 2007 and further reviews in 2008

There is no suitable housing scheme in the Borough where young people can be housed that provides the range of support, mentoring, life skills and other training and help in to further education and/or employment. The need for a Foyer scheme which provides all these services has been identified by past and current clients and a wide range of internal and external partners.

## **7 General**

The Foyer Project was developed with a focus on equality particularly by aiming to provide housing and a range of support services that could better meet the needs of the range of young people that it is aimed to provide for

As the Housing, Childrens Social Services and Probation contain a proportionately larger number of the more vulnerable young people in the Borough the project is, by its nature, benefiting those young people who might more frequently appear in the groups that are most disadvantaged or, possibly, discriminated against. For example, people from a BME background feature considerably higher in the housing service compared to the proportion in the Borough's population.

In addition, it has been identified as an issue that many young people going through the housing services without the support, etc, being proposed for the Foyer scheme go on to have problems sustaining their tenancy and/or achieving their full potential in life.

## **8. Mitigating measures**

Appendix A below sets out actions which have, or will be, taken to mitigate potential for adverse effects that the project might have for individual equality groups. These can be summarised as follows:

- Ensuring a fair process for those wishing to access the Foyer scheme
- Ensuring the Foyer has a mix of ages, gender, needs and abilities amongst its residents
- Ensuring the Foyer is accessible for people with a disability
- Ensuring that any services provided are sensitive to the ethnic, cultural, religious, etc, needs and requirements of its residents
- Ensuring equality of access to move on opportunities/options

**Appendix A: Temporary to Permanent Housing Initiative - Equality Impact Assessment Issues and Mitigating Measures**

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Potential Adverse Effect</i>	<i>Actions to date</i>	<i>Future action(s)</i>	<i>Target Outcome</i>	<i>Lead officer</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Ensuring a fair process for those wishing to access the Foyer scheme and that the Foyer has a mix of ages, gender, needs and abilities amongst its residents	Some groups are excluded from or do not get access to the Foyer and so would be excluded from the opportunity presented	Basic agreement amongst all parties involved who will be referral routes/sources around occupants being a mix of ages, gender and needs	Ensure SLA and SP contract and occupant selection panel/process reflect the aim for mix, balance, etc.	Good mix of occupants reflecting needs and client base	Sara Bowrey	End 2008
Ensuring the Foyer is accessible for people with a disability	People with a mobility difficulty would not be catered for and would be excluded from the opportunity presented by the Foyer	Design of the new buildings to ensure wheelchair accessibility	Keep design under review and ensure built scheme meets required standards	Foyer fully wheelchair accessible	David Gibson	By completion of build - 2010
Ensure services provided are sensitive to the ethnic, cultural, religious, etc, needs and requirements of the residents	Disharmony amongst residents. Management problems. Disaffected occupants. Loss of credibility in the Foyer. Failure to meet client needs and aims of Project	Initial discussions around SLA for Housing Management and Contract for Supporting People services agree these matters to be key feature	Complete new SLA and SP contract ensuring these matters are a feature and make them a part of Support Provider tendering and selection process	Suitable support services available	Sara Bowrey (SLA) Wendy Norman (SP Contract)	Spring 2009
Ensuring equality of access to move on opportunities/options	Different client groups move on arrangements unequal leading to potential for different groups not to achieve maximum potential	Discussions amongst key partners have prioritised adequate move on arrangements as a key area to be developed	Progress a work stream in the project to review and develop Move On arrangements to meet the range of client types and their needs	All clients in the Foyer have an equal chance of moving on to the accommodation they want or need or require	Sara Bowrey	Summer 2009