

## Initial Equality Impact Assessment

### Stage One

This document is designed to identify if the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice in question is discriminatory against any particular social group.

<b>Name of service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice</b>	<b>Customer Contact Access to services</b>
<b>Manager completing Assessment</b>	<b>Julie Heywood</b>
<b>Date of EIA</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> September 2008</b>

### Part 1

#### About the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice

#### **1. What are the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / procedure / strategy / working practice or service?**

The Customer Contact centre was launched to provide customers with a fast track to essential services.

We provide a range of essential services such as tackling antisocial behaviour, rent advice and action, estate management, improving your home, repairs, buying your home and how to get involved in your community.

We aim to deliver high quality services to customers and we are always looking at ways to improve the service.

Customers can call for a fast, friendly access to a range of housing services. The Customer Services Team is dedicated to doing their very best to help customers:

- Access the service required
- Get information
- Report a problem

#### **2. What is the policy / procedure / strategy / working practice or service going to achieve?**

The change to opening hours will support Six Town Housing's vision of 'Great communities, excellent services, inspiring people' and also our value of putting the Customer first and being a customer focused organisation.

#### **Change to Six Town Housing Point Blue Opening Hours**

When we first opened our contact centre (0161 686 8000), we extended our opening hours to 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday.

We did this without increasing costs and with the same number of staff.

Over the last two years we have noticed that only a small number of customers contact us early in the morning or after 5.00 pm.

We consulted with our customers about our opening hours and the majority of them (over 75% of completed responses) were in favour of us reducing our hours to offer a quicker more responsive service.

### **New opening hours**

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 our contact centre (0161 686 8000) and reception opening hours at Point Blue will change to Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Alternatively customers if they prefer, can:

- email there enquiry to [enquiries@sixtownhousing.org](mailto:enquiries@sixtownhousing.org)
- visit or write to us at: Freepost RLUY-BXZX-UZGT, Six Town Housing, Point Blue, Moor Street , Bury BL9 5AQ.

This will now mean we will have more staff available when the majority of calls and visitors come in.

Remember for information on all Six Town Housing services 24 hours a day 365 days a year customers can visit our website at [www.sixtownhousing.org](http://www.sixtownhousing.org)

The Home Improvement Agency (0161 686 8200) opening hours are also Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

### **Our Bradley Fold repairs helpdesk will remain open 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday**

Repairs Help Desk - to report a repair  
0808 144 5368 (free-phone number)

or

0161 686 8368 (to be used if phoning from a mobile - calls charged at normal calling rate)

If customers want to report a repair or if they have an emergency outside of the normal hours, they can ring the repair numbers above which will transfer the customer to the emergency number.

### **Council Information Points**

As well as visiting us at Point Blue, customers can also call into one of the Council's information points. Staff in the Council information points are trained to deal with housing issues.

**3. Who will be the main beneficiaries of the policy/ procedure/ strategy / working practice or service?**

The vast majority of customers will benefit from this change in opening hours. Our telephone statistics over an 18 month period also show very little demand between 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm

**4. Who are the main interested parties in the policy/ procedure/ strategy/ working practice or service? (I.e. stakeholders / Board Members / Staff?)**

- Tenants
- Residents
- Leaseholders
- Agencies
- Bury Council
- staff

**5. Who will the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice affect?**

- Tenants
- Residents
- Leaseholders
- Bury Council
- Agencies
- Staff

**6. Has the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice been explained to those that it may affect directly or indirectly?**

Yes we have carried out a full consultation process around the opening hours

**7. Has consultation occurred?**

Yes – via Internet, questionnaires, discussion groups, email, face to face.

**Please complete the following table.**

Where appropriate please comment on the following situations if or how they apply to the particular social groups outlined.

a) The service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice could have a **positive impact** on any of the social groups listed. Or promotes equality and improves relations within a particular social group or across a number of them.

b) The service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice could have a **negative impact** on any of the social groups listed. By this we mean discriminatory towards them.

**Please note:** if the negative impact is high then a Full Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out.

Equality strand	Any Impact?	Positive Impact? High / Low	Negative Impact? High / Low	Justifiable? i.e. Positive Action	Evidence	Reason/Comments
<b>RACE &amp; RELIGION</b>						
Any Particular Race or Ethnic Minority	Yes	Low				
Any Particular Religion or belief	Yes	Low				
New and Emerging groups (travellers and Eastern European communities)	Yes	Low				
<b>DISABILITY</b>						
People with disabilities	Yes	Low				
<b>GENDER (Inc. Transgender)</b>						
Women	Yes	Low				
Men	Yes	Low				

<b>AGE</b>						
Younger People (16-25)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Low</b>				
Older People (50+)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Low</b>				
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>						
Gay men Lesbian Bisexual	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Low</b>				
<b>OTHER</b>						
People with caring responsibilities	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Low</b>				
Other	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Low</b>				

**8. Please give a general overview of how the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice has a positive impact on the social groups identified.**

The change will allow us to answer more calls during our peak times. It will also allow us to answer calls quicker and have more staff available when the customer demand is high

**9. Please give a general overview of how the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice has a negative impact on the social groups identified.**

The few customers who contact us between 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm, will have to use an alternative method of contact or contact us during new opening hours i.e. 9am to 5pm

**10. If negative impact was found, is the impact intended i.e. through positive action?**

**Not applicable**

**11. Or was it unintended? (N.B If Negative Impact is high a full assessment must be undertaken.)**

**Not applicable**

**12. If low impact was found, please summarise the actions that can be taken to minimise this impact? (N.B These actions can be documented in the Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan)**

More advertising is needed through our newsletter on all the alternative methods customers can use to access the service.

Promotion of the Council information points which are open longer hours will also allow customers to access housing services outside normal working hours

**13. What amendments can be made to the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice in order to promote equality rather than just limit negative impact? (N.B These actions can be documented in the Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan)**

**None**

**14. Please give a brief description of how the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice will be implemented following the amendments, including necessary training.**

Customers have been informed through our newsletter, signs in reception and also a message on the telephone lines prior to the change in opening hours taking place.

**Is a Full Impact Assessment necessary?**                      **NO**  
(i.e. has there been a high negative impact?)

If yes, please ensure that any actions from this initial Equality Impact Assessment are included in the Full Equality Impact Assessment Report. (Appendix 3).

Date Completed: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Signed by Manager undertaking the Assessment: Julie Heywood

Approved by EMT Member:

Approved by Equality Action Group: