

Equality Impact Assessment Stage Three – Telling the Story

Starter Tenancy Policy

Who was consulted & what were the issues?

Consultation undertaken & who was engaged:

1. Tenants who have expressed an interest in policy reviews via a questionnaire
2. Staff via a questionnaire

Feedback from Tenants

- Not many residents would understand the policy itself
- A leaflet should be created and issued to all new tenants
- Have clear guidelines and guidance on anti-social behaviour (ASB) and what comes under ASB – use a points system
- Tenants need more feedback when they complain
- Policy needs more promotion
- Publicise policy and guidance for tenants in newsletters
- Discuss more at sign up
- Art projects to bring people from different backgrounds and diversity groups together
- The service should be adhered to without exceptions and to the letter
- Do not promote the policy any more on website and in newsletters
- Have a specific leaflet for starter tenancies
- Do not promote the policy in a specific section of the website
- I would need guarantees of a continuous tenancy
- To be treated in an understanding manner to our individual needs and vulnerabilities
- Fair and consistent treatment for all tenants
- There is no less consistent or favourable treatment of equality groups within this policy
- To be able to phone with any problems and for it to be private and confidential
- I do not agree with the policy service aims and objectives. Families are great for 12 months could then start misbehaving so they would need to be reviewed regularly
- All tenants should be vetted before being moved in
- There should be regular checks on all new tenants
- Not everyone has access to a computer and may not be able to use one
- Make sure that the policy is followed and that any matters that come to light from residents are treated seriously and not just pushed to one side
- Promote the policy and processes in a specific section of the website#
- If all the information is available to tenants if they need it then they can find it themselves just make sure they know where to find it
- I require good customer service
- Have a specific employee from Cosmopolitan Housing Association (CHA) who deals with all enquiries, complaints, suggestions and requests from tenants so that tenants do not have to contact anyone else to get repairs done i.e. KHT
- Tenants should not have to contact KHT that should be the responsibility of CHA otherwise it can create inequality to tenants in dealing with external parties who are responsible to CHA
- Each property should have a sign similar to the one for repairs which states a named person to talk to discuss problems before they get worse
- The policy does not tell the tenant what to do if they have problems with their tenancy
- The policy does not offer a mediation service or help with contacting outside agencies who could help tenants with their problems

- Groups who are treated less favourably by society are not being positively aided by this policy i.e. elderly and disabled who may find it hard to communicate
- The vast majority of tenants want to fit into a community but they expect responsibility to them and for them ,that is not possible unless the organisation has a named person who they can communicate with
- The starter tenancy should be for an initial 2 years
- The policy is one sided i.e. unkempt gardens could affect the tenants rights, but if the garden in unkempt because the contractors are inefficient who takes responsibility
- The policy itself is good and can help all tenants of CHA if there is an easy form of communication between tenant and landlord.

Feedback from Staff

- More checks and interventions need to be in place pre-sign up
- There needs to be training for staff on the policy
- A service leaflet is required
- Contact local community groups, attend local community groups or other local groups and use as a means of communicating with different tenant groups so as they can be more involved in ensuring the service meets their needs
- This needs to be on the website
- The policy is clear and easy to understand
- The procedure is not over complicated
- Clear procedure/process required for translation services, not just for this service area but for all this may have negative impact on equality groups
- Identify and work with relevant partners to promote information/opportunities etc for engaging with diversity groups
- Definitely include flowchart in staff procedure
- Ensure website is up to date for tenants and customers and any changes to policy & procedure are updated as well
- Possibly set up a diversity resident group who could look at services and performance
- Website page tenant Zone looks very “cramped” as compared to other RSLs sites. It could include more visuals, graphs and charts etc

Actions identified

Action	Lead officer	Due Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote new policy on website, intranet and in newsletters 	Colin Croxton	July 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Service Leaflet 	Colin Croxton	July 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for all staff involved in process 	Colin Croxton	July 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure links and triggers with other policies and processes are clearly defined and officers are fully aware of what is required of them 	Colin Croxton/ Karen Cheung	July 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider option for prevention of ASB and potential breach of tenancy at pre sign up and allocation stages 	Colin Croxton/ Karen Cheung	August 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create procedure for turning starter tenancies into assured tenancies 	Colin Croxton	August 2010

Outcomes for customers

A number of recommendations from tenants will be used to enhance and promote the use of this policy these include:

- Promotion of the policy on the website and in newsletters
- Creation of a service leaflet
- Have frequently asked questions section or equivalent on website
- Consider pre allocation preventative processes such as DVD, more effective use of sign up time with new tenants etc
- Provide the most secure form of tenure compatible with the purpose of the housing and sustainability of the community.
- Have tenancy agreements in use which meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements
- Report back to tenants how the Association is meeting obligations in relation to offering and managing tenancies
- Develop services that support tenants to maintain their tenancy and to prevent unnecessary evictions
- Conduct regular tenancy audits to ensure the correct persons are occupying CHA properties

Conclusion

The assessment has enabled CHA to look closer at its Starter Tenancy policy and how best to provide a service, which is accessible to all.

Areas of action identified through the assessment will be incorporated into a wider action plan. The Action plan includes a looking at pre sign up procedures and processes, creating a service leaflet, better promotion of policy and processes for tenants all of which will undertaken by August 2010.

All actions and service improvements will be included in the CHA Service Improvement Plan.