

Budget EqIA 2: Floating Support Service

This is an Equality Impact Assessment of the Floating Support Service saving in the budget. Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

The duty to pay 'due regard' is required to be demonstrated in the decision making and the implementation process. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed projects that are part of the programme is the means by which we show 'due regard'.

1. The Decision

The Floating Support Service contract is due to end in March 2015, and will not be re-commissioned but consideration is being given whether more targeted services can be provided to Council tenants using the HRA resources.

2. Key Issues

This assessment will review the main changes in the policy.

What might be lost?

The service has provided support to 228 clients including Duty Clients over the last 12 months – with the average case being open for a period of 4.5 months. In addition to the time worked with clients we have only been able to accept Priority 1 referrals, leading to a much more complex caseload with clients who have high support needs. The definition of Priority 1 is as follows: -

- A family or individual is Statutory Homeless and is about to be housed (permanent or temporary)
- High risk of Homelessness
- The Council has a duty to house and there is a real risk that the tenancy will fail without support
- An individual or family have been identified as vulnerable
- Previous history of failed tenancy
- First tenancy and tenant will require support to maintain accommodation
- A rough sleeper is accessing housing for the first time after an extended stay on the streets and floating support will increase the likelihood of a successful tenancy.

What are the alternatives?

Clients with mental illness, personality disorder, complex needs and chaotic lifestyles are not always in the position or frame of mind to grasp the intensity and implications of their current situation. It takes them time to build up trust with support workers.

They are often over whelmed by the chaos around them and are unable to fully engage with the service, flexibility in support can help and some are high risk clients

who require more than one visit. The risk is that without support these clients may be faced with “revolving door syndrome”.

3. Recommendation

This service helps people keep their tenancies, such as people who have a mental illness. It is likely that this decision will adversely impact some people who use the service. It could be argued that if someone presents as homeless due to the lack of support in future this might decrease the savings accomplished. Any increase of those who unable to keep their tenancies will need to monitored.