

Stafford Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form (EIA)

See Guidelines on completing Equality Impact Assessment Forms

| Equality Impact Assessment | |
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| 1 | Title of Function or Policy to be assessed: Housing & Council Tax Benefit Overpayment Policy |
| 2 | Date: October 2009 |
| 3 | Name of Lead Officer: Cliff Craddock |
| 4 | EIA Team: Sue Pote |
| 5 | Head of Service: Bryan Law |
| 6 | Existing, new or review: Review |
| 7 | Set out the aims/objectives/purposes/outcomes of the function or policy, and give a summary of the service provided: The objectives of the Policy are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To notify customers of overpayment of housing and council tax benefit, and to recover overpayments in accordance with legislation.• Minimising the loss to public funds• Maximising revenue to the Authority with regard to customer's ability to pay The outcomes of the Policy are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt recovery of overpayments• Revenue to the Council• Deterrent to Fraud |

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| 8 | <p>Linked policies, functions: Are there any other functions, policies or services, which might be linked with this one for the purposes of this exercise?</p> <p>Yes - The calculation and payment of standard HB & CTB.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|----------|-----|---|--|--|------------|---|--|--|--------|--|--|--------------------------|------|--|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--------------------------|-----------|--|--|--------------------------|
| 9 | <p>Who is it intended to affect or benefit (the target population):</p> <p>The Policy will have a direct impact on those customers who have been overpaid benefit as it provides the detail of what actions, decisions and criteria will be considered relevant to how, when and if an overpayment is to be recovered.</p> <p>There will also be an indirect impact on all citizens of the Borough as the effectiveness with which the Service limits the amount of overpayments and recovers those overpayments that do occur, has a direct affect on the revenue available to the Council.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | <p>Within this table, state whether the policy or function will have a positive or negative impact across the following factors and provide any comments.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Positive Impact</th> <th>Negative Impact</th> <th>Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td>Y</td> <td></td> <td>Factor to be considered (See 11 below).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability</td> <td>Y</td> <td></td> <td>The Policy makes specific reference to health/disability as a key consideration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>No Known Concerns</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>No Known Concerns</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion/belief</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>No Known Concerns</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexuality</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>No Known Concerns</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | Positive Impact | Negative Impact | Comments | Age | Y | | Factor to be considered (See 11 below). | Disability | Y | | The Policy makes specific reference to health/disability as a key consideration | Gender | | | No Known Concerns | Race | | | No Known Concerns | Religion/belief | | | No Known Concerns | Sexuality | | | No Known Concerns |
| | Positive Impact | Negative Impact | Comments | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Age | Y | | Factor to be considered (See 11 below). | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disability | Y | | The Policy makes specific reference to health/disability as a key consideration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | | | No Known Concerns | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Race | | | No Known Concerns | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Religion/belief | | | No Known Concerns | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sexuality | | | No Known Concerns | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | <p>What evidence do you have for the statements you have made above?</p> <p>The Overpayment policy has no differential effect on gender. Both males and females have equal access to Benefits. Application forms ask for an individual's title, so gender is usually known, but the individual would be treated equally regardless of this. An individual's age and health are both elements that would be considered. Particularly with regard to older people, it may be deemed unreasonable to recover an overpayment. The overpayment policy states that</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>decisions on recovery should not cause unnecessary hardship and that Officers are mindful of individuals' circumstances.</p> <p>The Policy makes provision for various criteria to be considered but gender, race and religion would be not generally fall into this category.</p> |
| <p>12. From evidence given at Q.11 what actions, if any, will you need to take against each of the following equality strands:</p> | |
| <p>Disability: None</p> | |
| <p>Race: None</p> | |
| <p>Gender: None</p> | |
| <p>Age: None</p> | |
| <p>Religion/belief: None</p> | |
| <p>Sexuality: None</p> | |
| <p>13. Briefly explain how the policy or function contributes to Community Cohesion by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will it provide equality of access to services, information and employment? • Does it or could it celebrate diversity? • Will it or could it promote good relationships within and between communities? • How will it help to prevent social exclusion? • Will it help to reintegrate those who have become excluded? • How will it provide good quality, inclusive services? <p>The Policy ensures that Officers will take into consideration the health and financial circumstances of the person before deductions are implemented, to ensure that hardship is not caused to that person or any of their dependants. Deductions lower than the statutory rates may be made where appropriate and the reasons for doing so will be documented.</p> <p>This approach, combined with the other guidance within the policy provides assurance that decisions made will be reasonable, equitable and transparent.</p> | |
| <p>14. Consultation: Describe what consultation has been undertaken on this function or policy, which was involved and the outcome.</p> <p>There is currently insufficient information from consultations and therefore there is a need to have an on-going dialogue with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice Bureau • Welfare Rights Groups • Landlords <p>The Overpayments policy is currently being re-drafted and this impact assessment forms part of that review. The current draft of policy and procedures have been</p> | |

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compiled within the last 18 months and will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis.

Head of Service:

I am satisfied with the results of this EIA

*The findings will be referred to within Service Plans and targets built around these.

I agree to review the Action Plan after 12 Months

Signature of Head of Service:

Completion of the Toolkit:

Action Plan

Please list on this sheet the nature of any issues and any recommendation for actions that you plan to implement as a result of undertaking this Impact Assessment

| Issue Identified | Action to be taken | Name Lead | Date to be Achieved |
|--|---|------------------|----------------------------|
| Lack of consultation with key Stakeholders | Stakeholder Matrix to be drawn up and consultation exercise undertaken. | Cliff Craddock | March 2010. |

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