



Equality Relevance Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Policy title	Tenant Led Inspection (TLI) Toolkit
Lead officer	Dyann Weir
Date relevance considered	June 2014
2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will, or may potentially:	
General Duties	Impact on equality (Yes or No)
Reduce or increase discrimination, victimisation or harassment against people covered by the equality protected characteristics?	Yes
Reduce or increase equality of opportunity between people who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
Provide opportunity to improve good relations between those who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
4. Equality impact assessment required? (Two Yes above = full assessment necessary)	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Decision rationale	
<p>TLI enables customers to scrutinise the service the council provides in a number of different ways and present recommendations to the service on how they could improve. The main methodology employed is centered on following customer journeys from first point of contact to a final outcome, and the subsequent report will produce observations, experiences and recommendations for improvements from a customer perspective.</p> <p>As TLI's exist to improve service delivery and access to services for all customers, including those most likely to find access challenging, relevance to equality is high as issues around policy, process and opportunity arise when those taking part are not a representative profile of the local population as a whole. This may lead to an increase in discriminatory practice or outcomes if those covered by the equality protected characteristics are not properly represented or given consultation opportunities in the assessment of the service to give their opinions on how the service affects them. Customer journeys can vary dependent on the circumstances, and it is crucial to conduct insightful scrutiny to ensure that our procedures and services do not deliver varying standards of service or outcomes based on customers' individual characteristics.</p> <p>By nature, under-represented groups and those covered by the protected characteristics are</p>	

classed as 'hard to reach' in terms of consultation and engagement activity. As such, the service has a responsibility to seek new and alternative means to involve those covered by the protected characteristics during the TLI stage, or to capture their views on our services - instead of their needs being considered by a third party with limited experience of their customer journey, this is not satisfactory or good practice. The TLI process should include actions and outline methods with the intention of attempting to engage with these people, further developing the current pool of inspectors to be more diverse and to improve the process, and demonstrate understanding that by doing so the entire process will benefit from increased diversity and continuous improvement.

- **No assessment required – process ends**
- **Assessment required – continue to next section**

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Details of others involved	Sarah Kelly(Assessment & Review Manager), Caroline Hannah (Quality Development Officer), Gillian Stewart/Dyann Weir (Tenant Participation Officers, Hannah Gardener (Equalities Research), West Lothian tenant representatives
Date assessment conducted	25/06/14
2. Aims of the proposed change to council policy or resources	
<p>The proposed Tenant Led Inspection (TLI) Toolkit is an update to the existing version of this guide to involvement for customers.</p> <p>This update is a scheduled review of the process and toolkit to ensure that the protocols and guidance reflect current practice and are relevant to the current objectives of engagement and involvement. Part of this review activity allows for the toolkit to accurately reflect the changes in Housing, Construction and Building Services operational policy and process where applicable. As a practical 'how to' format of guidance, it is key that this toolkit is regularly scheduled for review and that information of how to get involved, who to contact and how to access assistance is transparent and withstands scrutiny.</p> <p>It is also an opportunity for the service to further our aim of increasing the diversity of Tenant Led Inspectors and engagement opportunities for under-represented groups and individuals through targeting particular equality groups for increased support to guide them into involvement with the service. The HCBS equality action plan has been aligned to these aims to support the diversification of those involved in TP in West Lothian</p>	
3. What equality data, research or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?	
<p>Increasing the inclusiveness of community volunteers can create a more diverse range of opinions and ideas within the given community. Research indicates that organisations who adopt the integration-and-learning perspective to diversity provide a better experience to all involved (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Diversity should be perceived as a resource for learning and adaptive change. The integration-and-learning perspective is grounded in the notion that cultural identity shapes how people experience, see, and know the world. Hence, individual differences can be a source of insight and skill that can be brought to bear on an organisation's core tasks. Furthermore, employees in work groups that hold an integration-and-learning perspective on diversity report feeling more valued and respected by their colleagues. This notion can equally be applied to community groups and volunteers.</p> <p>With regard to involvement, proactive work on engagement is considered good practice, according to the EHRC. Proactive work can encourage and promote participation. The EHRC state that there is a need for proactive work to continue throughout the community engagement process, to seek out the views of community members (including equality groups and others who may be 'seldom heard' or hard to reach) and to ensure that their views and expertise are not excluded. Good practice suggests that it is not sufficient to assume that a process is 'open to all', but requires encouraging and promoting participation, particularly of groups who may experience barriers. A proactive approach, reaching beyond 'the usual suspects' has been found to increase the likelihood of some members of the community giving their views.</p> <p>Research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on the subject of community engagement and local governance (e.g. community councils) indicates that women are not less involved in</p>	

governance than men, but their involvement tends to be less formal. As a result, women are more likely to take part in smaller, informal community work than men. The more formal the process becomes, the less likely women are to be active. Where women do cross the boundary between community activity and political action in pursuit of particular issues or causes, they are less likely to progress up the ladder into formal positions. A study of gender and engagement in Manchester found that women were more involved in governance than men, but less able to exercise influence.

Work by the same authors also indicates that black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people are under-represented in community development. For many minority groups, campaigning for equal recognition is a much higher priority than engaging in community development work.

With regard to age, large proportions of retired people participate in community work, and are more likely to volunteer in initiatives that will help develop the community they live in. Young people participate less in civic and other local organisations than other age groups. Young people aged between 16 and 24 are least likely to participate, while those over the age of 65 are most likely to participate. Of these older adults, women are significantly more likely to get involved in informal community work than their male counterparts.

4. Details of consultation and involvement

- The TLI Toolkit is developed jointly in partnership with tenant representatives and staff
- The draft toolkit is then consulted on with wider West Lothian via WL online
- The toolkit is subject to internal consultation and scrutiny with the service equalities officer, performance and change team, service managers and the Senior Management Team
- The toolkit will go on to be presented and to go through approval via the Tenant Panel, Editorial Panel and tenant networks
- Finally the toolkit must go through the cycle of corporate governance via the Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP)
- The council corporate equalities researcher has input and comment during consultative stages
- The toolkit will be distributed throughout local equalities groups for comment

5. Issues identified and 'protected characteristics' impact

(Covering: age; disability; gender; gender identity; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief and sexual orientation equality)

- **Age** – the equalities action plan has recognised that in relation to the local demographics of West Lothian, and the range of tenant ages accessing services, that younger people are under-represented in Tenant Participation
- **Disability** – considering that 1 in 5 people in Scotland are estimated to consider themselves to have a disability, and the increased pressure on this group due to Welfare Reforms, it has been identified that it is crucial to seek meaningful engagement with this equalities group. Enabling disabled tenant led inspectors would offer unique insight into the accessibility of services and highlight any unknown variation in outcomes for disabled tenants.
- **Gender** – The service has an equal split in terms of tenants gender, however, there is an imbalance in the number of female TLI's. This may not present an issue in terms of objectivity of assessment, as HCBS does not preclude gender in accessing services – however, some 3rd party providers in the area of homelessness such as Womens Aid are targeted towards gender based support services. It is worthy of note and good practice to increase the diversity of the gender of TLI's. There is very little information available regarding the transgender community in West Lothian, however, this should not preclude research into any engagement opportunities.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity** – No issues identified
- **Race** – There are no ethnic minority TLI's. This has been recognised as an area for improvement in Tenant Participation through the equalities action plan to increase diversity and obtain valuable insight into accessibility of services and any unknown variance in outcome for ethnic minority tenants.
- **Religion or Belief** – No issues identified
- **Sexual Orientation** – This has been recognised as an area for improvement in Tenant Participation through the equalities action plan to increase diversity and obtain valuable insight into accessibility of services and any unknown variance in outcome for LGB tenants. Whilst this is an area of equalities that can be difficult to obtain involvement with in West Lothian due to LGBT services tendency to be centralised in Edinburgh, there are smaller organised groups that can offer engagement opportunities. As a group that may present to the service in difficult circumstances which may leave LGB tenants vulnerable, it is key to ensure that the support that is in place is appropriate to service user needs, non-LGB tenants may not be in a position to accurately judge this.

6. What measures are in place to monitor the actual impact following implementation?

- The HCBS equalities action plan addresses main areas of focus for the next 2 years for tenant participation – this covers areas for improvement, particularly in increasing the diversity of service user involvement, tenant representatives and Tenant Led Inspectors. This plan is produced and monitored by the service equalities officer. The plan is consulted on by the council's corporate equalities officer and improvements suggested. As this plan is largely focused on customer engagement opportunities, access to services and removal of barriers and discrimination, the TP team have responsibility for certain actions within this plan.
- This plan is approved by the HCBS Senior Management Team.
- As the TP team take forward their actions, these will be completed within the plan.

7. Recommendation

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined below)
- Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality

8. Mitigating actions and additional outputs

- Corporate equalities awareness and EQIA training has been agreed for key tenant representatives and TP Officers to ensure diversity and equalities priorities are a key objective of their work going forward
- The suggestions made during this assessment have already been implemented to the toolkit to include sections on improving access, opportunity and increasing diversity

- **Equality impact assessment completed**
- **Final assessment must be published on the council website:**
[Council EQIA Publication Page](#)
- **Link must be included in “Background References” section of committee/management reports**