

Equality Analysis

Date Completed: 22nd November 2011

Service area: New Homes

Title of Procedure: Granville New Homes Utilities Disconnection

Lead officer: Nigel Moore

Type of policy, function or service:

New

Step 1 Make sure you have clear aims and objectives

What is the aim of your procedure, policy, process or new service?

To introduce disconnection of service as a sanction of last resort for non-payment of heat and hot water charges at Granville New Homes.

Who is the procedure, policy, process or new service going to benefit or affect and how?

110 tenants at Granville New Homes. There are 85 social housing tenants and 25 intermediate tenants.

Utilities income is payable by all residents in Granville New Homes for the costs of supplying heating and hot water to individual homes from the communal boiler, and to pay

for the landlord metered cold water supply. BHP employs Ener-g Switch2 to provide a utilities billing and payment service, and to undertake initial recovery action towards a repayment agreement for any unpaid accounts. Bad debts are referred back to BHP to consider legal action.

BHP needs to consider all options to ensure debt recovery and be able to meet the costs of providing heating and hot water, and cold water supply. Residents who experience disconnection from the communal heating and hot water service, still have the option to fund heating and hot water through alternative means from the separate utilities connections within their individual homes which they are directly responsible for.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

Improve the collection rate for heat and hot and cold water charges at Granville New Homes.

To recover any outstanding utilities income, in order to meet scheme expenditure, and maintain service provision for the benefit of all residents.

What barriers are there to achieving these outcomes?

There is a culture of non-payment amongst a minority of tenants, who had debts of £52,000 at 31st October 2011. A debt management process consisting of letters and telephone contact is in place but has failed to secure payment in a number of cases.

Step 2 Collecting your information

What existing information / data do you have (please specify your sources of information)

Monthly collection reports from Ener-g Switch 2, BHP's utilities billing contractor.

Using your existing data what does it tell you?

Statement of account for all tenants at Granville New Homes.

Step 3 What is the impact?

Is there an impact on some groups in the community? (think about the nine protected characteristics as shown in the toolkit including other socially excluded communities or groups)

Utilities disconnection will impact on all groups of individuals who do not meet their utilities payments. The individual circumstances of vulnerable tenants (and members of their household) within any of these groups will be considered as part of the process for authorising disconnection. Disconnection will not be actioned before personal contact has been made to ensure that any barriers to communication are overcome.

Race (including ethnicity)

Information will need to be available in community languages in order to ensure that it is understood by tenants with a first language other than English.

Religion or belief

None

Age

Disconnection may adversely affect the health of some older residents where no alternative means of heating and/or hot water is available.

Disability

Disconnection may adversely affect the health and well being of residents with a disability where no alternative means of heating and/or hot water is available.

Sexual orientation

None

Sex

None

Gender re-assignment (including trans-gender)

None

Marriage and civil partnership

None

Pregnancy and maternity

Disconnection may adversely affect the health of pregnant women and small children where no alternative means of heating and/or hot water is available.

Step 4 What are the differences?

Are any groups affected in a different way to others as a result of the procedure, policy, process or new service?

There are potential health implications for elderly and disabled tenants, pregnant women and small children where no alternative means of heating and/or hot water is available.

In each case where disconnection is considered the likely impact on the tenant must therefore be taken into account before a decision is reached.

Information needs to be provided in community languages to ensure that tenants whose first language is not English are aware of the threat of disconnection.

Does your procedure, policy, process or new service directly or indirectly discriminate?

No

Additional information - If yes how are you going to change this?

Step 5 Now you need to consult

Who have you consulted with?

Service Delivery Sub Committee and BHP Board. Given the nature of the procedure consultation with the tenants affected is not likely to deliver a meaningful result.

If you have not consulted yet please list who and how are you going to consult with specific groups or communities?

Step 6 Make a decision based on steps 2 - 5

If you are in a position to change or introduce the procedure, policy, process or new service clearly show how it was decided on.

The procedure has been documented in a report to the Service Delivery Sub Committee and endorsed.

What changes or benefits have been made as a result of your consultation?

If you are in a position to introduce the procedure, policy, process or new service but still have information to collect or actions to complete to ensure all equality groups have been covered please list with timescales.

If you are not in a position to go ahead what actions are you going to take? (Please list actions with timescales)

How are you going to monitor the procedure, policy, process or new service, how often and who will be responsible?

Disconnection will require authorisation by the Head of Service. Any disconnections carried out will be reported quarterly to the Service Delivery Sub Committee.

Send an electronic copy of the EA to the corporate services team who will review the document. If this EA is attached to a confidential board report, send it to the Company Secretary only.

Your name: Nigel Moore

Your contact number: 0802 937 2263

This EA has been checked by: Linda Footer