



## NCVO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Good employment practice case study

#### Using equality impact assessments across your organisation

*Ade Fashade, equality and diversity manager at Shelter spoke to us about the equality impact assessments which Shelter uses across its work.*

**An equality impact assessment is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.**

#### How did this come about - what brought this issue to light?

Shelter had been searching for a way to make its organisation more inclusive. In 2007, Shelter's equalities team researched possible Equality models, and decided to adopt the [Equality Standard for Local Government](#). Local authorities use this to ensure they're working towards a fairer society.

*"We thought Shelter should be adopting this standard given the size of the organisation. So we introduced it. In 2007, we trained all managers from the CEO down."*

#### Who was involved in the process?

Everyone – as well as an external assessor.

#### How was the process designed? What format did it take?

1. Shelter brought in an external assessor from the Centre for Local Policy Studies, Edge Hill University, who had developed the Equality Standard model with IDeA. The assessor was brought in to benchmark the organisation's equality standard. The assessor interviewed the chief executive, trustees, senior managers and made recommendations to improve Shelter's equality and diversity practice.
2. The organisation was awarded a Level 2 equality standard: this means you're achieving equality and you've produced plans to progress further.

*"We were the first voluntary organisation to be awarded the standard and we used it as a carrot to get colleagues to buy into it."*

3. An equality impact assessment form was developed. Ade and the team put this together in consultation with key internal stakeholders.
4. Training on equality impact assessments was rolled out across the organisation.
5. Equality impact assessments are now a fundamental aspect of the organisation's planning process and is expected to be completed at the start of every piece of work. This includes all new services, functions and policies. This process is repeated every three years.

### What was the overall impact and successes?

- **Greater equality awareness.**

*"We're more aware of the impact of decisions across the service and how this affects clients... It's like looking at your work through an equality lens – we're proactive."*

- **Improved funding applications.**

*"The assessments are great for funding. When our colleagues later realised they had to do it for public funding proposals, they'd already heard about the equality impact assessments two years earlier!"*

### What barriers did you face?

**Initial resistance from some sections of staff.** Some managers and staff found the process bureaucratic. Ade revised the equality impact assessment form to make it more user-friendly. He also emphasised the benefits, for example for fundraising.

*"The fundraisers did an impact assessment on how they do their work and realised the untapped groups for fundraising. For example, spending power of BME communities in the UK is something like £33billion and for Disabled people, £40billion each year. This helps sells the process - knowing what it could eventually bring."*

### What makes a good equality impact assessment?

- **Robustness.** This means being honest about the disadvantage that might be experienced, for example, by those with disabilities.
- **Consultation.** *"We speak to staff and find what challenges they're having, for example, with underrepresentation in service use."* Referral agencies and the community groups which engage with Shelter are also involved in the process.
- **Facilitation.** As part of the support process, Ade goes to the regional offices to facilitate workshops with staff teams to look at their challenges and compile actions.
- **Listening to complaints.** *"The process helps us to be proactive about complaints. How do we resolve them? Many complaints can be equality-related. At least if we get a complaint, we can't say we haven't considered it."*

### What would you do differently?

- **Keep it simple.** The equality impact assessment form originally had 20 questions. It was simplified in 2009 to focus on broader themes. This made it easier to complete and take appropriate action.

- **Record positive impact.** *“Previously we just measured negative impact. Now we include positive impact as well to recognise the current achievements that we can build on.”*
- **Connect with more service users and potential users.** Ade wants staff and managers to consult more with clients, partners and stakeholders to find what barriers exist to accessing their services.

### Any future developments in the pipeline?

- **An equality framework for the sector.** Shelter is working with Macmillan Cancer Support, Age UK, Action for Children and NCVO to develop an equality and human rights framework for the voluntary sector.
- **Hopefully a set of management standards.** Ade is talking to the Equality and Diversity Forum, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Government Equalities Office and the WCVA.
- **Conference in the new year.** The consortium is planning a conference in early 2011 to promote the equality framework.

### Advice for others introducing equality impact assessments?

*“Keep it simple at first and know your stuff. Try and speak to your senior managers and trustees. Get support from them. Communication is absolutely important.”*

*Emphasise the benefits: know what the benefits to the organisation and the clients are. Everyone gets equal service. The organisation’s brand and profile is enhanced. If you can sell that, you’re on your way.”*

### About Shelter’s workforce

- **How many paid staff do you have?** 1,100 staff
- **How many trustees sit on your board?** 12 trustees
- **How many volunteers do you have?** Over 850 volunteers (including in Shelter’s shops)

## Appendix I: Shelter's equality impact assessment form

Division	Team	
Service / function / policy being assessed		
Purpose / aims / objectives		
<b>Monitoring/Research:</b> <i>Provide examples of qualitative/quantitative information that has or will inform this impact assessment</i>		
<b>Impact:</b> <i>identify the positive / negative impact of this service/function/policy on the following groups (e.g. positive or potentially negative outcomes / implications of your work)</i>		
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Race</b>		
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Disability</b>		
<b>Age</b>		
<b>Faith</b>		
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		
<b>User involvement / consultation</b> <i>Provide details of consultation or involvement work with stakeholders within the last year. Include how clients under the above E&amp;D strands were involved and any outcomes achieved as a result</i>		
<b>Customer service</b> <i>Have there been any complaints on the way your service/function/policy/ impacts on specific groups? If so, how were they dealt with, and what were the results (e.g. changes made or improvements)?</i>		
<b>Staff training &amp; working with partners</b>		
<i>Briefly summarise how you ensure all your partner organisations support Shelter's Equality Scheme?</i>		
<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Date</b>	

## Appendix II: Completed equality impact assessment - campaign recruitment

Division	CPC		Team	CAMPAIGNS	
Service / function / policy	CAMPAIGN RECRUITMENT (INCLUDING LOCAL CAMPAIGNING)				
Purpose / aims / objectives	Purpose is to ensure that Shelter campaign messages reaches out to wider and increasingly diverse UK society. Aim is to create and sustain a more diverse campaigning support base for Shelter. This includes increasing the diversity of celebrity campaigners and partner organisations that we engage with. Also to ensure that local campaign groups are diverse in representation and voice.				
<b>Monitoring/Research:</b> <i>Provide examples of qualitative/quantitative information that has or will inform this impact assessment</i>					
<p>The make up of campaigners is Female (55.2%), Male (40.8%) and Unknown (4%); Most active age group are between 20 and 39. (Information from the Campaign Recruitment paper 08/09).</p> <p>No available campaigning (on housing issues) data/analysis on ethnicity, disability, faith and sexual orientation. However, there has been recent research evidence produced such as Shelter's 'Advice Gap' report which highlights issues around overcrowding, affordability and limited access to mainstream housing advice services for BME communities. There are also emerging evidence on housing issues affecting Migrant workers, Gypsy &amp; Traveller (they identify as BME group) and Disabled people. These sources can help formulate strategies and actions on how to engage with these groups in campaigning for Shelter. There is lack of sufficient data on LGBT and faith groups &amp; housing (although health data from NHS and other social welfare information may provide some indication of housing issues).</p>					
<b>Impact</b> <i>identify the positive / negative impact of this service/function/policy on the following groups (e.g. positive or negative outcomes / achievements of your work)</i>					
	<i>Positive</i>		<i>Negative</i>		
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased BME involvement in campaigning will increase voice &amp; representation on key housing issues. Engagement with BME and refugee networks. Shelter have previously done work to highlight issues affecting migrant worker (in relation to PRS).</li> <li>- Effective use of online (web) forums and social networking could potential capture a more diverse audience.</li> <li>- Local campaigns 'on the ground' have potential of capturing a diverse and more representative audience. Increased opportunities for better engagement and collaborations with local community networks, grassroots/social movements</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of accurate analysis of Shelter campaign profile making, it difficult to encourage involvement in campaigns. Potential language/cultural barriers could adversely affect participation.</li> <li>- Current celebrity strategy lacks diversity terms of profile. However, gradual progress is being made on this</li> </ul>		
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying gender specific socio-economic issues and linking with housing could help encourage diverse gender representation. Currently, there is a near-even spread of male/female profile.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current campaigns on housing issues can be seen as excluding transgender people ('seldom heard voice' on socio-economic issues such as housing).</li> </ul>		

Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective use of online (web) forums and social networking could potential capture a more diverse audience. Increased representation on Shelter website</li> <li>- The 'social model of disability' advocates active civic participation/involvement in society. Promoting this model in campaign recruitment strategy can help engage with disabled people on housing issues</li> <li>- Collaboration and engagement with identified disability networks could help highlight Shelter campaigns and increase involvement/representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of accurate analysis of Shelter campaign profile making it difficult to encourage involvement in campaigns</li> <li>- Disproportionate focus on 'physical' disability could indirectly have a negative effect in encouraging participation and involvement in Shelter Campaigns</li> </ul>
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase involvement in online (web) forums and social networking could potential capture a more age group. Increasing number of older people using the web as a mode of engagement on diverse range of socio-economic issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disproportionate focus on younger population profile could be perceived as excluding older people, as they are currently under-represented in profile of campaigners.</li> </ul>
Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More targeting of campaign advert and information through multi-faith networks (e.g. Housing Justice, Faith-based Regeneration UK, Church Urban Fund) and religious events/festivals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of data available to capture link between housing issues and faith (Although, according to the Muslim Council of Britain information, UK Muslims are disproportionately the largest occupants of social housing in Britain!)</li> </ul>
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeting of campaign advert &amp; information through LGBT orgs (e.g. Stonewall Housing) and festival (e.g. Pride).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current local campaigning not currently representative in relation to engagement with local LGBT groups? Is current structure/format inclusive of this equality target groups</li> </ul>

**User involvement / consultation** *Provide details of consultation or involvement work with stakeholders within the last year. Detail how clients under the above E&D strands were involved and any outcomes achieved as a result*

( Engagement with local groups e.g. London borough of Redbridge to support Shelter campaigns; and increased engagement with local elected councillors. More work to be done in better engaging service users to share 'stories' to help support Shelter campaigns

**Customer service** *Have there been any complaints on the way your service/function/policy/ impacts on specific groups? If so, how were they dealt with, and what were the results (e.g. changes made or improvements)?*

None.

**Staff training & working with partners**

*Briefly summarise any E&D staff training undertaken by staff involved in delivering this service / function / policy what this was and its relevance to your work*

Workshop-based or/and online training on cultural/lifestyle/identity awareness and social justice/exclusion, and implications on housing. This will be in line with Shelter strategic commitment to be an inclusive and people-centred organisation in all that it does. (HR currently working to reviewing learning & development on diversity including introducing online/web based E&D learning).

**Briefly summarise how you ensure all your partner organisations support Shelter's Equality Scheme?**



Shelterdiversitystate  
mentforpartners.pdf

We will encourage other partner organisations working with us and on our behalf to operate in the spirit of fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

*Completed by*

*Date*