

Supported Housing Protocol 29th August 2013

Equality Impact Assessment

Specialist Housing Protocol

Contact: Katie Newe, Supporting People

Updated: 29/8/13

1. What type of proposal is being assessed?

A new or revised policy

2. Please describe the purpose of this proposal

A protocol to assist DCC Officers in identifying and setting up specialist housing projects in Denbighshire.

This protocol sets out a process which is designed to ensure:

- That elected members and neighbourhoods within which specialist accommodation is located are adequately briefed/consulted
- Risks are identified and managed, and
- A balance is achieved between the needs of individuals and wants of a community.

3. Does this proposal require a full equality impact assessment?

(Please refer to section 1 in the toolkit above for guidance)

Yes

Yes

4. Please provide a summary of the steps taken, and the information used, to carry out this assessment, including any engagement undertaken

(Please refer to section 1 in the toolkit for guidance)

We all need somewhere to live and most people in our community live independently, usually in a house or a flat. However some are unable to do so and supported accommodation enables people to live within the community with some degree of independence.

The need for this policy was identified following a number of challenging attempts to establish specialist supported housing for vulnerable people within Denbighshire. The latest one being a Mental Health Supported Housing project - during the process and following a difficult public meeting 18.3.13, where negative stereotypes of people with protected characteristics impacted on the establishment of the scheme. This followed similar experiences with both community living projects and young peoples projects. These instances have all directly affected vulnerable people and have had a negative impact on individuals

with all the protected characteristics.

It was identified that a protocol was needed for DCC officers and elected members to follow. The protocol is written with the intention to minimise the negative impact on these schemes, the users of these services and to ensure that the interests of local people are represented in an appropriate and proportionate manner.

This policy was developed in consultation with
DCC Planning Dept
DCC Housing Dept - BASS accommodation & Supported Housing
DCC Supporting People Dept - Supported Housing
DCC Learning Disabilities Dept - Community Living
Elected members
DCC Corporate director of modernisation and wellbeing
Current and Ex users of Supported Housing Services

Meetings were held with officers and members on 13/3/13, 28/3/13 and 11/4/13. Within these meetings presentations were given around the types of Supported Housing in Denbighshire by the relevant departments - consideration was also given to planning issues and the wishes and needs of local community members via representation from elected members.

This group also looked at similar or relevant guidance and protocols
The Wigan Protocol
BASS guidance

Wider consultation on the initial draft of the protocol was also carried out on 30/4/13 and included

Head of Planning and Public Protection
Head of Housing and Community
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
DCC County Councillors including the lead members for;
Social Care and Children's Services
Customers and Communities
Homeless champion

The draft document was circulated to all housing and support providers for consideration and comments on 28/5/13.

Two consultation events were held on 27th June 2013. These organisations represented and supported service users who fall into the protected characteristics. Examples include Welsh Women's Aid, Cymryd Rhan, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, First Choice Housing, Hafan Cymru and North Wales Housing.

A follow up meeting with DCC Officers and members was held on 12th July 2013 where suggestions for changes and additions following the consultation were discussed and added to the draft protocol.

The protocol was presented to the Learning Disabilities Strategic Planning group on 16th July 2013, this group includes users of the Learning Disabilities service.

The Director of Social Services has presented the draft protocol to various MAG's as follows

Denbigh - 8/7/13

Prestatyn & Meliden - 11/7/13

Elwy - 19/7/13

Rhyl - 24/7/13

Ruthin - 29/7/13

Dee Valley - 29/7/13

Service Users from Supported Housing Projects were consulted throughout August 2013 - via TAPE Community. A series of six audio recordings were produced which demonstrated general support of the protocol. Supported Housing Projects involved were Y Dyfoddol - Young people aged 16 to 25 years of age, Seashells - Males aged 25 and over, Warden Housing -For those over 50 years of age, Supported Lodgings -Young people aged 16 to 25 years of age, Hafal - Supported Housing for people with undiagnosed mental health needs. Nine service users attended the meetings and shared their views on supported housing and the Denbighshire Specialist Accommodation Protocol.

5. Will this proposal have a positive impact on any of the protected characteristics?

(Please refer to section 1 in the toolkit for a description of the protected characteristics)

Currently there are nearly 1700 units of supported accommodation available in Denbighshire (including sheltered accommodation) and approximately 450 units of floating support. Some expansion of specialist housing is needed to ensure that sufficient suitable accommodation is available to all in our community. This accommodation with benefit service users with all of the protected characteristics.

The protocol incorporates the Supporting People funding regime, proposals for Learning Disability Community Living schemes funded by Social Services, shared living schemes responding to homelessness needs. It will also be recommended for use for all RSL's, public agencies (e.g. BCU and Probation) and private sector developers.

The protocol sets out a process which is designed to ensure that elected members and neighbourhoods within which specialist accommodation is located are adequately briefed/consulted, risks are identified and managed, and a balance is achieved between the needs of individuals and wants of a community.

This protocol is intended to facilitate the development of Specialist Accommodation for vulnerable people. Examples include

- Frail older people
- People with medical conditions
- Young people not yet ready for independent living
- People fleeing domestic violence

- Those leaving institutions (including ex-offenders) and
- Those with alcohol and drug related issues

The client groups listed will inevitably fall into one or more of the protected characteristics. Explicit examples of this include

Young People Supported Housing Projects - Age
 Sheltered housing- Age
 Mental Health Supported Housing Projects - Disability
 Community Living Schemes - Disability
 Women's/mens refuge - Sex

All protected characteristic groups could potentially access these services, therefore they would also benefit from this protocol.

6. Will this proposal have a disproportionate negative impact on any of the protected characteristics?

It is not anticipated that this protocol will have any disproportionate negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics.

7. Has the proposal been amended to eliminate or reduce any potential negative impact?

No	
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8. Have you identified any further actions to address and / or monitor any potential negative impact(s)?

Yes	<p>This protocol will be made available to all involved in the planning, commissioning and setting up of future specialist housing in Denbighshire. Where appropriate it will be incorporated into tender documentation for future specialist accommodation projects. Individual specialist housing proposals will be equality impact assessed.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the general public impression of potential residents- in the interests of promoting equality, meeting needs, ensuring accurate information is provided and managing the introduction of a proposed scheme effectively.</p> <p>The protocol states</p> <p>"The degree of risk posed by the introduction of a scheme may well be less than that perceived by neighbours. Fear and lack of knowledge are not the same as risk. Equalities and other statutory duties also mean the Council has responsibilities to ensure the needs of vulnerable groups are met."</p> <p>"Given that communities can become very anxious about</p>
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	<p>proposed schemes, it is expected that the Council and local councillors will share good information and accurate pictures of potential scheme residents with local communities to avoid stereotyping and discrimination. It is also expected that those developing schemes will do everything in their power to enable neighbours to visit similar schemes and will support the establishment of liaison groups to help manage relationships once schemes are up and running and to promote positive community relationships."</p> <p>As a result of prejudices raised at the public meeting in March. Hafal, an organisation that supports people with Mental Health needs, has embarked on an awareness raising initiative with local members. This has involved inviting local members to a support group for Q&A's on 29th April 2013. Hafal have also promoted their national anti discrimination campaign "time to change" with town and county councillors.</p> <p>As part of their commitment to Service User involvement, the Supporting People team will commission a Service User led organisation to produce a DVD about Supported Housing, this DVD will be to support the Supported Housing protocol and will give a snapshot view of all kinds of supported housing in Denbighshire from Community Living, Wardens, to Offender Housing and Doorstop projects and it will also include testimonies from neighbours and community members. The aim of the DVD will be to break down some negative views around Supported Housing and challenge commonly held prejudices.</p> <p>The protocol will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness, as part of this review an assessment will be made as to any impact it has had on any of the protected characteristics.</p>
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Action(s)	Owner	Date
Review Protocol	Katie Newe	September 2014
<For additional actions, insert row below>	<Enter Name>	<DD.MM.YY>

9. Declaration

Every reasonable effort has been made to eliminate or reduce any potential disproportionate impact on people sharing protected characteristics. The actual impact of the proposal will be reviewed at the appropriate stage.

Review Date:	DD.MM.YY>
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Name of Lead Officer for Equality Impact Assessment	Date
Katie Newe	29.8.13

Please note you will be required to publish the outcome of the equality impact assessment if you identify a substantial likely impact.
