

YOUR FUNCTION OR POLICY AREA....Supporting People complaints procedure.....
 OFFICER COMPLETING
 THE ASSESSMENT.....Claire Truscott TEL.....01803 208377.....
 BUSINESS UNITHousing Services.....DATE.....October 2008.....

Part One	GENERAL
1	Please provide a brief description of the main function and/or policy(ies) including its aims and objectives
	Procedure for making a complaint about Supporting People services. Supporting People services provide housing support to vulnerable people. They are contracted to Torbay Council. People who use services (referred to as clients) should use the service provider's complaints procedure relating to their service in the first instance. If they feel that the complaint has not been dealt with appropriately they can ask the Supporting People team to investigate.
2	Please list the main stakeholders/beneficiaries in terms of the recipients of the function or the target group at whom the policy is aimed
	Users of Supporting People services, carers, referrers and other stakeholders including wider community
3	If the function is provided by another partner, organisation, contractor or agency on behalf of the Authority, please give the names of these organisations/agencies (see question 19)
	Supporting People services are provided by housing associations, private companies, and private individuals. They are contracted to Torbay Council to provide a Supporting People service

4	Do you have any research data, about traditionally excluded groups? Does this research highlight any disparities or adverse impact?
	<p>The Supporting People programme has carried out a needs assessment looking at the services needed for different client groups and the gaps in current service provision. This research highlighted gaps in services for traditionally excluded groups. Services are being developed to fill the gaps. The complaints procedure highlights that people may need help and advocacy to make a complaint and that people have the right to make complaints without feeling their service is threatened. The client should first use the complaints procedure of their service provider. The policies of each service are monitored by the Supporting People Team and it is a part of the Supporting people Quality Assurance Framework and each service's contract management plan that complaints are dealt with correctly and fairly.</p>
5	Have you compared your policy/function with similar local authorities, if so with what results?
	<p>We looked at Torbay Council's corporate complaints procedure and also those of other Supporting People Teams. We used the experience of other Supporting People Teams to put together this procedure. Our complaints procedure links to the Torbay Council corporate complaints procedure and the anti discrimination procedure- Report It</p>
6	Does this policy area have high medium or low potential impact on traditionally excluded groups?
	High

	IF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION HAS A HIGH OR MEDIUM POTENTIAL IMPACT ON RACIAL MINORITIES OR OTHER TRADITIONALLY EXCLUDED GROUPS PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Part 2 of the assessment
Part Two	CONSULTATION
7	Please list any consultation activity with internal or external customers carried out over the last year or two: e.g. satisfaction surveys, focus groups, Citizens Panel exercises etc and how the results are publicised?
	Supporting People as a programme has carried out much consultation with stakeholders, providers and clients about service development but not about the complaints procedure. SPOT (Speaking Out in Torbay)– an advocacy group of people with a learning disability- will be asked to review the complaints procedure to ensure it is workable and easy to understand. We will also send it to advocacy organizations representing various client groups.
8	Please list any alternative arrangements you have made or are planning for consulting with hard-to-reach groups within the community
	We are planning to train clients to help with reviews of services. This will include the monitoring and review of the complaints procedure of each service. Clients will also talk to people in the services about complaints. This should encourage people to be more willing to raise a complaint and be more open about how their complaints or concerns were dealt with and should reach people who often find it harder to talk to Council officers and to access services.
9	Please state how you consult with members of your staff about your function/policy
	Team meetings, email, website, leaflets

10	Please list any changes to your function or policy that you have made, or you plan to make as a result of consultation with different groups (Include future ones in your improvement plan summary attached)
	See number 8. There are a number of advocacy groups in Torbay including, Eddystone Trust, Vocal, SPOT (Speaking Out in Torbay, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Age Concern and Cool Recovery. These organizations can support clients through the complaints process. Supporting People has a Community Engagement Officer post who will be commissioning an advocacy service in 2009. This service could train existing clients to support people to make complaints. These agencies will help us to reach the people who find statutory services harder to reach and to reach groups to find out their concerns and ideas on how services should change.
DISCRIMINATION	
11	Please list any evidence you have of the function or policy having an adverse impact on different groups or relations between groups – this can be internal or external
	There is no evidence of the policy having an adverse impact. If the complaint is dealt with by Torbay Council and it is an incident of discrimination it will be recorded through the Report It anti discrimination process
12	Have you received any complaints about your function/policy in respect of equality issues? If so, please give a brief description No
SERVICE DELIVERY	
13	Please list any alternative ways designed to improve access to or use of your service by different groups, (and include this in your improvement plan summary attached)
	The advocacy service which could train current clients to support other clients through the complaints procedure

	would improve access . Clients helping with service monitoring and review will help people voice their concerns.
14	Please list any alternative ways designed to improve access to information about your service by different groups (and include this in your improvement plan summary attached)
	The advocacy service for clients could work with providing clear information and advice about the complaints procedure
MONITORING	
15	Please describe how you carry out monitoring of take up of your function/policy by equality group?
	Complaints are monitored and recorded by the service. They should include the equality groupings. The contract manager from the Supporting People Team also monitors the numbers of complaints and how they were dealt with and monitors through improvement planning how the service has changed in response to the complaint.
16	How are the results of any monitoring analysed, reported and publicised?
	Numbers of complaints and responses are monitored annually by the Supporting People Team. This shows the client group of complainants and the service they are receiving. This is kept with the contract monitoring information of the service. Complaints that are dealt with by the Supporting People Team are logged and monitored through the corporate complaints procedure and anti discrimination process- Report It
17	Does an analysis of your customer base against baseline population figures for the borough show that you are reaching all groups within your remit? If not, which groups are adversely affected? —
	The complaints procedure is applicable to all Supporting People clients. We need to ensure all clients are made aware of the complaints procedure. Supporting People services are open to all client groups. Some of the services are targeted at particular client groups and ongoing needs analysis is determining whether further specialist services are needed.

18	Please list any changes to your function or policy that you have made or plan to make as a result of monitoring
	Complaints can lead to changes in services and possible decommissioning of services. This has happened in the past and will continue to happen.
MISCELLANEOUS	
19	If your function is provided by a private sector or voluntary sector organisation on a contract basis, (see q 3) please list any arrangements have you made or plan to make to ensure that these comply with equality
	The procurement process builds safeguards into contracts to ensure good practice in the equality groupings. Providers must meet the Torbay Council corporate equal opportunities policy. Each service is monitored by staff in the Supporting People Team. Their complaints policies are monitored. All Supporting People services must comply with performance standards in the Quality Assurance Framework including fair access and complaints
20	Does your function or policy result in any financial support being given to community groups within the voluntary and community sector. If yes, please list organisations and amounts, including the equality monitoring on nature of the groups
	No

IMPROVEMENT PLAN List any recommendations for action as a result of this impact assessment. INCLUDE IN BUSINESS PLANS

ISSUE	ACTION REQUIRED	LEAD	TIMESCALE	COSTS	COMMENTS
Making services customer focused	Clients will be trained to carry out reviews of service, including the complaints procedures of services	Supporting People Manager	May – September 2008	Approx £32,000	Costs for all client involvement

Helping clients through the complaints process	The use of an advocacy service to train existing clients to support people through the complaints process will be investigated	Community Engagement Officer	July – August 2008	Approx £10,000	Also costs involved in staff training: client engagement,, community development, training for service users, officer time
Improve monitoring of complaints	Ensure services monitor complaints by equality groupings, including whether they are incidents of discrimination.	Service Development Officers		Within current resources	
Following corporate complaints procedure	Ensure procedure is in line with the corporate complaints procedure and the Report It procedure for incidents of discrimination.	Service Development Officers	Ongoing	Within current resources	
Ensuring policy understandable	SPOT (Speaking Out in Torbay)– an advocacy group of people with a learning disability- will be asked to review the complaints procedure to ensure it is workable and easy to understand	Information and Communication Officer	December 2008 – April 2009	Charge made by SPOT	