

Barnet Homes Equality Analysis

Refer to guidance notes when completing this form

Proposal/Policy: Decoration Voucher Scheme for new tenants

Aims & Objectives: To review our current decoration voucher scheme and propose an alternative that will prove to be value for money for the organisation while giving customer the choice in what they want to spend their money on. The previous scheme offered B&Q voucher to new tenants where they could go to a local store and redeem the voucher. The new scheme gives customers the choice of a whole paint package, allowing them to choose the colour of paint or alternative visit Barnet Reuse Centre Limited where they can purchase decorating items or furniture. The products included in the package will be reflective of the size of the property.

Who will benefit from the proposal?

The beneficiaries are Barnet Homes, staff and tenants.

Barnet Homes as there is potentially saving of 64%. The current budget across all three teams is £150k. Last year we hugely overspent due to an unexpected increase in void regeneration properties. We envisage that if we use the Dulux paint pack scheme, we will under spend on our budget, freeing up money to be used elsewhere. Barnet Homes will receive a more detailed report of vouchers being redeemed by each property which will allow us to carry out checks. Barnet Homes will also be safeguarded against losing money on vouchers being lost or stolen or going unused.

Staff will benefit from reduced workload. Staff will no longer need to count and recount vouchers each time it issues them. This new system will be more user-friendly for Grahame Park officers as they do not have to travel each time they are low in vouchers.

Tenants will benefit by having the choice of spending their voucher allowance on paint or furniture. The decoration pack scheme is a full package of everything that is required to decorate a property and it is made easy for the tenant. Tenants also have a direct number to a call centre for advice and support when decorating.

Information/data considered?

Decoration Voucher Report.

Financial data provided by B&Q and Barnet Homes, tenant survey.

Have stakeholders (e.g. tenants, leaseholders, staff) been consulted?

Yes via telephone survey

Risk Assessment

Consider the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: Race, Gender, Gender reassignment, Disability, Sexual orientations, Religion or belief, Age, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity

<p>1. <i>Different communities will receive different service outcomes</i></p>	<p>There is potentially an issue for residents who can not speak or read English as one of the requirements of the new scheme is that after given the voucher code, tenants are expected to then call up the Dulux call centre and place an order by selecting their colours. If they are not able to read English, they will not understand the literature in the pack and they will be unable to call and place an order. We will support resident who cannot speak English by training Housing Officers to assist tenants to make a choice and place the order over the phone on behalf of tenants.</p> <p>The new scheme will support tenants with mobility issue. With this new scheme, tenants will no longer need to go visit a store and chose the products. They could make the choice from their home.</p>
<p>2. <i>Satisfaction ratings will decrease amongst different groups of residents</i></p>	<p>Although it is expected that more tenants will be happier with the new scheme due to being able to choose between decorating and furniture it may also reduce satisfaction amongst a few groups. Tenants will not have the choice of paint or wallpaper as the new scheme offers a set 'starter package' where the only choice is the colour of paint, whereas previously they could choose from a wide range of products at B&Q. Also tenants who may already have the accessories may have wanted to spend the money on other items that they needed instead of accessories and this scheme does not allow that choice. The package is rigid, although tenants can take items back and Barnet Homes will be offered a refund. Tenants who know the old system may feel that they are getting less then other tenants as the value of the package is 64% lower.</p> <p>The majority of the tenants should be satisfied as they would prefer to get more for less money. They will also be given the choice to buy furniture or paint, which they did not have the choice to do before.</p>
<p>3. <i>Members of Barnet's diverse communities will feel less confident about Barnet Homes and the manner in which it conducts its business</i></p>	<p>No. The new scheme is value for money and provides tenants with what they need, giving them the choice and makes the process easier. Tenants should be more confident that Barnet Homes is ensuring money is not needlessly wasted.</p>
<p>4. <i>Barnet Homes ability to promote good relations between different communities will be affected</i></p>	<p>The new scheme will promote Barnet Furniture Centre, a local charity and raise the profile of a local community project.</p>
<p>5. <i>Any additional considerations (e.g. Barnet Homes reputation)</i></p>	<p>The change needs to be communicated with B&Q as this contract has a significant value. We need to ensure that our relationship with B&Q is not jeopardised and that even though we are ending the contract, explain the reasons why and then give B&Q a chance to compete if they wish if the contract goes out to tender.</p>

Does the policy make a positive contribution to promoting equality? Any negative impact identified should be addressed in actions below.

Housing Officers will place order for tenants with language barriers with support from our translation partner The Big Word. Under the old and new scheme, tenants with mobility are just given the decorating equipments with not assistance with decoration. The implementation of this new policy will allow us to review and address the issues identified by signposting to certain schemes that help with decorating or organisation that offer decorating service.

List any actions resulting from above assessment

Action:	Owner:	Target date:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train Housing Officer (HO) / Letting Officer (LO) to place orders on behalf of tenant, ensuring they are competent when dealing with tenants who don't speak English • Contact Handy Man Scheme; Help the Aged, community groups to set up an easy referral scheme for help with decorating. • Carry out inspection of property in new tenant visits and identify where vouchers are being used or not used • Agree a start date for new project • Incorporate in new tenant survey if the DPP scheme or BFC vouchers meet the need of the tenant. • Consult with residents on the implementation of this pilot • Complete further assessment of scheme at the end of the pilot. 	<p>HO/LO</p> <p>To be agreed</p> <p>HO</p> <p>Project group</p> <p>HO</p> <p>Residents Involvement Team</p> <p>VOIDS and Lets Team</p>	<p>Once the go ahead given by Executive team.</p>

Completed by: Surma Begum, New Business & Grants Officer

Date: 04/07/11

Completed assessment to go to Barnet Homes Equality Group for scrutiny.

To be completed following feedback from Equality Group

Feedback on above assessment:

The proposed decoration scheme provides an additional degree of choice for tenants with the option of using the vouchers at Barnet Reuse Centre as well as providing better value for money for Barnet Homes. It is acknowledged that there is less choice in decorating items under the new

scheme however the scheme does provide new tenants with everything they need in order to decorate their home which is very helpful for those new to decorating. The new scheme makes better business sense due to the financial savings made with Barnet Homes only paying for what is actually used by tenants.

Concerns were raised by the Equality Group over how tenants with mobility issues would carry out decorations. The group were informed that our repairs partner Lovell have a dedicated decorator who carries out work for tenants unable to do their own decorations.

Dates and named action owners to be added to action section above.

Following this analysis, no group of people with a protected characteristic will be adversely impacted under the new scheme, therefore the group are happy for the pilot to go ahead with the recommendation that satisfaction information collected during this pilot should be analysed at the end of the 6 month pilot period. This data should be considered alongside the above analysis to identify if any changes are needed to the proposed scheme to ensure equality of opportunity for all communities. This should be reported back to the Equality Group.

Further investigation into equality impact needed: Yes No
Further analysis to be complete following pilot of new scheme.

Date: 11th July 2011