

Response to inspection report

Bradford City Metropolitan District Council

Supporting People

Introduction

This response has been prepared by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) following an inspection carried out by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate. Inspected bodies are asked to prepare responses to the Inspectorate's reports which set out how the report's recommendations will be met and how services to users will be improved following the inspection. The Commission has editorial control over the content of the responses of inspected bodies.

Response

Recommendation 1

In response to recommendation 1 the council is ensuring that there is an increasing focus on equality and diversity. The Council is committed to building a society that is fair and acknowledges that every community and individual has rights and responsibilities.

The Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy outline how it will develop and promote equality and diversity within the Council and across the district. The Strategy provides a clear statement of Council's responsibilities and sets out its commitment to eliminating all unlawful discrimination as well as fulfilling its legal obligations.

Equality and diversity is central to the way the Council delivers and commissions its services, employs staff and how it leads and involves the community. Through these three roles, the Council aims to deliver a positive and sustainable change to people's life chances and has based its actions on the following five broad priorities:

1. Promoting positive attitudes
2. Participation and inclusion
3. Access to information
4. Access to services
5. Promoting a diverse workforce

The Supporting People team training plan incorporates a mandatory course for all staff which forms part of a rolling training plan to ensure that staff attend equality and diversity training at a minimum of once every 3 years. Supporting People is working with providers to ensure that services are culturally sensitive and appropriate to meet service user needs. This is being done through the introduction in December 2008 and assessment of supplementary objective S3.3 the living environment, and the implementation of the action plan associated with the equality impact assessment carried out in

September 2008. EIA's are being incorporated into each service review to ensure that we have a rolling programme of checks against services.

Recommendation 2

In response to recommendation 2 the council has made significant progress in improving access to services with the employment of a dedicated link worker who is delivering a programme of events to raise awareness and address the necessary improvements in access. We are monitoring take up of services, promoting services and housing related support to front line staff through using a service user led DVD and will check for progress and self-awareness through a planned mystery shopping exercise in September 2009. The service user action plan is being updated to check that access is improving and this will be endorsed by a new survey to be carried out in late 2009. We have a dedicated move on coordinator in post whose role is to progress the action plan to improve move on. A new tenancy ready framework is being developed with providers of short term services and will be in place in the autumn of 2009. The housing services contract to deliver access to housing and related services has now been awarded, inbuilt within the service specifications is the need to fully engage with service users at all levels of service delivery including policy, strategic planning and service development. Future service commissions planned through Access to Housing will draw on SP good practise experience to ensure structured service user involvement is routine. We have a pro-active approach to fairer charging and are doing some specific targetting of those not on subsidy in long term services. Our complaints procedure has been updated and we have a new complaints champion in the team. Monitoring of complaints is taken to the Strategic Core Group and Commissioning Body and reported through the Adult and Community Services performance structure.

Recommendation 3

In response to recommendation 3 we confirm that we have increased and improved the opportunities for service user involvement in the delivery and development of housing related support services. We have just successfully employed a service user involvement officer and we have started to update the service user strategy action plan to look at what we have done and what steps we should take in the future. Choice advocacy has been funded to carry out further work to engage service users and we have engaged with carers in the 2 year strategic review of older persons services.

Recommendation 4

In response to recommendation 4 we can confirm that further training has been given to providers on value for money with one to one sessions on costs, workshops on performance indicators, the introduction of a provider sub group to develop outcome based contracting and an overall session on VFM to our provider forum. We are collating cashable and non cashable efficiencies from the monitoring of outcomes of service reviews.

Recommendation 5

In response to recommendation 5 we have identified where we need to increase reporting on outcomes and this will include further analysis and reporting of the Quality Assessment Framework objectives and CLG outcomes at service level. The feedback from the partnership shows that there is an increased understanding of the content of the performance reports and we continue to use this format and build on it with the introduction of new performance data. The service plan is continually updated and the Commissioning Body has agreed the development of a high level delivery plan for reporting outcomes.