

Impact Assessment of: Discretionary Housing Payments and Overpayments policy

Service/ Directorate: Leeds Benefits Service (LBS) / Resources

Date Completed: 11 July 2008

Lead Officer: Anthony Derbyshire

Members of the assessment team:

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team e.g. service user, manager of service
Anthony Derbyshire	Leeds Benefits Service	Manager
Dawn Hutchinson	Leeds Benefits Service	User / Manager
Sukvinder Singh	Leeds Benefits Service	Equal Access Officer
LRBS Equality Steering Group	Leeds Revenues and Benefits Service	Managers

Brief description of policy/ service:

(take this from Section 1 – aims)

The DHP policy is made up of key principles that must be adhered to each time a DHP award is requested.

These are:

- *The scheme will be used to provide additional help for customers facing the prospect of hardship caused by unusual or exceptional circumstances*
- *The scheme will not be used to counter general inadequacies of the Social Security system.*
- *The scheme will not be used where there is an alternative provision or option for dealing with hardship such as renegotiating “non-priority” debts such as credit cards, hire purchase agreements etc.*
- *The scheme will not directly or indirectly support anti-social activities including*

drug abuse, alcohol abuse or neighbour nuisance.

Brief account of how the impact assessment was carried out:

Desk top exercise involving Compliance Team Manager, DHP Team Manager and the Equal Access Officer

Brief description of any adverse affects found:

Limited funding - Difficulty in ensuring that we maximise spending at all times throughout the year whilst ensuring sufficient funds remain available for future claims.

Potentially excluding disadvantaged groups - No statistical information is available around the case breakdown in terms of possible disadvantaged groups around DHP customers

Summary of Actions arising from Assessment

Actions	Responsibility	Timescale
Need to ensure that any welfare/take-up activity is held at places, and at times, that are accessible to all groups.	Advice and Benefits Liaison Team Manager.	As and when activities are organised. There are a wide range of take-up activities throughout the year.
All take up activity is community based. The take-up strategy considers the location and timing of these activities so as not to clash with dates such as bank holidays, religious holidays, school-times, etc.	Advice and Benefits Liaison Team Manager.	As and when activities are organised. There are a wide range of take-up activities throughout the year.

Analyse and breakdown DHP customers in order to identify any shortfalls in applicants of any disadvantaged groups. This information can then be used to advise and better target take-up activities.	Equal access officer	On-going basis
All other LBS officers must have an understanding and awareness of DHP administration, so as to give consideration to it as part of their decision-making functions. This is covered in new starter induction training.	Benefits Administration Team Leaders	Upon induction
Update/refresher training is required following any changes in the policy.	Quality Assurance Team Leader	As and when policy is amended.
Further review the latest Customer Satisfaction Survey undertaken in 2006 to identify any issues relating to customer accessibility to the service. This will include office opening hours, speed of response and telephone accessibility. Results showed an overall satisfaction rate of 80% (an increase of 2% on the previous survey in 2003).	Equal access officer	On-going basis

Contacts for further information:

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