



FOLD HOUSING ASSOCIATION

CARE AND SUPPORT

Equality Impact Assessment

December 2008

Please note that this document is available on request in alternative formats including:

- **Large print**
- **Audiocassette**
- **Braille**
- **Computer Disc**
- **Alternative languages**

If you would like an alternative format, please contact:

Marie Pickles
FOLD Housing Association
FOLD House
Redburn Square
Holywood
Co Down
BT18 9HZ

Tel: } 028 90 397250
Fax: } 028 90 397184
Email: } marie.pickles@foldgroup.co.uk
Website: } www.foldgroup.co.uk

Contents

	Page
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Introduction	5
3. The Policy	7
4. Consideration of Available Data & Research	14
5. Assessment of Impact	20
6. Consideration of Measures to Mitigate Against Adverse Impact	21
7. Consultation	22
8. Outcome	23

Action Plan

Appendix A – Survey Data

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Fold Housing Association is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Association gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy, or group of related policies, where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.
- 1.2 As the representative body for housing associations, the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) has been assisting its members in the implementation of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 by co-ordinating a joint approach to the equality obligations. Fold Housing Association is part of this joint exercise which is intended to maximise resources for equality work and to minimise the administrative impact on consultee and/or stakeholder organisations.
- 1.3 The Association screened all of its policies during 2004-05. The results of this exercise, including the proposed EQIA programme, were subject to a 12 week period of public consultation between July and September 2005.
- 1.4 The aim of the Care and Support policy is:

To deliver to people with care and / or support needs appropriate services which maximise their quality of life, whilst operating within available resources

This report provides the following information:

- Background information on the equality duties and Fold Housing Association
- A description of the Association's current Care and support policies
- Information on the scope of this review
- The sources of quantitative and qualitative data considered during the review
- Assessment of the impact of the policy on the 9 equality dimensions. This includes potential differential impacts based on disability and race
- Proposed mitigating measures
- Details on the consultation process
- The next stages of the EQIA.

2. INTRODUCTION

Statutory Equality Duties

2.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act requires Fold Housing Association, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Men and women generally;
- Persons with a disability and persons without;
- Persons with dependants and persons without.

2.2 The Association must also, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

2.3 In line with its equality scheme obligations, the Association screened all of its existing policies to assess whether they impacted on the promotion of equality of opportunity or the duty to promote good relations. The following questions were asked during the screening exercise:

- Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- Is there evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
- Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity between the relevant different groups, either by altering the policy, or by working with others in government or in the larger community, in the context of the policy?
- Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of that type create problems specific to any relevant groups?

A report describing the results of the screening process is available from (see contact details on page 2).

2.4 Following this screening process and the associated consultation, the Association developed a 5 Year Equality Impact Assessment programme. The Care and Support policies were scheduled for assessment in year three of this programme.

2.5 This impact assessment has been carried out in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Equality guidance. The eight separate stages of the Equality Impact Assessment are:

1. Determining the aims of the policy
2. Collecting available data
3. Assessing the impact of the policy
4. Consideration of measures to mitigate any adverse impacts and/or alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
5. Formal Consultation
6. Analysis of responses and decision by Association
7. Publication of results of the Equality Impact Assessment
8. Ongoing monitoring of adverse impact.

2.6 The purpose of conducting the Equality Impact Assessment is as follows:

- To identify adverse impacts and to consider mitigating factors which will eliminate adverse impact
- To consider alternative policies which would better promote equality of opportunity.

2.7 About Fold Housing Association

FOLD Housing Association was established in 1976. FOLD Housing Association is a Registered Housing Association registered with the Department for Social Development and holds charitable status with the Inland Revenue. It is a voluntary non-profit making organisation. Historically FOLD built and managed only sheltered accommodation for older people with disabilities and special needs through supported housing, housing with care and a range of innovative care services.

FOLD's mission statement is 'to provide the best housing, care and support for those in need of such services'.

The Board of Management of FOLD comprises of a maximum of 15 appointed members, including a Chairperson. Appointments are made through external recruitment. The Board of Management reflects a range of interests, representing the interests of users of the service and the community at large. The current membership is: Chair Mr. W J Cameron, Mr P McIlroy, Mr R Holliday, Mc C Murdock, Mr B Henry, Mr C McLean, Miss A Graham, Mrs J McCrum, Miss A Quinn, Mr A Halligan, Mr J Fivey, Mrs A Harper, Mr William Canning, and Mr David Crothers.

3. THE POLICY

Description of Policy

The Care and Support policies describe the Care and Support service the Association provides to its tenants and the wider community.

Policy Aim

3.1 The aim of the Care and Support policies is:

To deliver to people with care and / or support needs appropriate services which maximise their quality of life, whilst operating within available resources.

The scope of the Care and Support activities covered in the policy include:

- **Housing Support** – This covers support services funded by supporting people grant* which is managed by the NIHE. By housing support we mean:
 - sheltered housing for older people
 - supported housing for people with support needs
 - floating support which is outreach services based on the needs of the individual regardless of whether they are a tenant of the association

*Please see below for details of the types of people who may be entitled to the Supporting People Grant.

- **Care Support** – This covers care services funded by the health and social care trusts; the department of health and by personal care charges. By care support we mean personal care e.g. help with daily living tasks.
- **Residential/Nursing Care** – This covers care support provided in accommodation registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). This is usually funded by the health and social care trusts.

Underpinning objectives include:

A key objective of housing association support services is to make a positive difference by addressing adverse impact.

* Supporting People funding may be available to help the following types of people:

- Older people
- People with learning difficulties
- People with mental health problems
- People with physical disabilities
- Women fleeing domestic violence
- Homeless people
- People struggling to meet their tenancy conditions
- People leaving institutional care

Scope of Review

3.2 The main stakeholders in relation to the policy include anyone seeking or receiving the Association's Care and Support service or any other stakeholder of the Association. This can be any of the following:

External

- AccessNI (ANI)
- Applicants for support services listed at 3.1 above
- Current service users
- Department of Employment and Learning (DEL)
- Department for Social Development (DSD)
- Elected representatives
- General public
- Health and Social Care Trusts
- Inspection and assessment bodies
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
- Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
- Other Housing Associations
- Other statutory agencies
- Partners or providers of Housing Support Services
- Past service users
- Recognised service user groups/organisations
- Relatives and carers
- Representatives of the local community
- S75 representative groups
- Suppliers

Internal

- Board members
- Management
- Staff

Department for Social Development

Housing Associations are subject to a high degree of regulation with the DSD having specific responsibility for monitoring their activities. The DSD gathers information on a wide range of Association services including Care and Support.

Inspection and Assessment bodies

There are also other bodies that can look at aspects of the Association's Care and Support service:

- Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority RQIA
- The NIHE's Supporting People Team
- Environmental Health

Ombudsman

Anyone dissatisfied with the way in which the Association carries out its Care and Support service (after having exhausted the Association's Complaints Procedure) can make a complaint directly to the Ombudsman for an independent review.

Other Third Parties

There may be occasions to deal with third parties when reviewing the Association's Care and Support policies.

The lists shown under 3.2 are not exhaustive. These lists are in alphabetical order.

What this EQIA does not cover

3.3 We anticipate that some aspects of Care and Support may be considered during all equality impact assessments. Whilst considered to be important by the Association, the following areas do not come under the scope of this equality impact assessment:

- **Access & Communications generally** - The Year 1 EQIA on this policy dealt with overall issues relating to accessing the association's services (including care and support) and communicating with the organisation. Please note criteria for accessing these services are based on need and set by the Supporting People Commissioners not the associations
- **Complaints about Care and Support** – This was covered by the Year 1 EQIA on Complaints

-
- **Care and Support services which are totally provided by a Joint Management Partner** – This is when the association provides the building but another organisation provides the support service.
 - **Maintenance in a Care and Support setting** – This was covered by a Year 2 EQIA
 - **Setting support and other charges** - This will be covered in a separate EQIA

3.4 Care and Support policies are intrinsically linked to all of the Association's key policies and processes, depending on the nature of the service.

Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

3.5 The Association is required to comply with a range of legislative and regulatory requirements. Those listed below are relevant to Care and Support service provision:

- Health & Personal Social Services (NI) Order 1972
- Enduring Powers of Attorney (NI) Order 1987
- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 1978
- The Fire Regulations and the Fire Precautions Order 1984
- The Housing Benefit (General) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (NI) 1987
- Social Security Claims and Payments Regulations (NI) 1987
- The Food Safety (NI) Order 1991
- Health & Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 1992
- Registered Homes (NI) Order 1992
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Mental Health Order 1996
- Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (NI) 2001
- Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001
- Sex Offenders Act 2001
- Housing Support Services (NI) Order 2002
- Health & Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (NI) Order 2003 and associated regulations
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Health & Safety Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (NI) 2003 (COSHH)
- The Children's (NI) Order 2003
- Residential Care Homes Regulations (NI) Order 2005
- DSD Regulatory Framework (2006)

-
- Food Hygiene Regulations 2006
 - The Health & Safety at Work & Fire Precautions (Workplace) (Amendment Regulations (NI) 2003
 - The Smoking NI Order 2006
 - Domiciliary Care Regulations (NI) 2007
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

This list is not exhaustive.

3.6 In addition to Care and Support generally, Fold must also meet certain obligations, under its Equality Scheme, to ensure that complaints made about failure to meet its equality duties are dealt with effectively.

Reasons for Equality Impact Assessment

3.7 The screening report gave the following reasons for carrying out an impact assessment on the policy:

- (a) Whilst there are Care and Support policies in place, as part of our commitment to delivering an excellent customer service the Equality Impact Assessment presented an opportunity to improve the existing policies.
- (b) The Association believes that access to services, including Care and Support, is of high importance to S75 groups.
- (c) Fold also believes that its Care and Support policies merited an equality impact assessment to demonstrate its commitment to providing an efficient and effective service to its tenants. The Association provides services to a diverse range of customers including many client groups with special needs.
- (d) Due to the absence of available data at the time of screening the policy, the decision was taken to assess actual adverse impacts during the conduct of the equality impact assessment.

Implementation of the policy

Within FOLD, Care & Support is delivered by Care Services and/or Housing Services who oversee the compliance of relevant policies and procedures.

Care Services reports through the Director to the Care Services Sub Committee and thereafter to the Board.

Care and support delivered in sheltered housing is directly managed by Housing Services which reports via the Housing Services Sub Committee and thereafter to the Board.

3.8 The Care and Support policies have been defined by the Association's Board and / or management team. It is implemented by relevant staff throughout the Association.

The association also works to the following standards:

The Quality Assurance Framework which is a self assessment document used to check the quality of service funded under Supporting People. This inspection process is used the NIHE to ensure compliance with the standards set for providers of support services. The NIHE's Supporting People team usually follow up with a verification visit.

The Regulation Quality and Improvement Authority have the power to set standards for service provision and inspect Domiciliary Care, Registered Homes, unregistered Day Care facilities and family centres as well as the Social and Clinical Governance arrangements of these services. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety have developed minimum standards for a range of regulated services including Nursing Homes. The RQIA will look for evidence that the standards are being met through: discussions with patients, staff, managers and others; observation of activities in the home; and inspection of written policies, procedures and records.

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council monitor, inspect and register the health and social care sector against set employer and staff standards. It is an independent public body, established to increase public protection by improving and regulating standards of training and practice for social care workers.

All services provided to vulnerable adults and/or children require preventative checks through Access NI to ensure staff are cleared to work in the health and social care sector

- 3.9 Care and Support policies documents are developed in compliance with legal requirements and agreed by Fold's Board and Senior Management Team.
- 3.10 Fold Housing Association provides accommodation for people with a variety of housing needs developed in areas where housing need has been identified by the NIHE and (where possible) these homes are built to a lifetime homes standard. As the statutory housing authority the NIHE is responsible for collecting data and identifying housing need and supporting the Association in the delivery of the housing development programme.

3.11 Housing Support

Housing Support is designed to help people live independently. It is usually provided to those living in particular types of accommodation, such as sheltered housing schemes for older people or supported housing schemes for people with support needs. A Housing Support worker will assist those living in these types of schemes to remain independent. Housing support services are not time limited, they are available for as long as the person needs them. Housing support covers a range of activities including some or all of the following

- giving general counselling
- providing advice and support
- making daily calls
- maintaining safety of equipment,
- maintaining the security of dwellings
- offering help with benefits
- arranging activities for tenants
- life skills training such as budgeting, shopping, cooking

Floating Support is a particular type of housing support that is based on the needs of the person rather than where they live. It is only offered for a limited time period and is intended to help people to deal with problems that might result in the loss of their home. Floating support is only available in certain situations such as:

- homelessness
- need for advice to manage debt
- young people leaving care
- series of complex needs anti social behaviour

3.12 Care Support

Care support offered by Fold Housing Association includes:

- personal care plans
- medication
- assistance with meals
- personal hygiene
- personal development
- dressing
- travel

Comment [n1]: Some of these need to be explained in plain English

The care offered in these schemes is usually low level and the schemes are not registered under the RQIA. Schemes are partially funded by the Healthcare Trusts

Fold Housing Association also provides a number of daycentres. The services offered in them include: daily activities, personal care, provision of meals, collection from and return to home, multidisciplinary care in accordance with agreed care plans.

3.13 Residential / Nursing Care

Residential and Nursing Care offers similar types of care to those listed above but it usually more intensive. The schemes are registered with RQIA and subject to RQIA inspection. The schemes are funded through Healthcare Trusts and referrals are usually made by social services.

4. CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RESEARCH

Sources of information

4.1 The following were used in considering available data relevant to the impact of the Care and Support policies:

- a) Pre-consultation research commissioned by NIFHA and undertaken by IMS Consultants during March 2008
- b) Internal events to assess the impact of Care & Support policies held during November 2007
- c) The Association's internal management information on the profile of tenants and service users
- d) 2001 Northern Ireland Census Data
- e) Office for National Statistics
- f) Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency data
- g) NICORE reports – statistics of all lettings made by the Association
- h) Housing Waiting list data
- i) Annual Regulatory Returns
- j) Data from NIFHA's Annual Benchmarking exercise
- k) Qualitative Feedback from Care and Support staff
- l) Fold Housing Association's Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- m) Fold Housing Association's Service Review Surveys
- n) Supporting People Scheme reviews
- o) RQIA Inspection reports
- p) Complaints and compliments relating to Care and Support
- q) Equality Commission Codes of Practice
- r) Equality in Northern Ireland: the rhetoric and the reality (Sept 2006) - CAJ

The key issues highlighted by analysis of the above data sources are presented in the following sections.

IMS Pre-consultation Survey

- 4.2 A Report from IMS Consultants, prepared for NIFHA's EQIA Co-ordination Group (ECG), providing consultation feedback on the impact of Care and Support and Human Resource policies dated April 2008 highlighted various issues that may affect the groups within the Section 75 categories. The issues raised in relation to the respective S75 groups are detailed below.

Internal Data collection events

- 4.3 Housing associations held two meetings during November 2007 where a range of staff undertook an assessment of the impact of both the Care and Support and the Human Resources – Recruitment and Selection policies.

The Feedback collected at those events has also been taken into account and when considering the impact of these policies.

The table shown overleaf summarises the outcomes of the work detailed at 4.2 and 4.3.

Key issues highlighted for each of the nine Section 75 categories

S75 Category	Source of data	Issues highlighted
Age	IMS pre-consultation survey	Lack of care at home (generally) Mobility and access Living in run-down accommodation due to financial pressures Need to work with housing associations that cater for elderly Chinese community Consultees cited access to services (in general) as a issue affecting young
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	Sheltered accommodation is only available to people above a certain age Foyer accommodation is only available to those aged 16 -25 Housing associations are not allowed to provide care or support services to those under 16
Dependents	IMS pre-consultation survey	Consultees cited no issues that affected people with dependents however the difficulty of getting a new home suitable for a divorced person with children was mentioned in relation to marital status
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	Identified potential for adverse impact if carers could not be accommodated due to the limitations of the building or the tenancy
Disability	IMS pre-consultation survey	Mobility and access Whether personal care is available Whether policies accommodate mental health issues
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	Some care services will cause adverse impact because that is the aim of the service – for example meeting a particular health need such as helping those with mental health difficulties
Gender	IMS pre-consultation survey	Consultees suggested there is a need to keep separate policies for men and women Homophobic attacks on homes
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	Some service users may have issues about personal care due to the fact that most staff in care situations tend to be female

S75 Category	Source of data	Issues highlighted
Marital status	IMS pre-consultation survey	Availability of housing and support for single people The difficulty of getting a new home suitable for a divorced person with children
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	There is potential for adverse impact for a married couple who want to share a room in a care home as most facilities are not set up to meet this need
Political opinion	IMS pre-consultation survey	Consultees cited no issues
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	No issues were identified
Racial Group	IMS pre-consultation survey	Lack of awareness of what sort of care and support is available to those who have been victims of racism or hate crimes Language barriers in terms of understanding how to access information and also in relation to the quality of information available Specific consideration should be given to ethnic groups with other problems Migrant workers should have access to training and employment support (N.B. this appeared to be a general comment) Majority of information provided is not available in Chinese
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	Staff recognised there could be access issues but felt these had been addressed in the Year 1 EQIA on this topic The level of English required for the post could have adverse impact for some people Staff identified potential for adverse impact for migrant workers Staff also recognised that problems may arise as a result of service users not wanting staff from a different background

S75 Category	Source of data	Issues highlighted
Religious belief	IMS pre-consultation survey	Consultees cited no issues in this area
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	<p>Association staff felt there was potential for adverse impact in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dietary requirements • Prayer rooms • Managing death • Gender issues • Storage of food <p>The relevance of these points would depend on the type of scheme and the religion of the individual</p> <p>Transporting service users to religious venues may cause difficulty for care staff whose beliefs differ from that of the client</p>
Sexual orientation	IMS pre-consultation survey	<p>Lack of housing / care support for younger people who have been put out of their home because of their sexual orientation</p> <p>Higher consideration needs to be given to those who are the victims of hate crimes or homophobic attacks on their home</p> <p>Older people used to a society that is not accepting of same sex relationships may feel they have to hide their true identity if they have to move to a residential home</p>
	Housing association meetings in Nov 2007	No issues were identified

Profile of Service Users

- 4.4 The Association currently has 4475 units of accommodation, which includes: Housing for the general population; General Needs Housing, Sheltered Housing, For older people; Residential Care (Housing with Care), for older people, people with learning disabilities, people with dementia; frail older people; Housing for Travellers, other types of accommodation, Day Care provision,
- 4.5 The principal sources of equality information about tenants are tenant surveys and NICORE lettings statistics.
- 4.6 The Association does not provide a secure tenancy to anyone under the age of 16 years due to the restrictions of the statutory Housing Selection Scheme.
- 4.7 The Association's supported housing tenant base in relation to other Section 75 Categories are as follows:

Insert relevant details for each

- Age
 - 18-24 20%
 - 25-44 33%
 - 45-59 12%
 - 60+ 35%
- Dependents 05%
- Disability 29%
- Gender 64% Female 36% Male
- Martial Status
 - 10% Married
 - 1.9% Divorced
 - 70% Single
- Racial Group N/A
- Religious Belief
 - 55% Protestant
 - 43% Catholic
 - 02% Other

4.8 At present, Fold does not collect data on political opinion or sexual orientation.

4.9 Statistics from the 2006 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey in relation to the S75 categories are shown at Appendix A.

4.10 A research report by Youthnet argues that analysis of the Census 2001 indicates that between 2 and 10% of the population may be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

4.11 Research from the Belfast Islamic Centre in 2007 estimates circa 6,000 residents who are Muslim as opposed to 1,943 cited in the 2001 census.

Complaints

4.12 As stated at 3.3 the overall handling of complaints was dealt with in a previous EQIA. However, during the last year the Association has received no complaints about its Care and Support service that would indicate adverse impact arising from these policies.

User Satisfaction Surveys

4.13 The Association's User Satisfaction Surveys invite tenants to state if they are satisfied with the Association's standard of service.

Inspection/ Satisfaction Reports

4.14 RQIA inspects Fold's registered care homes on a regular basis and have accepted that Fold provides sound management systems with no adverse impact on the clients and residents.

Ombudsman Report

4.15 There have been no complaints raised with/complaints where Fold Housing Association was found to be at fault by the Ombudsman in relation to the Care and Support practices of this association.

5. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 This section outlines our assessment of the impact of the Association's Care and Support policies on the 9 Section 75 groups based on the evidence considered above.

5.2 It has become apparent, following the conduct of this EQIA, that there are very few adverse impacts that are directly related to the Care and Support policies.

5.3 Many of the issues raised during the IMS Pre-consultation survey highlighted concerns around Access & Communications in relation to services rather than specifically to Care and Support. Access & Communications was addressed as part of the associations' Year 1 EQIAs. As a result the majority of the concerns mentioned by respondents were either covered by the Mitigating Measures proposed at that time or have been identified for action as part of that process.

5.4 Other issues reflect general concerns that are outside the scope of this particular EQIA or even the remit of the individual association e.g. lack of healthcare identification of housing/support needs or even training requirements. Where relevant associations will raise these matters with the appropriate authority. In addition, NIFHA and/or association representatives participate in a wide range of inter-agency groups aimed at addressing issues such as community safety, housing of sex offenders or the provision of care and support.

5.5 We also feel it is important to state that the very nature of some care or support services will bring a certain amount of adverse impact as they were set up to address the needs of a particular group. For example sheltered housing is intended to be for older or disabled people therefore it would not be suitable for other groups. Similarly schemes to assist

individuals with learning disabilities would not be appropriate for those who do not have that need.

5.6 Where we indicate that there is no evidence of adverse impact, this does not mean that no action will be taken. The Association is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all and excellence in customer service, and will seek, where possible, to put measures in place to ensure that all sections of society have an equal opportunity to access appropriate redress when problems occur.

5.7 The issues that we have identified as having the potential to cause adverse impact are:

- Age restrictions generally
- The age at which people can access sheltered housing
- Provision of personal care by staff of a different gender to the recipient
- Married couples who wish to share accommodation in a residential or nursing setting
- Balancing our commitment to equality of opportunity for potential employees whose ability to communicate in effectively in English against the needs of service users and legal obligations under Health & Safety
- Managing situations where service users attitudes may cause adverse impact for staff providing care
- Accommodating the religious needs of an increasingly diverse community

6. CONSIDERATION OF MEASURES TO MITIGATE AGAINST ADVERSE IMPACT

The following are options that could potentially mitigate adverse impact arising from the Care and Support policies:

- Provision of information in alternative formats where appropriate (usually care and support plans will have identified what is required by the individual user).
- Offer flexibility in the level of support provided i.e. dependent on the needs of the user(s). Where possible, and whilst operating within available resources, adapt the service to suit the specific needs of the user.
- Conduct ongoing training programmes to ensure awareness of diversity and cultural issues – these should to include services users as well as staff.

-
- Work in partnership with other Housing Associations to arrange cultural awareness days/activities; invite representatives from groups to attend meeting in a joint approach to raise the profile of Housing Associations and to increase awareness of different groups and the range of their needs.
 - Promote the work of Fold Housing Association within the local communities to ensure that potential service users from all S75 categories are aware of the care and support that is available.
 - Work with the local community to promote social inclusion and good relations.
 - Promote and support activities that encourage greater understanding, tolerance and respect for Section 75 groups

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Fold has given careful consideration to the measures that might be taken to make the Care and Support policies most efficient, effective and equitable.
- 7.2 Fold has ensured as far as possible that it has consulted with those groups directly affected by its Care and Support policies, and their representatives.
- 7.3 Staff were given an opportunity to discuss the proposals during the consultation exercise.
- 7.4 The period of consultation ended on 29 August 2008
- 7.5 Comments in relation to this report were to be submitted in writing to:

Marie Pickles
FOLD Housing Association
FOLD House
Redburn Square
Holywood
Co Down
BT18 9HZ

Tel: } 028 90 397250
Fax: } 028 90 397184
Email: } marie.pickles@foldgroup.co.uk
Website: } www.foldgroup.co.uk

8. OUTCOME

FOLD received one comment in relation to this EQIA. This has been considered and where applicable taken forward in our action plan.

ACTION PLAN

	Action	Who	Timescale
1	Review access criterion to sheltered housing	Director of Housing	December 2009
2	To consider the provision of personal care by staff of a different gender to the recipient (where practical)	Director of Care Services	June 2009
3	Balancing our commitment to equality of opportunity for potential employees whose ability to communicate effectively in English against the needs of service users and legal obligations under Health & Safety	Chief Executive	September 2009
4	Managing situations where service users attitudes may cause adverse impact for staff providing care	Director of Care Services/ Director of Housing	September 2009
5	Accommodating the religious needs of an increasingly diverse community	Director of Care Services/Director of Housing	September 2009

Appendix A

The following tables have been taken from the 2006 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey. This survey has been used only to give indicative information in relation to the 9 Section 75 categories. Fieldwork for the 2006 survey was carried out between October 2006 and mid March 2007. 1230 adults were interviewed. The modules included were:

- Informal carers
- Community relations
- Healthcare
- Attitudes to Minority Ethnic People
- Political attitudes
- Background information on the respondents

AGE

Age of respondent (in age categories)

	%
18-24	14
25-34	14
35-44	19
45-54	20
55-64	15
65+	19

DEPENDENTS

Some people have extra family responsibilities because they look after someone who's sick, handicapped or elderly. May I check, is there anyone living with you who is sick, handicapped or elderly whom you look after or give special help to (for example, a sick, disabled or elderly relative, wife, husband, child, friend)?

	%
Yes	11
No	89

What about people not living with you, do you provide some regular service or help for any sick, disabled or elderly relative, friend or neighbour not living with you?

	%
Yes	14

No	86
----	----

DISABILITY

Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long-standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time?

	%
Yes	32
No	68

GENDER

Sex of respondent

	%
Male	43
Female	57

MARITAL STATUS

Marital status of respondent

	%
Single (never married)	28
Married	53
Living as married	4
Separated	4
Divorced	4
Widowed	7

POLITICAL OPINION

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a unionist, a nationalist or neither?

	%
Unionist	36
Nationalist	23
Neither	40
Don't know	1

RACIAL GROUP

To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

	Number of respondents*
White	1206
Black	2
Asian	5
Chinese	2
Irish Traveller	2
Other (please specify)	8
None of these	4
Don't know	1

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion? If yes, which?

	%
No religion	13
Catholic	40
Church of Ireland or Anglican or Episcopal	15
Baptist	1
Methodist	3
Presbyterian	22
Free Presbyterian	2
Brethren	0
United Reform Church (URC) or Congregational	1
Pentecostal	1
Church of Scotland	0
Elim Pentecostal	0
Reformed Presbyterian	0
Non-subscribing Presbyterian	0
Church of Nazarene	0
Jehovah s Witness	0
Protestant - no-denomination	0
Christian - no denomination	1

Hindu	0
Other, please specify	0
Don't know	0
Refused	0

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Can you tell me which of these best describes you?

	%
I am 'gay' or 'lesbian' (homosexual)	0
I am heterosexual or 'straight'	98
I am bi-sexual	0
I do not wish to answer this question	2