

Equality and Diversity Case Studies
Directorate: Culture and Regeneration
Service: Housing Services

Title: Use of large print documents

Introduction:

For many years the service had provided large print copies of documents such as residents' newsletters. There was a list of people who had requested large print but the list was not systematically updated and over time the list declined to the point where only six residents were receiving large print documents. This meant that the cost of providing these was very high and yet was not meeting the needs of our residents.

In 2009 we began the process of profiling our customers and by September 2010 we had profiled approximately 60% of residents. This revealed that there were approximately 250 customers with some form of visual impairment who would benefit from the service.

Over the same period we increased the number of publications for residents in order to keep them informed of changes and improvements to the service. This meant that the cost of large print documents would rise considerably if we were to meet the identified needs of the community.

We identified an alternative solution which was to provide residents with A4 magnifier sheets. These had the potential to provide a far better service at reduced cost.

Challenges:

We were concerned that residents who already received large print documents would not like the A4 magnifiers. We were also concerned that in building up residents expectations we might not be able to deliver an improved service.

How the challenges were overcome:

An initial train of the magnifiers was carried out with the six residents receiving large print documents. This was successful with all of the residents stating that they would recommend it to their friends.

The Supported Housing Service Improvement Panel was consulted and they approved a wider consultation as they were not convinced that they would be suitable for all residents.

A second pilot was held where 250 magnifiers were sent with copies of the latest resident newsletter to residents with visual impairments. A questionnaire was included asking them for feedback on the magnifiers and whether they thought that this was a suitable replacement for large print.

Outcomes:

The magnifiers have proved to be very popular with residents as they can be used with any document rather than just council publications. Approximately 90 responses to the survey were received with only 7 respondents stating that they did not want to use the magnifiers. Of the 7 negative responses:

- 1 stated that they did not need either large print or a magnifier
- 1 complained that it was too large to be used away from the home
- 2 stated that their eyesight was too poor for either large print or magnifiers
- 3 found it difficult to use

What we could have done better:

We are continuing to investigate alternative solutions for the three residents who found the magnifier difficult to use.