

East North East Homes Leeds



# SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE STRATEGY



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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Objectives and Aims of this strategy.

The key objective of the strategy is to provide effective support to vulnerable people to enable them to live independently within the community. East North East Homes Leeds (ENEHL) believes that by assessing needs and risks to vulnerable people at the earliest opportunity it will allow us to put interventions in place to assist safe and independent living.

This supports the wider aim of East North East Homes Leeds to provide community cohesion by facilitating settled and sustainable communities.

The aim of this strategy is to:

- Provide a strategic approach to the housing, management and support of vulnerable people.
- Ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to support tenants and residents who are vulnerable in order to promote independent living.
- Identify potential service developments which could improve the provision of support to vulnerable people in the medium to long term.
- Establish our own policy framework and ensure it supports this strategy.
- Have ongoing training and support for staff in place to meet changing needs.

Over recent years it has been recognised that there has been an increase in the number of tenants housed in East North East Homes Leeds who are vulnerable and who require some form of support to enable them to maintain their tenancies and at the same time minimise any negative impact upon other residents in the area.

For the purpose of this strategy we have identified a range of client groups who could be described as vulnerable who may require support from a range of agencies, to varying degrees, including East North East Homes Leeds, namely:

- Older people
- People with drugs / alcohol problems
- Hostel residents including rehabilitation
- People with hearing difficulties
- People with physical / sensory disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- Ex-offenders
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Victims of domestic violence
- Young people leaving care
- Witness protection
- Homeless people
- Pregnant teenagers and young parents
- Hospital leavers
- HIV / AIDS sufferers

- People with challenging behaviour
- People with multiple debts
- Carers
- Protection of Vulnerable Children and Adults.

There is a general recognition that more vulnerable people with support needs are being re-housed in general needs housing as a result of increasing demand, lack of availability of affordable housing, changes to homelessness legislation and limited supported accommodation provision.

A failure to communicate or recognise the 'triggers' that would alert officers to potential vulnerability may contribute to tenancy breakdown or early failure. This affects:

- Rates of evictions – for both ASB and rent arrears
- Tenancy abandonment
- Introductory Tenancies terminated in the first 12 months.
- Tenancy Sustainment.
- Enhancing peoples lifestyles through choice, control and the chance to live independently and safely.

Typical problems that, when combined, can overwhelm new tenants at early stages, especially for first time tenants, include:

- The connection of gas, electricity and water
- Paying for and organising removals
- Costs of setting up home, redecorating and furnishing the property
- Under estimating the costs of running a home
- Maintaining gardens
- Arranging repairs
- Changing doctors and schools
- Isolation and establishing new networks of support
- Accessing welfare benefits

This is exacerbated by the speed in which we expect a prospective tenant to sign up and move into their new tenancy because of associated voids performance targets.

Despite our use of checklists to ensure important information is identified, prospective tenants are reluctant to discuss such issues and sometimes there is a lack of contact and handover when vulnerable people and families are re-housed from homeless situations or previously supported situations. In addition we need to ensure this information is recorded and used to tailor future services. Also we need to ensure that more support in the early stages of a tenancy may be needed than we currently offer.

In addition vulnerability is not necessarily a permanent state and personal circumstances may change at any time, such as after a bereavement, which can create a 'vulnerable' customer at any time during the duration of their tenancy.

There continues to be emphasis on improved performance in key areas such as income collection, tenancy and estate management , supported housing and independent living but it is important to remember that first and foremost East North East Homes Leeds ( ENEHL ) is a significant provider of social housing in the City and therefore needs to provide for the needs of vulnerable people. It is essential that ENEHL is able to demonstrate that service provision is tailored to meet the needs of our most vulnerable customers.

In reality we will provide a flexible approach to supporting individuals living within ENEHL properties with a service that is tailored to people's choice and needs. Our staff have been trained in various areas such as needs and risk assessing, support planning, customer care and safeguarding.

East North East Homes is customer focused and we will endeavour to improve our services in line with our customers' needs aspirations and choices, this is approached through various mechanisms such as tenants meetings, tenants' focus groups and customer questionnaires. We have amended and improved several policies and processes over the last 12 months with customer involvement and empowerment.

Every tenant has a tenancy agreement which places upon them a number of responsibilities including the payment of rent, keeping their property in a good condition, having respect for neighbours and maintaining any garden regardless of their circumstances. The vulnerable or potentially vulnerable are not exempt from these or any other tenant responsibility. However, the Company recognises that some will need support to enable them to meet their obligations in light of the individual needs and difficulties often faced by vulnerable people.

This strategy outlines an approach which recognises all of the above factors and is designed to ensure a service that meets the needs and expectations of vulnerable people and their supporting agencies and promotes tenancy sustainability without detrimental impact on other residents or compromising the key business objectives of being an excellent landlord.

**East North East Homes Leeds is committed to protecting and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from abuse. We have both a legal and moral obligation to ensure that we implement procedures which protect our vulnerable children and adults from abuse.**

We are committed to working in partnership with Leeds adult and Childrens safeguarding authorities and strive to ensure are staff are trained and are aware of how to report cases of abuse.

## 1.2 Identifying vulnerable people and general principles we need to be aware of.

We believe that it is vital that staff identify potentially vulnerable residents at the earliest opportunity, both in general needs housing and particularly in our own supported housing schemes. It is also important to recognise that different approaches, guidance and policies are appropriate because of the wide variation of people that ENEHL deals with, whether in independent or supported housing.

Vulnerability issues amongst residents can be identified by staff in a number of ways:

- Housing application and medical forms
- By using the vulnerability checklist as part of the tenancy sign-up process
- During home visits to applicants
- Notification from existing residents whose circumstances might have changed
- Notification from relatives of existing residents of any changes in their circumstances that may have increased their vulnerability
- Periodic support plan reviews for supported housing residents living in sheltered accommodation.
- Through Occupational Therapists, Care Managers or GPs referrals to Community Housing Officers or Scheme Managers regarding increased vulnerability issues.
- Customer information forms.

Other evidence could come from:

- Social workers, probation officers, support workers
- GP/Hospital
- Support or advisory services like the Citizens Advice Bureau and Shelter
- A resident's family or friends
- Letter from a bank confirming that you are unable to open a bank account
- Copy of a Court Order or County Court Judgement
- Rent records and letters proving attempts to collect monies or evidence from a previous landlord.

It is therefore important that all staff are aware of the individual's needs, vulnerability or disabilities and ensure that:

- as much information as possible is available from the application form and customer information forms, and also family, care workers, referring agency LA, probation/ prison service, Social Services etc.
- staff liaise with any statutory or voluntary agencies on a regular basis and record details appropriately in the tenancy records.

Service standards should be set and reviewed to ensure that vulnerable tenants are aware of the support that they can receive and who to contact.

All new staff whose main role is working and providing services directly to vulnerable people e.g. Floating Support Workers, Supported Housing staff, etc, are required to provide a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Enhanced Disclosure.

This process will also be rolled out across existing housing and other teams within the organisation who have regular face to face contact and support vulnerable tenants by 2012. There will also be a legal requirement that staff who hold CRB checks are ISA registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority who update and regulate all CRB checks to keep them up to date.

All newly appointed and existing staff will be briefed on this strategy and will receive training in understanding and responding to vulnerability as part of their induction training. Refresher training should be made available on a bi-annual basis and at any point of change of the terms of the policy.

Active promotion of the types of intervention available for use to help sustain tenancies is important in raising awareness. Awareness also needs to be raised amongst potential service users and relevant professionals (e.g. social workers) who might refer such people. Such information needs to make it clear how potential clients can access support if they need to.

ENEHL will work in partnership with corporate and external partners to develop a co-ordinated approach to developing safeguarding measures across the City aimed at protecting those who are most vulnerable in the community.

# 2.0 About East North Homes

## 2.1 The Company.

East North East Homes Leeds (ENEHL) is a private company limited by guarantee and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Leeds City Council, which is the only shareholder. The company provides housing management services to the City Council's tenants

The corporate vision of East North East Homes (ENEHL) is:

**“A company with a passion for communities”.**

This vision is conveyed in our business mission:

**“to enrich lives, homes and communities”**

ENEHL is committed to ensuring the provision of decent homes to council tenants in East and North East Leeds and sees this as a key starting point of the “Vision for Leeds 2004 – 2020's” aim of creating better neighbourhoods and confident communities.

ENEHL Core values are:

- Decent Homes
- Decent Places
- Fair Access to Services
- Valuing Resources

**East North East Homes aims to achieve quality homes for “ LIFE “ Living Independently in a Friendly Environment:**

**The East North East Homes business plan states that:**

- “East North East Homes Leeds will seek to provide opportunities which allow residents a range of flexible ways in which they can get involved to ensure that our services reflect their needs.”
- “East North East Homes Leeds will treat residents as equal partners and ensure that they feel that they have a real ability to influence the decisions which affect their estate.”
- “East North East Homes Leeds will seek to provide an equality of opportunity for residents to get involved but will also seek to actively promote the involvement of young people, older people and individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds”

The resident involvement key line of enquiry (KLOE) published by the Audit Commission in July 2004 - establishes clear statements of performance in the following areas:

- Access, customer care & user focus – effective communication and consultation with clear service standards and user satisfaction.
- Diversity – responding to the diverse community ensuring fair access for all.
- Resources for resident involvement that are committed to ensuring that service users access training.
- Impact of resident involvement – service user involvement leads to improved services and outcomes.
- Value for money – working in partnership with other providers and maximising the impact of resident involvement

The East North East Homes Leeds Community Involvement Strategy seeks to reflect the KLOE by providing equality of opportunity for all customers to participate in shaping service delivery and by emphasising the involvement of under represented groups.

We offer over 17 different ways in which residents can get involved with the organisation. From setting up residents groups in sheltered schemes to focus groups on a range of topics. The annual service improvement plan also demonstrates our commitment to service user involvement, from gardening clubs and training to intergenerational projects.

In achieving this level of service user involvement East North East Homes will demonstrate that we are committed to placing our residents at the centre of shaping our service they receive and that we are recognised as an “Excellent organisation”.

## **2.2 Historical Context.**

ENEHL was created by the merger of all or part of 3 former ALMOs which were originally established in Leeds in 2003. Leeds East Homes, Leeds North East Homes and part of Leeds South East Homes were merged to create East North East Homes Leeds (ENEHL) as a result of a review of the existing arms length housing management within Leeds by the City Council. Following a variation to the Section 27 approval by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), responsibility for service provision together with staff, premises and other assets transferred to ENEHL from the former ALMO in April 2007.

ENEHL now has responsibility for delivering services to just under 20,000 council properties in the east and north east of Leeds. The Company is managed by a Board of twelve Directors and employs just around 500 staff located in offices within the area. We manage revenue and capital budgets in excess of £75 million (in 2007/2008) and deliver services both directly and through Service Level Agreements, contracts and partnership agreements

The climate in which ALMOs work is changing. There is now an expectation that ALMOs will undertake a broader role within the housing and wider public services sector than just improving and managing properties.

Demographic and social change and the impact of poverty and wealth are also reshaping the products and services ALMOs offer. New financial and regulatory pressures, new demands for efficiency and innovation and new terms of engagement with customers, both individually and collectively are emerging and are setting out challenges and opportunities for the future.

It is within this dynamic context that this strategy has been developed and will need to be constantly reviewed to keep pace with the changing scene which is evolving both locally and nationally.

### **2.3 East North East Leeds Area Profile 2006.**

East North East Homes Leeds has approximately 200,000 people (40,000 of which are from BME communities) living in approximately 90,000 households. The area is very diverse, comprising inner-city areas, suburban areas, dormitory or commuter villages and a rural fringe. Being such a diverse area, the nature of the stock varies from large high value properties in the north (the 'Golden Triangle') to smaller street-line Victorian back-to-back homes near the city centre. Council owned stock follows the phases of government sponsored development but with disproportionate numbers of later years system built stock including almost half of the City's stock of multi-storey flats.

The area is also home to a sizeable black and minority ethnic population in the Chapeltown and Harehills districts, and a significant Jewish population in Moortown, Alwoodley and Shadwell. Every kind of housing tenure is represented with a larger rented sector within the area than in any other parts of Leeds.

Demand for Council owned East North East Homes Leeds property is very strong across the area and has been increasing over the last five years. There is strong demand for all types and sizes of housing. There is a particularly strong demand from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, twice the city average.

There is now only one locality within the ENEHL area that is classified by the 2006 NOMAD model as being 'in significant decline' and there are thirteen localities that are classified by NOMAD as being 'on the edge' of decline. This compares with seven 'in significant decline' and fourteen 'on the edge of decline' in the 2001 NOMAD model.

The 2006 NOMAD model classifies thirty localities as being 'popular with problems' compared to twenty one in the 2001 NOMAD model.

The 2006 NOMAD model classifies sixteen localities as being 'popular' compared to eighteen in NOMAD 2001.

Whilst the changes from 2001 to 2006 demonstrate the continuing strengthening of the housing market both in Leeds and in the east and north east areas with the reduction in localities 'in serious decline', the model does now indicate that some

localities which were once popular now experience problems in some of the factors that are considered.

Demand is projected to remain relatively static over the next few years with the number of new Housing Register applications having decreased since 2004. However the number of applicants on the Register has remained static, indicating that fewer people are being rehoused.

## 3.0 Strategic Context

### 3.1 Nationally.

Nationally, there are numerous strategies which influence the type and level of services which we need to provide and develop for the range of vulnerable people we interact with. The main ones are:

Supporting People: Focus on need, choice of services for service users, flexibility, funding and quality framework for services provided. [www.spkweb.org.uk](http://www.spkweb.org.uk)

Sustainable Communities: Develop and improve homes suitable to the needs of occupants, sustain home ownership and develop a pride in the area where people live.  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Quality and Choice for Older People: Support older people to make more informed choices in their homes, services, lives and future.  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Our Health, Our Care: Focuses on the development of preventative services for vulnerable groups, early intervention and choice, advances in technology and a move towards community based care.  
[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

Homelessness: The government has changed the emphasis from providing temporary accommodation to the improvement in preventative services available to people who might otherwise be faced with being homeless.  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Independent Living Strategy: In 2006 an independent Living Review was established to make progress on ensuring disabled people have the same choices, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people. Consequently, a consultation paper setting out the government's policy commitment has been published in 2008. It is designed to promote independent living, improve housing choice and opportunities for disabled people, improve health and economic well being and increase support, information and advocacy services.  
[www.dwp.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Respect Action Plan – Home Office 2006: This set out the Government’s plans on its approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour. It focuses on both enforcement and preventative measures. Ensuring that the environment in which people live is kept up to reasonable standards is seen as a key tool in reducing anti-social behaviour and increasing the sustainability of neighbourhoods.

[www.respect.gov.uk](http://www.respect.gov.uk)

### 3.2 Locally.

The Leeds Initiative, the City’s strategic partnership group, developed the Community Strategy for Leeds “Vision for Leeds 2004 – 2020” which forms the overarching base for developing plans and strategies across the City. One of its main aims is to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged people and communities and the rest of the City. It is based on the principles of sustainable development, making sure that everyone has a better life now and in future generations. The Strategy recognises that the increased prosperity which has been enjoyed in the City over recent years has not reached all parts of the community and the strategy outlines a variety of themes by which these gaps can be reduced.

This strategy links to a number of other city-wide housing and related strategies. It links to:

- the Leeds Housing Strategy for Older People which seeks to provide a range of housing and support to older people from low level visiting support to full residential or nursing care, but with a clear presumption towards encouraging independent living wherever possible and appropriate.
- the Supporting People Strategy for Leeds is seeking ‘to improve the independence, choice and quality of life of vulnerable people, through the co-ordinated planning and delivery of housing related support service’ by focusing on the prevention of homelessness and by bringing about a shift from buildings based to floating support services and to significantly increase support for older people.
- The Homelessness Strategy seeks to focus on the prevention of homelessness through encouraging the retention of homes, use of mediation and greater use of temporary accommodation on mainstream tenancies rather than expensive hostel provision.
- Every Child Matters is the young people’s strategy which seeks to ensure that statutory agencies focus on the needs of young people in setting policy objectives and are encouraged to work together in addressing the needs of vulnerable young people.
- East North East Homes Leeds are committed to protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse. Every child young person and vulnerable adult has the right **not to be abused**.

As an organisation working with children and vulnerable adults we all have a responsibility for the safety of children young people and vulnerable adults. Our Policy is designed to ensure that we are equipped with the knowledge and information to enable us to follow Leeds adults and children’s

safeguarding unit and boards Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding responsibilities and guidance.

- The Leeds BME Housing Strategy seeks to ensure quality and choice in housing and location are available to the various diverse communities of Leeds. It also aims to identify and cater for any housing and support needs specific to those communities.
- The Valuing People Strategy for Leeds aims to improve the housing and support provided for people with learning disabilities. In particular Valuing People seeks to affect a shift from larger institutional models of provision to small independent or group home settings.
- the Leeds Disabled People's Housing Strategy seeks to deliver choice and control for disabled people in relation to housing accommodation and services. It will promote the concept of independent living if that is the individual's choice and ensure that a range of services are available to those who need them. ENEHL is a partner in the multi-agency Implementation Group whose role will be to drive through the changes required.
- "Home Not Alone" is a strategy to meet the housing and support needs of older people in Leeds. The overall vision is to improve their quality of life through providing a range of housing options, care and support services which will promote independence for older people in Leeds. This will mean supporting people to remain in their home if that is their wish, ensuring affordable and quality housing is available to meet changing needs, developing a range of flexible services for older people, improving partnership working, promoting equality and diversity as a fundamental value when delivering services and contributing to the National Service Framework for Older People.

ENEHL has also signed up to the Government's RESPECT Agenda and has a strong commitment to addressing anti-social behaviour. All too often those more vulnerable sections of the community are targeted by perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and we have reviewed our procedures to ensure that we adopt a firm, consistent approach and support vulnerable residents whenever it is appropriate.

ENEHL is also reviewing the use of our current sheltered housing stock to ensure that we can meet varying needs. There was a significant stock of sheltered housing across Leeds, but over time demand in some areas has diminished and more people are wanting to remain in their home but are still in need of more support to maintain their independence. ENEHL is reviewing the need for floating support for older tenants, the future use of sheltered housing schemes and the use of staffing resources.

# 4.0 ENEHL Services that Support these Strategies

## 4.1 Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Vulnerable adults from abuse:

East North East Homes Leeds are committed to protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse.

Our Independent Living Team will act as advisors within ENEHL and will also be the coordinators for reporting abuse to either Leeds Adults or Leeds Children safeguarding authorities.

Every child young person and vulnerable adult has the right **not to be abused**.

As an organisation working with children and vulnerable adults we all have a responsibility for the safety of children young people and vulnerable adults.

Our Policy is designed to ensure that we are equipped with the knowledge and information to enable us to follow Leeds adults and children's safeguarding unit and boards Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding responsibilities and guidance.

Our role is not to establish whether or not abuse is taking place, but it is our responsibility however to report any concerns we have over the welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults. This duty extends to the identification of abuse, poor practice by internal members/staff of the Council, as well as allegations brought to our attention by a member of the public/community or other agency.

East North East Homes Leeds accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children and vulnerable adults, safeguard their well being and protect them from abuse.

We aim to do this by:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable adults.
- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children and vulnerable adults throughout the Council.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and vulnerable adults to protect them from harm.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, and minimise risk to themselves.
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or vulnerable adults in line with this Policy and Procedures, Local Area Safeguarding Board and 'No Secrets' guidance as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.

- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Council's Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Reviewing and evaluating this Policy and Procedures document on a regular basis.

## **1.2 Principles and Definitions of Vulnerability**

This policy and these procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the primary concern.
- All children and vulnerable adults irrespective of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/ or sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- The term child, or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18yrs.
- The term vulnerable adult can include people with learning disabilities, older people (irrespective of age), people with physical or sensory disabilities, people with mental ill health, people with certain physical illnesses or people with drug or alcohol problems.
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parent, carers and guardians.
- The terms staff, elected members and volunteers is used to refer to employees, district councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for, or representing the Council.

## 4.2 Tenancy Services

### Mediation Services

#### Support Through Tenancy Management

Anti social behaviour can be very disruptive on communities and in many cases people feel unable to deal with disputes alone. Though they might initially start as a low level dispute they can escalate to a point where the fabric of the community is threatened and those most vulnerable can feel powerless to deal with such situations.

We have robust procedures in place to ensure the support of both victims and perpetrators of anti social behaviour. The support works along side enforcement to try empower people to change behaviour with using a range of non legal enforcement remedies. We work with a range of partner agencies to ensure support and help is provided to victims of anti social behaviour including:

West Yorkshire Police  
Social Services  
Anti social behaviour unit  
West Yorkshire fire services  
Signpost Family intervention project  
Education Leeds  
Range of specialist support agencies.

ENEHL has developed a service level agreement with Mediation Leeds to provide an independent alternative to dealing with neighbour disputes. The service is only provided where tenants agree to receive it and it helps people to communicate with others where normally it might be difficult.

All mediators are appropriately trained to deal with a wide range of disputes from anti-social behaviour to harassment and all personal information is treated with impartially and in confidence. Tenants can agree to mediation Leeds sharing information with us if they feel it is in their best interests to do so.

We do, however, receive a quarterly performance report from Mediation Leeds on the outcomes of referrals in order that we can measure how effective the service is.

#### Tasking.

Every 6 weeks ENEHL housing management staff meet a range of other partners including West Yorkshire Police, ASB Unit, Neighbourhood Patrollers, Streetscene and Area Management Teams to discuss and agree actions relating to a wide range of issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour and other enforcement measures. Intelligence is shared between partners to identify problems which could affect the long term sustainability of areas and estates if left alone. Funding streams are available through Tasking subject to the partners agreeing priorities.

The sharing of information leads to the identification of “hot spots” many of which require a coordinated approach from some or all of the partners concerned. It ensures that resources are targeted more effectively and that outcomes have the maximum impact upon the communities most affected.

Every month regular review meetings also take place between ENEHL, West Yorkshire Police, Neighbourhood Patrollers and ASB unit to address serious anti-social behaviour cases. Again information is shared between partners to ensure that the most effective approach is adopted.

## **Domestic Violence.**

ENEHL has a Domestic Violence Policy which supports Leeds City Council's Domestic Violence policy. It gives guidance to all staff to ensure that they respond appropriately to the needs of women and men experiencing violence from someone else.

When dealing with issues of this nature we need to be sensitive to the needs of the victim and ensure that their safety is secured. We also work with a range of partners such as the Homeless Outreach Service, Leeds Victim Support Service and a range of support and counselling agencies to ensure that we can meet the requirements which each individual case warrants.

As a member of the Leeds Community Safety Partnership we also take part in MARAC, the Leeds Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference which is a forum for sharing information, assessing risk, safety and action planning and improving agency accountability. MARAC is a monthly Police led, multi-agency forum which covers all the Leeds Police divisions and has been established to address high risk cases of domestic violence. In Leeds in 2005/2006, 466 out of a total of 697 homeless acceptances were due to fleeing domestic violence which highlights how serious the problem is in Leeds.

Cases are discussed by the multi-agency group, risk assessments carried out, actions to support the victim agreed, decisions recorded and the case is then referred to an appropriate agency, which can include housing requirements. All cases are then reviewed at each monthly MARAC to assess the effectiveness of each plan and agency concerned.

Only accurate information which is directly relevant to the safety of the victims is shared between the partner agencies.

A Domestic Violence Group has also been established to raise the awareness and reduce the level and impact of domestic violence in East North East Leeds. Members include ENEHL, West Yorkshire Police, Health, Social Services, local voluntary groups and Leeds Community Safety. The group is particularly keen to work with children and young people as they are often the hidden victims in domestic violence cases. Working in partnership with Theatre in Education, the Domestic Violence Group has secured funding to roll out a series of theatre workshops in local

schools. After the play has finished the children are encouraged to discuss their thoughts and feelings on what they have witnessed. For some it will help them cope with issues which might affect them at some time in their lives and it gives them a greater understanding of the impact of domestic violence in a non-threatening environment.

Some victims of domestic violence who are threatened with homelessness have a desire to live at home and can be referred to the Sanctuary Scheme. Victims of anti-social behaviour, multiple burglaries and hate crime can also be referred in this way. Where a victim wishes to take this option their individual requirements are assessed and a programme of work is agreed with them.

Many victims find this a more appropriate alternative to having to live in temporary hostel accommodation, but in all cases where this is considered the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator will carry out a full assessment of the suitability of this approach.

### **Multi Agency Public Protection Panel Agreement (MAPPPA)**

MAPPPA is a multi-agency panel of professionals who meet each month to formulate risk strategies to manage cases where individuals pose a potential risk to the public.

Housing authorities have a duty to co-operate with MAPPPA under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 by:

- Advising MAPPPA on offenders' previous housing and other behaviour
- Providing specialist knowledge of local areas and risks posed by specific neighbourhoods
- Providing suitable housing
- Engaging in the day-to-day management and information sharing of high risk offenders
- Providing advice and assistance to help access affordable housing or private sector

Each ALMO has now nominated a MAPPPA representative to assist in carrying out the above duties. The ENEHL representatives will become involved in individual cases primarily where the mapped individual needs to be re-housed within the ENEHL area. ENEHL work closely in the MAPPPA process to improve the efficiency with which appropriate properties can be identified, where the MAPPPA asks us to assist in rehousing someone. This will help to ensure we carry out the risk strategy implemented by MAPPPA, which aims to minimise the risk the individual may pose to the public.

## Hate Crime.

Hate Crime is a serious criminal offence committed against a person or property due to the hatred of that person's gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

Hate Crime does not only harm the victim or damage their property, it can affect the whole family, friends and the wider community. It can do serious harm as many victims don't report incidents but endure harassment for, in some cases, many years.

ENEHL is committed to dealing with sort of crime together with its partners and will deal strongly with anyone who is found to be involved in Hate Crime in whatever form. These can include:

- Offensive letters
- Abusive language
- Graffiti
- Physical violence or threats
- Groups intimidating people

All ENEHL customer outlets are reporting centres for Hate Crime incidents and we work very closely with Stop Hate UK to monitor and manage the effects of such crimes, support those affected by these crimes and provide training to all staff who may have to deal with people who suffer from these verbal, written or physical attacks and threats.

We also work together with partners to install covert surveillance, where victims feel threatened by any further attacks, to obtain evidence that could lead to action being taken against perpetrators.

## 4.2 Allocations / Customer Services

### Lettings Policy.

ENEHL administers the allocation of all Council tenancies on behalf of Leeds City Council. The Lettings Policy takes account of the needs of a wide range of vulnerable groups and priority for rehousing is awarded for these reasons:

- Homelessness
- Medical needs
- Housing conditions
- Additional needs for both children and general cases

The last priority is awarded to any applicant who is in need of care and support, is suffering from harassment or hate crimes, requires witness protection or is in need of permanent accommodation as a result of a Supporting People referral from relevant support agencies. These referrals will include care leavers, people who have suffered from drug and alcohol abuse and ex-offenders. Referrals are made direct to Area Managers who undertake a desk top review of the case and can award the relevant priority.

Demand in most areas of Leeds for accommodation remains high and in some high demand areas such as Moortown and Wetherby, obtaining even the highest priority can still mean that an applicant has many months to wait for accommodation. There are, however, times when alternative accommodation is required urgently. Within the policy there is scope to deal with pressing needs such as:

- Hospital discharges
- Discharging homeless duty
- Emergency rehousing due to fires or floods etc
- Corporate parenting and child protection issues
- Witness protection
- Provision of move on accommodation for Supporting People contracts

Where this is appropriate a Direct Let can be agreed under extreme circumstances to accommodate the need to act quickly and in this event suitable properties are made available without the need to advertise them.

Where medical needs are identified referrals are made to the Medical Assessment Team who will visit the applicant, take into account any medical information that has been provided and assess any mobility problems that the family might be having in and around the property. Subject to their findings, they will then award the relevant priority. If an applicant has any communication problems due to disability they can be represented by an advocate of their choice any many are represented by support agencies.

ENEHL also has a number of tenancies which are allocated directly to support agencies who support a wide range of vulnerable people for anything up to 2 years. The support agencies have until now managed and allocated these properties to individual licencees but because of the strategic direction of Supporting People away from accommodation based support, we are moving away from this sort of provision and in the next 18 months the support agencies in Leeds will incrementally move their operations towards more floating support. Where licencees are in occupation of these properties the sitting occupants will be given secure tenancies.

### **Choice Based Lettings.**

All Council tenancies in Leeds are allocated through the Choice Based Lettings system where applicants can bid for up to 3 properties each week in the areas of their choice. Properties are advertised each week in the Leeds Homes flyer which is available each week from any ENEHL outlet. Where vulnerable people are identified arrangements can be made for the flyer to be delivered to their home or to relevant support agencies to ensure that they have every opportunity to bid for vacancies. We also arrange for relatives or support agencies to obtain advocate consent so that they have the applicant's permission to bid for vacancies or represent them in other ways regarding their application.

Recently, a new text bidding service has been introduced which is designed to help applicants who may be confined to the home for a variety of reasons to increase accessibility for many customers. Anyone texting in a bid is informed by text message that their bid has been received within 2 hours of making the bid. They will, therefore, be able to keep this message on their phone memory as evidence of receipt in the event of any query.

Our ENEHL web site contains a link to online bidding, which contains relevant information about how the choice Based Lettings system operates and has been designed to help customers who might have sensory or language difficulties.

### **Vulnerability Needs and Risk Assessment Process.**

There is a needs and risk assessment checklist that is completed on the accompanied viewing by our lettings and allocation team. This aims to identify any needs and support requirements that the new prospective tenants may have to enable them to live independently and safely within their new home.

By identifying early interventions and putting support measures in place will in turn assist the individuals to maintain their tenancies successfully. This can also have a positive impact in developing and strengthening communities.

Early support interventions will also impact positively in avoiding crisis interventions and tenancy terminations.

We will complete the Vulnerability needs assessment checklist with our new tenants to ensure that they have choice and control in any measures and outcomes from the process. It is important to remember that the measures and goals are achievable and realistic for the individuals. The process aims to be customer focused and to

have support intervention that will in reality assist people to succeed within their homes as ENEHL tenants opposed to issues which may have led to failed tenancies, maybe through financial or Anti Social Behaviour issues.

There is a clear process in place for staff to undertake the assessments and guidance notes for completing the forms.

### **The Independent Living Team.**

ENEHL has introduced a team of staff who specialise in coordinating support packages with support providers, tenants and professionals. Our aim is to have a consistent approach to assessing and supporting vulnerable tenants within ENEHL. This is all captured on our vulnerability database which will assist us to accurately monitor all our vulnerable tenants and open support cases which we will review on a monthly basis. The database allows us to profile service users and report on our support and customer outcomes and needs.

### **Our Mission Statement is:**

To create sustainable communities for ENEHL customers through need and risk assessments to maximise lifestyles and choice –

And to overarch this through the protection and safe guarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Independent Living Team's aims are:

- To promote independent living, by maximising lifestyle and choice for our tenants.

The Independent Living Team's objectives is to ensure that staff and partners are made aware that:

- We have both a legal and moral obligation to ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults live safely within ENEHL.

The Independent Living Team aims to underpin vulnerability across the organisation and bring together needs and risk assessments and safeguarding for vulnerable tenants. This will be done through departmental joint working, information sharing and in house training to ensure that staff are aware of their roles within the process. The role of our team will be pivotal in ENEHL tenants remaining as safely and independently as possible within their homes for longer. In turn succeeding to maintain their tenancies and sustaining safer communities in which they live.

## 4.3 Income Management Services

### Debt Management

ENEHL has a team of specialist Assistant Area Managers - Income and Benefits Advisors dedicated to maximising income through benefit entitlement, discretionary payments, tax and pension credits and working through our informal working partnerships with debt advice and support agencies to sustain tenancies.

However, they can only help the customers who know about or are willing to engage with the service. A recent customer satisfaction service identified a third of respondents who had experienced problems with benefit claims did not ask for our assistance as they were unaware we had a specialist benefits advisor at each housing office.

In addition ENEHL is financially supporting the expansion of Leeds City Credit Union across One Stop Centres in our area and local housing offices to provide access to financial services and affordable credit for our communities, meeting our commitment to address vulnerability due to financial exclusion.

Staff have been trained on the effects of financial exclusion on individuals and ways of working that promote inclusion.

We have devised links with a range of independent debt agencies including St Vincent's, who provide independent debt advisory and debt counselling services for people who may be suffering multiple debts.

We also recognise that older and vulnerable tenants find that letters relating to rent account problems can cause far greater stress than they would for other customers and we will use our customer profiling information to identify appropriate people and tailor our response more appropriately. We will do this by attempting to contact these customers first before we send any letters out. This will enable us to discuss any support requirements the tenant might benefit from and reduce the anxiety that might otherwise have been caused.

We are also promoting a housing and welfare benefit campaign in our sheltered housing schemes which will coincide with the Older Persons Week. We are aware that almost £5 billion pounds of benefit entitlements go unclaimed each year by pensioners and see this approach as a means to increase social inclusion amongst older and vulnerable tenants.

## 4.4 Support Services

### Family Intervention Programme.

Family Intervention Programmes were introduced as part of the Government's RESPECT Agenda. They are designed to address a small number of highly problematic families who have chaotic lifestyles and cause disproportionate problems for everyone who lives in the surrounding community. Often they have multiple problems which need varying degrees of support and intervention to deal with. Invariably, if action is not taken to remedy these problems the family will end up being ejected from their accommodation, becoming homeless and often the children may need to be taken into care.

Because of the complexity of these cases, it is essential that a multi-agency approach is adopted and that responsibilities are clear to both the family concerned and the various agencies who might be involved in addressing the family's behaviour. In effect a contract is drawn up between the family and the project which outlines the changes in behaviour expected, support that will be provided and any sanctions which will apply if behaviour does not improve.

ENEHL has entered into partnership with other agencies to establish a number of these projects and the results have been very encouraging. ENEHL is committed to meeting the RESPECT Agenda, preventing homelessness, sustaining tenancies and helping to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and younger people:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic well being

### Sheltered Housing ( Independent Living with Support)

ENEHL currently provides support to 649 category 2 sheltered housing properties across 22 sheltered schemes. The support is provided by an area based team of scheme support officers who visit individual tenants within their homes at each scheme.

Our priority is to establish well being with individuals on a daily or regular basis and work closely with family, agencies and partners to arrange care and support for tenants to live safely and independently. The support that is provided to tenants is assessed through risk and needs assessments and supporting planning which is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. This process puts tenants at the centre of our service and their choice and control is pivotal to successful support and outcomes.

Each sheltered property is linked to Leeds Care Ring services which is a 24 hour emergency response centre where a team of trained operators will respond to calls through the Care Ring equipment. When the Scheme Support officers are off duty the emergency alarm calls are answered by a central unit, operated by Leeds City Council. We work closely with Staff there who hold electronic emergency information about individual tenants and we ensure that this is updated by our staff as and when any changes occur, to enable them to act promptly and effectively to emergency calls. They also have a list of family and other contacts who can be reached in an emergency situation.

The wardens provide a flexible support service which depends on the needs and choice of each tenant, we ensure that changing needs are reflected in the levels of support which is required and provided. This is offered through a lower level support visit, It is important that tenants are encouraged to be active and we support and facilitate various social activities and groups across the service. We promote and encourage social inclusion which in turn minimises feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Prior to tenants taking up occupation of their tenancies ENEHL also carries out vulnerability risk assessments to identify potential problems and support requirements at the earliest opportunity. These are also reviewed as part of the ongoing support planning process.

We understand that often Older people live in isolation and fear we strive to eliminate these fears and promote a pro active approach through safeguarding and reporting cases of abuse that may occur.

## Down Your Way

ENEHL consulted with our residents within sheltered housing schemes who indicated that they often found themselves in need of odd jobs doing around their home. Often these jobs were left undone leading to health and safety issues around their home and also they told us that in many instances they were putting themselves at risk of a fall by doing the jobs themselves.

Some tenants expressed that they often found themselves asking friends and family for support whilst others told us that they would need to get handymen in and pay them. To address these concerns, we introduced a pilot scheme to provide a personal non-urgent repair and odd job service around the home in 2 of our sheltered schemes.

A multi skilled team of operatives visit the schemes on a monthly basis completing all minor repairs in one visit and carry out those little jobs that older people find more difficult, such as cleaning light fittings, fitting curtain rails and moving furniture.

This pilot scheme was then reviewed and the service is now successfully run across all 22 of our sheltered schemes. Tenants know in advance when work is going to be done and they are supported through the referrals and schedules by the team of scheme support workers.

The operatives visit each scheme once a month and the tenants are advised in advance of the dates they are due on site. A schedule of work is produced which allows the operatives to plan for their tasks and in turn offers value for money as the work for the whole scheme is completed in one day reducing travelling time and the cost of multiple visits.

It minimises risks of immoral chance or bogus callers who may offer odd job services to our vulnerable tenants which may lead to criminal or safeguarding issues. The scheme also aims to reduce the risk of falls and ensures that older tenants within sheltered housing are able to maintain independent living and maximise a safe home environment.

### **Adaptations.**

The elderly population is growing and the emphasis now is clearly on supporting this group of people in maximising independence, staying healthy and to remain living within their home and community as long as possible.

Providing appropriate social and welfare support is high on our agenda especially as pressures continue to demand faster response times and shorter hospital stays. With limited resources in the community there is always the risk that individuals needs will not be met. As the rise in the elderly population is increasing, this will have a likely impact on the demand for Occupational Therapist services.

ENEHL has a dedicated Team of Officers whose aim is to support individuals to live safely and independently in their homes, by providing adaptations that will meet their identified need. The team consists of :

- 2 Occupational Therapists
- 2 Adaptation Surveyors
- 1 Adaptation Liaison Support Officer
- 1 Adaptation Coordinator

The Team carries out assessments, undertakes surveys, gives advice on and develops technical specifications for adaptations work. The Adaptation Surveyors also carry out energy surveys, produce Energy Performance Certificates and offer advice on possible energy savings. They also identify repairs when they visit enabling the customer to access the repairs service much quicker.

ENEHL makes specific budgets available to carry out adaptations to its properties; this is in excess of £2 million.

We will carry out adaptations when:

- A need is identified in a current tenancy
- Capital improvement work is being carried out
- Tenants are being discharged from hospital
- A new tenant is offered a property who requires adaptations and work is usually completed before they move in

ENEHL Occupational Therapists work with other partners such as LCC Social Care Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and a range of Health Professionals to ensure that the assessments they carry out for major adaptation work meet all the needs of the family concerned. They will take into account the longer term prognosis of the customer to reduce the likelihood of having to carry out additional adaptations at a later date and also to reduce the possibility of the family having to move if circumstances change.

Where minor adaptations work is required such as lever taps, grab rails etc. we operate a fast track service. This is where work can be ordered immediately via the Adaptations Team without the need for an assessment. Occupational Therapists

### **Canopy Housing Project.**

Canopy Housing Project is a self help community housing project which has been operating in Leeds since 1998. It was set up to tackle the twin problems of homelessness and derelict properties. Canopy works with prospective tenants and volunteers to bring derelict and disused homes back into use. Canopy leases properties from landlords on long leases, which it then sub-lets to families who help to carry out any necessary improvements to the property and create their own home.

Initially, Canopy had worked in the south Leeds area where the Project leased over 30 properties and in 2007 they were seeking to identify other opportunities to expand their operation in the City and particularly for refugee communities. At the time, ENEHL was managing a number of properties which, because of demand and their overall condition, were considered to be surplus to requirements by both ENEHL and Leeds City Council. Most of the properties are in the Harehills area and local councillors expressed concerns that if these properties were advertised on the open market or by auction, they could attract unregulated absentee landlords into an area where this is already a serious problem.

Consequently, ENEHL entered into discussions with Canopy Housing Project which resulted in 10 properties being leased to them. All properties needed substantial renovation work over and above the requirements to meet Decent Homes Standard and to make the scheme financially viable the properties have been leased to Canopy for a 21 year term to meet the needs of homeless refugee families living in Leeds. This type of project helps to create more stability in areas where blight is beginning to have a significant and long term impact on community cohesion.

## 4.5 Technical Services

### Tackling Fuel Poverty through the Decent Homes Programme

We have and will continue to target vulnerable homes for the installation of energy efficient 'renewable' heating installations to reduce fuel poverty to our homes. Solar heating systems have already been installed to older people's bungalows in Gipton and Seacroft and at the same time, thermal insulation has been upgraded to reduce fuel costs.

To tackle fuel poverty, the Decent Homes programme prioritises vulnerable homes when carrying out improvement work which affects thermal comfort and fuel costs such as replacement windows and doors as well as heating system installations and providing insulation. The Home Improvements Team works closely with Fuelsavers and our own fully qualified Domestic Energy Assessors to ensure that the correct homes are targeted, targeting homes on housing benefit as well as larger family homes.

All our empty homes have an energy survey carried out and all new tenants are issued a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate which is available when the property is advertised. This tells the new tenant how energy efficient their home is and advises on how much it will cost to heat the home. Energy Performance Certificates are also produced for all homes that are adapted through our Adaptation service.

In addition to making our homes more Energy Efficient, we continue to target vulnerable homes and offer free energy saving advice and have improved our empty homes Letting Standard so include improved Energy Efficiency measures and in turn, reduce fuel bills for our tenants.

In May 2009, we entered into an agreement with 'Billscutter' which gives all our Customers the opportunity to change over to the best Energy Tariffs for their home without the usual hassle. Our customers can find the best tariffs and switch suppliers using our customised on-line service or by telephone. Our staff are able to assist customers in using the service and helping them find the best deal. Billscutter's sister company, Money Angels provide a similar service for all our empty homes which ensures that the new tenant receives the best deal when they move in. Money Angels also takes all the hassle of dealing directly with the utility suppliers away from the new tenant and makes moving in to our homes even easier.

### Gas Servicing.

Each year we aim to carry out a gas safety check to every one of our homes that contains gas appliances to ensure the safety of all residents and visitors. While there are serious dangers to those who will not allow us access to carry out a gas safety check, we recognise that for some tenants, especially those that have suffered

domestic violence, allowing a stranger into their home can in itself be a traumatic experience.

Where we are aware of these cases, we work closely with the tenants and try to build up confidence through friends and family members, to reassure them and arrange for the gas service to be carried out in an environment that they are comfortable with. We are able to offer a female gas engineer in these circumstances as well as flexible working hours on evenings or weekends that means additional support is available to the tenant.

## **Fire Safety**

Following the completion of the joint initiative with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services to install long life smoke detectors and offer free home fire safety advice to tenants in the Wetherby area, our Construction Services teams are continuing to provide this service to isolated homes under our management. In addition to the service provided for existing tenants, our empty homes Letting Standard has been revised and now includes the provision of smoke detectors to all homes.

## **Decoration Allowance Scheme**

In recognition of the difficulties that disabled and older tenants experience when decorating their new home or redecorating after we have repaired their home, we have introduced a more flexible Decoration Allowance Scheme. Those eligible for compensation to redecorate their homes can now claim a cheque which can be used to pay for a decorator to carry out the work instead of receiving vouchers that were only redeemable in exchange for decorating materials such as wallpaper and paint.

When a new home is allocated, an assessment is done to determine the capability of the new tenant in relation to them carrying out decoration work in their home. We have changed the criteria so that our contractors will now carry out certain decoration works in the home at no cost to the tenant. This includes extensive decorating to all our sheltered homes whilst they are empty.

Our award winning Michelangelo's Mates teams now target vulnerable homes to carry out decorating for those households that are unable to do so themselves. Michelangelo's Mates work with trainees who have learning difficulties to help them earn a recognised qualification in decorating. Customer feedback from homes where this service has been carried out tells us that the teams provide a personalised, high quality service and are making a real difference to our customer's lives.

## **A Flexible Repairs Service**

Like all repairs services, it is important that repairs criteria and priorities are standardised so that the service can be managed and monitored effectively and efficiently. All front line staff are aware however of the importance of making sure that the differing needs of vulnerable persons are accommodated and this means exercising discretion when dealing with customers. Examples of where this comes into practice and has a genuine impact on our customers are where we have:

- Cleared lofts for disabled and older tenants to allow loft insulation to be properly installed.
- Changed light bulbs to light fittings for disabled tenants and replaced batteries to smoke detectors.
- Upgraded repair priorities for older and disabled tenants and those with medical needs.
- Extended repair and gas servicing appointments for Saturdays and evenings for tenants who require a carer, friend or family member present when someone visits their home.
- Flexibility to arrange appointments for specific times within the day for those who work, are in education or have childcare issues.

In addition to improving our processes to make the Repairs service even more accessible for vulnerable customers, we have worked jointly with our contractors and partners to ensure that they deliver a services that meet the requirements of our vulnerable customers. All our contractors are now able to immediately access an interpreter when they encounter non-English speaking customers and receive important information about the customer before they visit their home, this information includes a flag where we know that the customer is vulnerable and may need extra assistance or services tailoring to their needs.

We constantly review our key policies to ensure that they best suit the needs of our vulnerable customers and have flexibility within them so that all our customers are able to access our services fairly. Examples of this are:

- Our Rechargeable Repairs Policy sets out that we will not pursue a recharge against the victims of domestic violence or customers with Mental Health issues.
- Our Fencing and Gates Policy gives priority to replace missing fencing to homes where young children live and may be at risk.

## 5. Equality and Diversity

East North East Homes Leeds is much more than a housing landlord; we are part of the community in which we operate. We are “a company with a passion for communities”. We cover a large part of Leeds bringing together staff, tenants, partners, agencies all who have one thing in common; to enjoy a community in which we can all live and work together as equals, valuing the different cultures and bringing together people from different backgrounds.

At ENEHL we understand the importance of Equality and Diversity and recognise how important it is to our business. We need to understand the changing needs of our customers and adapt our service delivery in the way we carry out our business.

At ENEHL one of our main values is “Fair Access” and our objective is to provide excellent services to all our customers. We will continue to work with our customers, partners and agencies to ensure we are offering services at excellent standards. We are committed to:-

- Providing accessible information in the promotions of services i.e. large print, different languages, audio, easy read
- Increase promotion of services where there is evidence of barriers, experiences by different equality groups or areas
- ENEHL will monitor positive progress across all departments services areas against the equality outcomes and objectives set
- Appropriate measures are put in place to ensure the service needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are identified, and that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect
- ENEHL will develop systems to collect analyse and measure data on how all sections of the community are able to access services
- Use customer profile data to effect change in service delivery
- Increase customer involvement to improve services
- Equality and diversity is considered with the procurement and management of contracts where services have been, or are planned to be outsourced.

In 2009 ENEHL will be introducing the Single Equality Scheme, following the success of achieving Level 4 in the Equality Standards for Local Government. It felt appropriate to review current strategies and build upon these to capitalise on our robust approach to equality and diversity, which will take us forward to 2011.

## 6. Our Plans for Change

ENEHL have an Independent Living Team who support the organisation with issues around safeguarding and vulnerability.

By 2010 we have ambitious plans to develop services even further to support people who find themselves vulnerable for a variety of reasons. We want to promote the concept of independent living so that our customers can feel more involved and empowered by the changes we are proposing. In doing so we will seek to achieve our aims as follows:

### Aim One

We will make sure all our sustainable homes meet the Decent Homes Standard by December 2010 and are then maintained to that standard as a minimum in future years.

### We will do this by

Objective	Completed
Introducing an incentive scheme which will enable vulnerable people to move to homes that better meet their needs and where under-occupation is an issue. This incentive has now been exhausted / removed.	2008/2009
Targeting low SAP properties for energy efficiency works as part of Decent Homes programme.	2008/2009
Carrying out any necessary adaptations to homes whilst we are carrying out decency work to ensure that disturbance is kept to a minimum.	2008/2009
Reviewing the Decoration Allowance Scheme for Elderly and Vulnerable Tenants to allow flexibility within the scheme.	2008/2009
Installing Renewable / Energy Efficient heating systems. Will not be in 2009 plan.	2008/2009
Increasing Home Safety for ENEHL Tenants through installation of Smoke Detectors and free Home Safety Advice. Ongoing programme	2008/2009

### Aim Two

We will work proactively with partners and residents to make our estates cleaner, safer and greener, and to develop cohesive communities in which people choose to live.

### We will do this by

Objective	Completed
Extending the current 'Down your Way' Service to all Sheltered Housing Schemes within the ALMO.	2008/2009
Establishing a range of working protocols with Support Agencies to ensure that services from all partners are delivered in a consistent, co-ordinated and effective manner which reduce social exclusion and	2008/2009

create sustainable, cohesive neighbourhoods.	
Ensuring all Sheltered Housing Schemes and Multi-Storey Flat Communal Areas are DDA compliant. On target for completion.	2008/2009
All ENEHL customer access points to be made DDA compliant.	2008/2009

### Aim Three

We will provide our services in an open and inclusive manner that meets the identified needs and aspirations of the diverse communities that live in the area.

### We will do this by

Objective	Completed
Establishing a better understanding of the incidence of unmet housing need amongst elderly / disabled adults and children.	2008/2009
Establishing a service user group for people with a disability to ensure that services meet their aspirations.	2008/2009
Reviewing vulnerable customer assistance at housing application stage to ensure that we are identifying potential risks and providing appropriate support to the customer both before and during the time they become a tenant of ENEHL.	2008/2009
Examining, in partnership with Strategic Landlord, more effective means by which vulnerable people are able to express bids through the choice Based Lettings System.	2008/2009
Reviewing the effectiveness and value of the translation services we provide and identifying tenants who could be employed directly as translators for new customers.	Ongoing
Working in partnership with the Supporting People Team to develop a local directory of services for vulnerable people in the ENEHL area which identifies Support Agencies for the different client groups and the referral criteria.	2008/2009
Developing Vulnerability checklist / customer support assessment forms and guidance to prompt identification of needs for all new tenants of ENEHL.	2008/2009
Improving the information and support given to BME groups when dealing with Hate Crime incidents based upon feedback we receive from victims.	
Improving Information Systems in order that vulnerable people and their individual needs can be identified at any point where they request a service from ENEHL. A team has been employed to take ownership of this.	2008/2009
Reviewing all means of communication we have with people who have literacy problems and develop a range of alternative solutions in consultation with service users.	2008/2009
Ensuring all customers who require information in a different format can access this via the ENEHL web site.	2008/2009
Promoting Adult Learning courses provided by our partners for people whose first language is not English.	
Becoming an active member of Leeds Older Peoples Forum.	2008/2009
Increasing the number of active Tenants Groups in sheltered housing schemes.	2008/2009

Giving clear and consistent guidance to all frontline staff and contractors with regards to consistency and flexibility within the repairs procedure when dealing with vulnerable customers.	
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### Aim Four

We will be an employer of choice and provide high quality services through valued and empowered staff, and effective and efficient use of resources.

### We will do this by

Objective	Completed
Reviewing processes and procedures as part of the Sheltered review. Achieve Level A accreditation in the Supporting People Quality Assessment. Framework for services provided to sheltered housing tenants.	Ongoing
Reviewing the feasibility of sheltered housing schemes in the area and establish opportunities to introduce floating support services which support the objectives of Leeds Supporting People Strategy.	2008/2009
Working in partnership with Strategic Landlord to submit a bid for the Supporting People contract to provide support services to older people living in sheltered schemes owned by Leeds City Council.	2008/2009



**SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE STRATEGY**  
**PRODUCED BY EAST NORTH EAST HOMES LEEDS**  
*Reviewed and updated July 2009*  
*Updated October 2009*