

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

<p>Title of EqIA:</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy.</p>
<p>Brief description of the Proposal:</p>	<p>The Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy sets out Eastleigh Borough Council's approach on providing financial assistance. It aims at improving and maintaining community cohesion and specifically addressing social exclusion issues that can arise from the occupation of poor or inappropriate housing. It particularly sets out the Council's approach to the financial aspects of Disabled Facility Grants (DFG).</p> <p>This update to the policy brings in the additions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extending the criteria for which discretionary grants can be used to now include for small works, that fall outside of DFG, that are necessary to alleviate an immediate mental health crisis, • charging for the Council's project assistance on self-funded adaptations, and • a new condition to those that are attached to any DFGs.

Assessment:

For all of categories below please consider:

1. Does this proposal eliminate unlawful discrimination?
2. Does this proposal advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?
3. Does this proposal foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?

Statutory Considerations: Please highlight what impact could there be on people with protected characteristics.

Age:

No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services covered by policy.

While the greater majority of customers of the DFG service are elderly (48.3% aged 65+) the service is available to all ages provided they meet the other necessary eligibility requirements as set out in the legislation.

The project assistance available on adaptations that are self-

	<p>funded by the client is offered so as to help customers who might otherwise be unable to organise and arrange the works themselves and, if it wasn't offered, would likely not be done. However, it is clear in policy it will only be provided where capacity allows, which is necessary to protect and ensure that providing this assistance is not to the detriment of the provision of the mandatory DFG service.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between different age groups. However, by providing adaptations that will allow customers (predominantly elderly) retain independent and access to the broader community this could help allow for greater opportunities for socialisation between age groups within the community.</p>
Disability:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services covered by policy.</p> <p>The provision of the disabled facility grants ensures necessary adaptations to the homes of disabled residents can be done. This will help advance equality of opportunity by helping them to retain independence, dignity and ability access to the broader community and services. It is a legal requirement that all children's DFGs are fully funded, where as adult DFGs are means tested.</p> <p>The inclusion of the extended criteria for discretionary DFGs reflects the greater acknowledgement & conversation of society around matters of mental health and helps to advance equality of opportunity by.</p> <p>The project assistance available on adaptations that are self-funded by the client is offered so as to help customers who might otherwise be unable to organise and arrange the works themselves and, if it wasn't offered, would likely not be done. However, it is clear in policy it will only be provided where capacity allows, which is necessary to protect and ensure that providing this assistance is not to the detriment of the provision of the mandatory DFG service.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between disabled & able-bodied people. However, by providing adaptations that will allow customers to have increased independence and so by access to the broader community this could help allow for greater opportunities for socialisation within the community.</p>
Gender:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services covered by policy.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between different gender groups other than by improving access to the broader community & services by customers.</p>
Gender reassignment:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services covered by policy.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between different gender groups other than by improving</p>

	access to the broader community & services by customers.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services covered by policy.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between these groups other than by improving access to the broader community & services by customers.</p>
Race:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that some ethnicities require larger properties due to intergenerational living or co-living. This will be taken into consideration during the design process where possible. However, there may be disputes as to level of work that will be grant funded but we will always try to fund what is required by the Occupational Therapist in the most cost-effective way.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between these groups other than by improving access to the broader community & services by customers.</p>
Religion or belief:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services.</p> <p>Specific needs due to religion will be considered during the design process where possible, provided we are made aware of the requirements. However, there may be disputes as to level of work that will be grant funded but we will always try to fund what is required by the Occupational Therapist in the most cost-effective way.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between these groups other than by improving access to the broader community & services by customers.</p>
Sexual Orientation:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services covered by policy.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between these groups other than by improving access to the broader community & services by customers.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on accessing services covered by policy.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between these groups other than by improving access to the broader community & services by customers.</p>
Non statutory considerations: Please highlight what impact could there be on people experiencing social deprivation.	
Social deprivation:	<p>No existing discrimination or identified limitation on access services covered by policy. DFG remains free at the point of delivery.</p> <p>The policy will advance equal opportunities by ensuring those</p>

	<p>of greatest need have access to financial assistance to ensure they can adapt their home or do essential repairs so that is safe & suitable and allow them to retain independence, dignity and access to the broader community. Loans are given based on financial circumstances and are targeted towards people who would otherwise be unable to afford to improve their property, it is a legal requirement that children's DFGs are always full funded, and adult DFGs are means tested and so provided to those that cannot afford to adapt their properties independently.</p> <p>The proposed administrative charge for project assistance is only to be levied where the client has been financially assessed to be able to cover the cost of works so the adaptations are fully self-funded. This will not disadvantage those clients more socially deprived as they will still be able to access the mandatory DFGs.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of this policy to improve relations between these groups other than by improving access to the broader community & services by customers.</p>
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<p>What engagement or consultation has been carried out?</p>	<p>External consultation on the proposed updated policy was undertaken between 7th December 2020 and 15th January 2021. The consultation was targeted to key stakeholder organisations.</p> <p>Draft copies of the updated policy were sent to those below for any comments. No comments were received from this external consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastleigh & District Disability Forum • Age UK (Eastleigh Branch) • Abri Housing Association • VIVID Housing Association • Hampshire County Council (Child Services – OT Team) • Hampshire County Council (Adults Health & Care – OT Team)
<p>What could reduce any adverse impact on these groups?</p>	<p>While there is a push for customers to self-serve online through website, given a considerable proportion of customers of the DFG service are elderly or may have accessibility issues, we need to ensure continued provision of paper applications forms that can be posted out or collected from the offices and also timely provision of forms in other accessible formats. We will continue to provide phone support by the CMOs for customers to help answer questions on completion of the application forms.</p>

Action Plan

Activity	Outcome	Timeframe	Person responsible
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N/a			
N/a			
N/a			

Service Manager:	Elizabeth Hawkins
Executive Head:	Janine Pickering
Corporate Director:	Andrew Trayer
Date completed:	31/08/2021