

Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: People Strategy & Commissioning People (Adults)	
Service: People (Adults) / Adult Social Care	
Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Ashfaq Hussain	
Date of Assessment: 29/09/2022	
Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Housing Assistance Policy	
1.	<p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>The purpose of this Equality Impact Needs Assessment is to assess the possible effects of Slough Borough Council introducing a new Housing Assistance Policy. Government funding for disabled Facility Grants (DFG)s has been increased, but the use of this funding is rigid within the remit of Mandatory DFG guidelines. Local authorities can only use funding for Discretionary DFGs if a policy is in place to set out how funding will be used. Therefore, implementing this policy allows funding to be used more flexibly. The Council will continue to provide Mandatory DFGs to assist those in need of accessibility works and adaptations to their home. Mandatory DFGs remain a statutory duty therefore these will take precedence in terms of funding and resources. The introduction of the Discretionary DFG in the policy will allow for an extended use of DFG funding which will enable the Council to assist a greater number of vulnerable residents in the Borough remain independent in their homes It is not anticipated that the new Housing Assistance Policy have any negative impacts for any groups.</p> <p>The Council's Housing Assistance Policy will allow for the expanded use of discretionary DFGs. Discretionary support options are new from a Slough perspective, but we have had the legal right to do this since the 2002 regulatory reform order.</p> <p>The following grants are discretionary and are offered subject to Council funding and resources available at the time:</p> <p>Additional Discretionary Support for Mandatory DFG Applicants including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discretionary DFG top-up Assistance• Discretionary Contribution Grant

Other Assistance

- Enhanced Minor Adaptations Grant
- Major Equipment Grant
- Second Home Grant

The policy will also move the threshold of the Major Equipment Grant from £5,000 to £10,000 so this will allow more equipment to be installed including stairlifts, ceiling-track hoists, modular ramps, specialist toilets and shower/bathroom adaptations without the means testing required. This will streamline the service and decrease the waiting lists and ensure residents who require small adaptation under £10k will not have to worry about waiting for a means testing assessment and any contributions they may have to pay towards the work.

The policy will introduce new ways the grant can be administered such as:

- Managed application process – The ILT will handle everything on behalf of the applicant through an agreement between the applicant and the service.
- Customer contractor – the council manages the planning application, however the resident uses their own building contractors.
- Customer managed - the resident manages the whole process.

Currently it is thought that there are residents who may not continue with the grant application due to the current means testing and the fact they will have to contribute. The new policy will allow the teams to explore any other avenues of funding and have the last resort option for the council's discretionary assistance if the resident is deemed to be high risk.

2. Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function? State if this is undertaken by more than one team, service, and department including any external partners.

The delivery of this service will be carried out by the Independent Living Team (ILT) and Long-Term Occupational Therapy (OT) teams within Adult Social Care.

The OT team will assess each individual and recommend if they are eligible for the grants. The OT team alongside the ILT team will work and oversee the work until completion. However, if the individual chooses to use their own contractors to carry out the work, the plans will be provided to the contractor. The OT team will carry out a joint inspection with the ILT team to make sure the work is compliant with the OT recommendations.

3. Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc. Please consider all of the Protected Characteristics listed (more information is available in the background information). Bear in mind that people affected by the proposals may well have more than one protected characteristic.

Adults and Children (anyone who is eligible for the disabled facility grant)

We currently do not hold large amounts of data of people accessing the Disability facility grant, however we have data on the current DFG waiting list.

Age:

Age Range	Residents
18 to 24	1
25 to 34	1
35 to 44	2
45 to 54	4
55 to 64	13
65 to 74	14
75 to 85	20
85+	8

Disability:

Client Category	Total
Carer	1
Dementia	1
Learning Disability	1
Mental Illness	2
Other Vulnerability	2

Physical Disability	26
Physically Frail/Temporary Ill	27
Visual Impairment	3
Grand Total	63

Gender Reassignment: We currently do not hold this information on our system.

Marriage and Civil Partnership:

Marriage or Civil Partnership	Residents
Not disclosed	33
Divorced	1
Living with Partner	1
Married	16
Separated	1
Single	4
Widowed	7

Pregnancy and maternity: We currently do not hold this information on our system.

Race:

Ethnicity	number of residents
Any other Asian background	7

Any other black background	1
Any other ethnic group	2
Any other White Background	3
Black African	1
Black Caribbean	3
Indian	11
Not yet obtained	5
Pakistani	12
White British	16
White European	2

Religion and Belief:

Religion	Residents
Not disclosed	37
Christian	5
Church of England	2
Hindu	3
Methodist	1
Muslim	9
None	1
Protestant	1
Sikh	4

Sex:

Gender	Number of residents
F	42
M	21

Sexual orientation: We currently do not hold this information on our system.

The waiting list profile show that the majority of people on the list are women, older people and those with physical disabilities. The new policy will be more flexible and will allow other client groups to benefit more from these grants such as clients with a sensory impairment or dementia.

We do not currently hold data on information and reason why residents were not successful or reason why the residents never went ahead with the application. The data we currently have is from the waiting lists which we are adapting to capture more information.

4. What are any likely positive impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? You may wish to refer to the Equalities Duties detailed in the background information.

There will be no negative impact. The introduction of the new Housing assistance policy does not alter existing processes and mandatory DFGs remain statutory.

The DFG has remained underspent for some time, this new policy will allow the service to reach more people who need assistance by ways of financial support through the discretionary assistance, reduced waiting lists, prioritising residents who urgently need assistance and being more flexible in the way the grant is delivered.

5. What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? If so then are any particular groups affected more than others and why?

There will be no negative impact. The introduction of the housing assistance policy does not alter existing processes and mandatory DFGs remain statutory.

	<p>The new policy will introduce a new way the waiting list is compiled and managed. Currently the list is based on a points system similar to housing allocations, however with the new policy the council will change this to chronological order (date order) for non-urgent cases. Example of urgent cases are people who are being discharged from hospital or living alone and deemed a risk.</p>
6.	<p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Please state evidence sources and conclusions drawn (e.g. survey results, customer complaints, monitoring data etc).</p> <p>The data used is from the current disabled facility grant waiting list.</p>
7.	<p>Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results, e.g. have the staff forums/unions/ community groups been involved?</p> <p>Engaged with teams who will be implementing the new way of working, Long Term OT team and ILT team, reported to the senior leadership team, Children's First and councillors.</p> <p>The policy was reported to the Better Care Fund Group which includes Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Health and Social care partnership board.</p> <p>In October 2022 the policy will also be discussed at the Coproduction network, which is made up of residents, if any points are raised, we will take into consideration.</p> <p>The Independent Living Team will advertise the benefits of the new policy to eligible local residents and relevant agencies.</p>
8.	<p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations?</p> <p>There will be no negative impact. The introduction of a Housing assistance policy does not alter existing processes and mandatory DFGs remain statutory. The new policy will improve services for the residents.</p>

	<p>Slough Borough Council has already changed the way the waiting list is recorded to urgent and non-urgent cases and removal of the current points system. This will ensure residents who are assessed as high risk will go onto urgent with high priority and everyone else will be added in chronological order.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? For example what plans, if any, will be put in place to reduce the impact?</p> <p>We have already put changes in places which is changing how cases are on the waiting list to urgent and non-urgent.</p> <p>Using the Searchlight system, run by the department of working and pensions (DWP) to help cut down financial means testing assessment times by identifying people who are in receipt of benefits and are on passport benefits and will not be required to pay contributions. This will streamline the process and will reduce the waiting lists.</p> <p>Changing the way, we procure stairlifts this will also help reduce waiting times for installations.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>What plans do you have in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? (The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented). Please see action plan below.</p> <p>We intend to carry out internal consultation with the teams and resident surveys upon completion of receiving the work.</p> <p>We are planning to start gathering more data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timescales from beginning to end of each grant • Waiting times • Demographics • Disability • Reasons for opt out of the grant • Equipment • Types of grants • Referral rates <p>We will arrange a 1-year review of the policy and see the impact and how it has benefited other groups. Adult social care will take learning adapt the policy from this.</p>

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply	✓
Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	✓
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified? (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 3: Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You will need to ensure that the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact (see questions below). (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (Complete action plan).	

Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

At this stage a timetabled Action Plan should be developed to address any concerns/issues related to equality in the existing or proposed policy/service or function. This plan will need to be integrated into the appropriate Service/Business Plan.

Action	Target Groups	Lead Responsibility	Outcomes/Success Criteria	Monitoring & Evaluation	Target Date	Progress to Date
Review new ways of working.	All vulnerable groups		To improve pathways of accessing the DFG schemes. Cut down waiting times from assessment to installation.	Surveys after each grant implementation KPIs		

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Name: Ashfaq Hussain
Signed:(Person completing the EIA)

Name:Andre Ansah.....
Signed:(Policy Lead if not same as above)

Date: 29.09.22