

Equality Impact Assessment

Financial Assistance Policy
Disabled Facilities Adaptations and
Home Improvement



Section 1: Introduction and background

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| What is being assessed? | Financial Assistance Policy Disabled Facilities Adaptations and Home Improvement |
| Business unit | Environmental Health and Licensing |
| Job title of assessor | Team Leader Residential and Environment |
| Strategic Management Lead | David Hine, Strategic Partnership Manager Environmental Health and Licensing |
| Date of assessment | 14 February 2022 |
| Is this a new or existing function or policy? | Existing |

Description of the function or policy, including:

- **The aims and scope**
- **The main beneficiaries or users**
- **The main equality issues and barriers, and the protected characteristics¹ they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every protected characteristic)**

The policy sets out how Mole Valley District Council will provide financial assistance to support the provision of safe housing within the district and promote independent living. The policy applies across the whole district.

The policy supports working with partners to deliver the right services to our residents to reflect an integrated approach to health, social care and housing.

The overall aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- support the adaptation of disabled peoples' homes to facilitate them to live independently in their own homes for longer and help to ensure their homes are accessible and suitable for their needs
- provide a subsidised home repair service through a Handy Person Service to undertake minor repairs and assist residents to maintain a safe and secure home environment
- assist private tenants and homeowners to make minor adaptations or repairs to their property to facilitate safe and independent living

¹The protected characteristics are age, sex, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, religion and belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership (Source: Equality Act 2010)

- assist Mole Valley residents to achieve discharge from hospital back to their homes, to support health outcomes and recovery from illness and minimise bed blocking.

The main beneficiaries of the policy are:

Disabled residents who live in the district. This will include those with a disability, chronic illness, mental health condition or sensory impairment, which restricts their functioning on a day-to-day basis.

Residents aged over 60 who require home safety improvements who are in receipt of relevant income or disability related benefits.

A resident who is awaiting discharge from hospital but is unable to return home due to unsuitable conditions there, which works or the provision of equipment will resolve and who is in receipt of one of the relevant income or disability related benefits.

The protected characteristics this policy relates to are age and disability and both of these are impacted positively.

Description of how the function or policy fits into the Council's Corporate Priorities or other local, regional or national plans and priorities

The policy fits into the Council's Corporate Priorities below:

Environment

A highly attractive area with housing that meets local need

- The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants, which are administered by the Council and delivered through the Home Improvement Agency, enables people with disabilities to adapt their homes to improve access in and around the home and enable them to continue to live independently in their own home.

Community Wellbeing

Active communities and support for those who need it

- The financial assistance provided to eligible residents enables small home improvements to make homes safer and to help people to return home from hospital sooner, supporting health outcomes and reducing bed blocking.
- The home assistance and repair service provided by the Handy Person Service enables residents to undertake essential repairs and improvements to their homes, improving opportunities for residents to live safe and healthy lives.

Section 2: Analysis and assessment

| Indicate for each protected characteristic whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, a mixture of both or no impact – using a tick <input type="checkbox"/> in the appropriate columns | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|--|
| Protected characteristics | Positive | Negative | No impact | Reason |
| Age | √ | | | Elderly residents benefit from financial support to make their home safe and secure |
| Sex | | | √ | |
| Disability | √ | | | Disabled residents benefit from financial support to adapt their home to improve access in and around the home. |
| Pregnancy and maternity | | | √ | |
| Race and ethnicity | | | √ | |
| Religion and belief | | | √ | |
| Gender reassignment | | | √ | |
| Sexual orientation | | | √ | |
| Marriage and civil partnership | | | √ | |
| Other aspects to consider | Positive | Negative | No impact | Reason |
| Carers | √ | | | Carers of disabled or elderly residents would benefit from an adaptation in the home of the person they care for as this would improve the disabled person's independent mobility and reduce the level of assistance required. |
| Rural/urban access issues | | | √ | |
| HR issues (how will staff with protected characteristics be affected?) | | | √ | |

What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts?

Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified, and is it lawful?

No negative impacts have been identified in this assessment.

**Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made?
Who are the beneficiaries? How have they benefited?**

There are three groups of beneficiaries of the revised policy:-

- 1. Disabled residents who live in the district, including those with a disability, chronic illness, mental health condition or sensory impairment, which restricts their functioning on a day-to-day basis.**

Under the original policy some disabled people may not have been able to afford to pay their contribution towards the cost of the adaptation. This might mean that the adaptation could not go ahead fully. The revised policy will enable the council to pay their contribution where that is determined to be £3000 or less.

- 2. Residents aged over 60 who require home safety improvements who are in receipt of relevant income or disability related benefits.**

The revised policy will enable these residents to access a grant of up to £3000 for works to their home to make it more safe and more secure.

- 3. A resident who is awaiting discharge from hospital but is unable to return home due to unsuitable conditions there, which works or the provision of equipment will resolve and who is in receipt of one of the relevant income or disability related benefits.**

The revised policy will enable a resident of any age in the above situation, access to a grant of up to £3000 for essential work to their home to enable them to return home from hospital.

Section 3: Evidence gathering and fact-finding

What evidence is available to support your views above?

Please include:

- A summary of the available evidence
- Identification of where there are gaps in the evidence (this may identify a need for more evidence in the action plan)
- What information is currently captured with respect to usage and take up of services.
- What the current situation is in relation to equality and diversity monitoring (where relevant)

Available evidence

Experience of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) and the Occupational Therapists (OT) when some adaptations or parts of adaptations do not go ahead due to lack of clients funding towards their contribution.

Enquiries received by the HIA and the council from residents about the availability of financial support, for elderly people on low incomes, for minor works to make their home safer and more secure, or to enable them to return home from hospital.

The gaps in the evidence are that this is based on the experience of the service providers but the numbers and details are not recorded.

Information Currently Captured

Quarterly reports on the number of disabled adaptations completed and details of the applicants and the adaptations.

Quarterly reports on the number of clients taking up paid Handy Person services for minor works and the works carried out.

Equality and diversity monitoring undertaken by the HIA.

How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment?

Who are they, and what is their view?

The HIA and OT service support the additional support that the revised policy will offer but they have not been involved formally in this assessment.

Recommendations

Summary of the main recommendations (if any) arising from the assessment

None arising.

Section 4: Action Plan

Actions needed to implement the EqIA recommendations – **None arising**

| Issue | Action | Expected outcome | Who | Deadline for action |
|-------|--------|------------------|-----|---------------------|
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