

EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Home Improvement Assistance Policy	Alice Foster & Andy Vincent

A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

This policy will set out how disabled adaptations and grants for council owned properties and privately owned properties will be dealt with. The Council is committed to supporting tenants to live independently within their own homes where possible. The increase in demand for social housing requires a greater focus on supporting tenants to consider how their housing needs may be met in the longer term and this policy clarifies that.

This policy is aligned with the Disabled Facilities Grant process, the Council’s approved Housing Allocation Scheme and the objectives of making best use of stock, ensuring Best Value and responding to the housing needs in the area.

RBC’s stated objective it to operate a service that offers suitable, practical and cost-effective solutions that meet tenants’ assessed needs, ensuring their safety, well-being and quality of life.

Assessments are completed by Occupational Therapists (OTs) or a Trusted Assessor in line with their good practice guide and a referral is submitted to the Home Improvement Agency (HIA), outlining the work required. The Home Improvement Agency Team then follow their process to put these adaptations in place for the residents. The HIA Team work closely with the Housing Team to ensure all adaptations are suitable.

B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential for adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination.
The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

The policy seeks to promote fairness, transparency and equality in responding to requests for adaptations for all residents in Runnymede. With one policy for all residents, we have a tenure neutral service, meaning all residents will receive the same answers and options to support them to live independently and safely in their homes.

The DFG and discretionary grants outlined in this policy are for disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents. This policy helps to support these residents and promotes independence in their homes. Creating a tenure neutral service will support RBC to not discriminate against residents based on their tenure as all residents will have access to the same level of support, where appropriate.

The increase in demand for social housing requires a greater focus on supporting tenants to

consider how their housing needs may be met in the longer term. RBC is committed to enabling tenants to remain living independently within their own home.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if there it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected of Characteristics but that measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

This policy provides assistance to elderly and disabled people including specific financial provisions for disabled persons aged 19 and under. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the Council's policy complies with all legislation and its approach is tenure neutral. The policy will ensure that all residents can make funding applications (subject to some means testing) irrespective of their tenure in the private or public sector thereby benefitting people with Protected Characteristics.

This screening assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge before sign-off.

Date completed: 11th May 2023

Sign-off by senior manager: Andy Vincent

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCOPING

1. What aspects of the policy function or activity are particularly relevant to equality? Other aspects should not necessarily be excluded from the assessment, but attention should be focused on the most important areas and include which of the equality strands the policy function or activity is relevant to. Diversity within the strands should also be considered. Please consider whether any comments made in Part B of the Screening form are relevant here.

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and discretionary grants are for residents who are disabled, elderly or vulnerable.

Moving towards a tenure neutral service will support RBC to ensure all residents have access to the same resources and support. As the service is means tested residents are treated with equity, and those who can contribute to their adaptations, will. Those who can't pay no contribution to the works.

The discretionary grants allow us to offer a more varied selection of support. This includes dementia grants, clearing grants for hoarders and minor works grants that are not means tested.

The policy tries to offer a large selection of support, so that every resident that may need it, can have access to financial assistance for adaptations and urgent repairs.

2. Set out the available evidence that will help you assess the impact of this policy function or activity on equality. This could include service-level monitoring data, analysis of complaints/enquiry records, existing user feedback, data obtained from external sources and information about the local community. You may find it useful to compare your service-user statistics against the [Runnymede population profile](#).

The policy is for:

- Elderly residents
- Disabled residents
- Vulnerable residents
- Residents on low income/benefits

Key Performance Indicators are taken to the Community Services Committee every quarter to measure who is accessing the service. There is also monthly reporting.

There will be narrative in this quarterly reporting around the people accessing the service.

Housing records show there are currently 637 underoccupied council properties (23% of the housing stock). 423 of these are households who are over 60 years of age.

3. What consultation and involvement has been undertaken in relation to this (or a similar) policy, function or activity and what are the results? If none have been carried out, what consultation will be needed? Data may be available from recent consultation activities on a related policy or Equality impact assessment.

Public consultation was completed in relation to the disabled adaptation policy, including with the Runnymede access liaison group.

If there are any major updates to this policy in the future public consultation will be considered at that time.

Any ideas or actions from this group will be considered and added to the policy if appropriate

4. Are there any gaps in the information established from the consultation and involvement undertaken and referred to in Part 3? If so, set out how these gaps will be filled?

N/A

Where it is not possible to fill information/data gaps in time to inform this assessment, specific action points will need to be included in the action plan section Part 10 below, with a focus on monitoring the actual impact of the policy function or activity.

ASSESSING IMPACT

It is essential to consider not just the intended consequences of the policy but also any unintended consequences and barriers that might prevent it being effective for people within any of the Protected Characteristic groups.

Please use the Grid included below to assess the impact of the Policy/function/action on each of the Protected Characteristics. When completing the assessment, please bear in mind the following questions;

- 1. What are the main findings of your consultation and involvement activities, and do they demonstrate problems that need to be addressed? For example, could the policy, function or activity outcomes differ according to people's ethnic group, disability, gender, religion/belief, sexual orientation, or age?** For instance, there might be evidence of higher or lower participation/uptake by different groups.
- 2. If there is a disproportionate impact on one group, is it appropriate and consistent with the objective?** For instance the policy may include lawful positive action or other

methods to address particular needs or may be considered to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

Protected Characteristic	Positive		Neutral	Negative		Comments
	High	Low		High	Low	
Age	X				X	The grants are for residents who are elderly, and so can support them to live at home independently
Disability	x				X	The grants are for residents who are disabled, to support them with adaptations in their homes
Gender Reassignment			X			
Marriage / Civil Partnership			x			
Pregnancy / Maternity			X			
Race			X			

Religion / Belief			X			
Sex			X			
Sexual Orientation			X			

5. Does the policy, function or activity miss potential opportunities to promote equality or positive attitudes to (and between) different Protected Characteristics or communities?

We have updated the policy to create a tenure neutral service. The missed opportunities could come from residents not being aware of the grants available to them. To overcome this, we have set out a 12 month communication plan where we will be targeting groups to inform them of the service. This include attending day centres, libraries and GP surgeries. By promoting the service throughout Runnymede, we will be able to overcome the missed opportunity of awareness and hope that all residents who can access the grants are given the opportunity to do so.

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT: ACTION PLANNING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

6. Does the policy, function or activity require reconsideration or amendment? If not, explain the reasons for this conclusion. If an adverse impact has been identified, you will need to set out the justification for continuing the policy, function or activity or outline measures to mitigate the impact.

No, the policy aims to support disabled, vulnerable and elderly residents to live independently in their homes. The changes that we have outlined in the policy will have a positive impact on these individuals.

7. What actions have you identified as a result of this equality impact assessment? These might include improving data collection in order to give a clearer picture of your service-users, physical adjustments to a building, arranging for information to be sent out to individuals in alternative formats or languages, or consulting with a wider group of people to understand the impact of the policy.

As part of the equality impact assessment we need to improve our data collect to give a clearer picture of service-users

8. Action Plan (where applicable): Who will be responsible for completing these actions and in what timescale? How will you review the actual impact of this policy function or activity?

Provide details of timescale and actions for review, and details of how the actions will be evaluated to measure if expected outcomes are achieved in practice. You may have identified 'triggers' that would indicate a problem with the policy, function or activity and suggest a revision is be needed.

Service Manager will be responsible for completing these actions over the next 12 months

We are reporting on KPIs every quarter to show the impact of the work, and we will include narrative around the residents accessing the service.

This assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge.

Date completed: 11th May 2023

Sign-off by an authorised Officer/Manager: Andy Vincent