

APPENDIX 3: EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Assistance and Grants Policy

The Equality Impact Assessment Form is a public document which the Council uses to demonstrate that it has complied with its Equality Duty when making and implementing decisions which affect the way the Council works.

The form collates and summarises information which has been used to inform the planning and decision making process.

Title of this Equality Impact Assessment:

Housing Grants and Assistance Policy for Private Sector Housing

Purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment:

To assess and advise upon the potential impacts of a refresh to the Housing Grants and Assistance Policy for Private Sector Housing

Officer Responsible:

Name: Kevin Thompson, Head of Private Sector Housing.	Ext: 4753
Directorate: Chief Executive	Department/Division: Private Sector Housing

Director: James Goddard/Chris Trowell	Date: 02/02/2021
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STEP 1: DEFINING THE ISSUE

1. Summarise why you are having to make a new decision

The Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant provided under the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, and is designed to enable the homes of disabled people to be adapted to meet their needs.

Discretionary grants as set out in the policy are made under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) at the discretion of the council to meet local needs.

Hackney's existing Disabled Adaptation Policy was last reviewed on the 1st of April 2012 within the "preparing a policy" guidelines under the RRO 2002. A review of that policy is necessary to enable the Council to address issues on a wider preventative basis that cannot not be covered using Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) alone. It also presents an opportunity to improve the efficiency in managing and delivering the grants schemes.

2. Who are the main people that will be affected?

- Owner occupiers and private tenants
- Residents of Registered Provider Landlords
- Home Improvement Agencies
- Adult Social Care
- Children Social care (Hackney Ark)

STEP 2: ANALYSING THE ISSUES

3. What information and consultation have you used to inform your decision making?

This is an existing statutory service. The proposal is to refresh the existing policy which is necessary to enable the Council to address issues on a wider preventative basis that cannot be covered using mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) alone.

In 2002 the government brought in the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 which provides freedom and opportunities for the Local Authority to address housing issues. This Order had important implications for local housing authorities because it repeals much of the existing prescriptive legislation governing the provision of renewal grants to homeowners and replaces it with a new wide-ranging power to provide assistance for housing renewal.

In 2008-9 the government extended the scope of the RRO to include use of the DFG budget. This enables the authorities to use specific DFG funding for wider purposes.

This proposal is to update the London Borough of Hackney's disabled adaptation policy which was effective from the 1st April, 2012, using the RRO to have a Housing Grants and Assistance Policy that gives the council the freedom and opportunities to address housing issues borough-wide. It also sets out the range and scope of discretionary grants which fall outside of the mandatory disabled facilities grant regime.

Equality Impacts

4. Identifying the impacts

This policy affects vulnerable groups from all parts of the community.

4 (a) What positive impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?

People with physical disability are entitled to apply for a DFG and where their application is supported by a recommendation from a Hackney Council Occupational Therapist the Council is under a statutory duty to make them an offer of a grant. A large proportion of applicants are older, frail people who need this assistance to continue living well in their homes.

The DFG service may be seen as an important Council contribution to the range of preventative services which directly impact on the health and wellbeing of Hackney Council residents and potentially avoid more expensive health and social care interventions.

a. Race

People from any ethnic minority group are entitled to apply for grants. There is no anticipated impact on such groups from the proposal.

b. Disability

The provisions within this policy, including some additional funding will have a positive effect on this group.

c. Gender

No anticipated detrimental impact. There may be a positive impact for women as we know that a significant proportion of DFG applicants are older people and the life expectancy of women is generally greater.

d. Age

The provision of additional funding will have a positive effect on older age groups.

e. Religion

No detrimental impact.

f. Sexual orientation.

No detrimental impact.

g. Gender reassignment

No detrimental impact.

h. Pregnancy and Maternity

There may be a positive effect as adaptations made may remove potential hazards within their homes. No detrimental impact.

i. Marriage and Civil Partnership

No detrimental impact.

4 (b) What negative impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?

No detrimental impact.

STEP 3: REACHING YOUR DECISION

5. Describe the recommended decision

To refresh the existing Disabled Adaptation Policy and introduce a refreshed Housing Grants and Assistance Policy to encapsulate the changes and powers given to local

authority by the RRO. This will bring the council grant scheme up to date and enable us to make the most of the Better Care Funding and capital funded discretionary grants.

STEP 4 DELIVERY – MAXIMISING BENEFITS AND MANAGING RISKS

6. Equality and Cohesion Action Planning

Please list specific actions which set out how you will address equality and cohesion issues identified by this assessment. For example,

- Steps/ actions you will take to enhance positive impacts identified in section 4 (a)
- Steps/ actions you will take to mitigate against the negative impacts identified in section 4 (b)
- Steps/ actions you will take to improve information and evidence about a specific client group, e.g. at a service level and/or at a Council level by informing the policy team (equality.diversity@hackney.gov.uk)

All actions have been identified already and should be included in the PSH Service Plan and action plans put in place to implement the policy.

Positive impacts from refreshing the grant policy will be evaluated by collecting customer satisfaction data from specified equality groups through the process. This data will inform us of the turnaround efficiency of the adaptations process from start to completion and allow the service to work more effectively liaising with the responsible bodies involved in the process.