

# Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

<b>Name or Brief Description of Proposal</b>	<b>Discretionary Disabled Adaptations Financial Assistance Policy 2026-2028</b>
<b>Brief Service Profile</b>	
<p>The revised Southampton City Council Discretionary Disabled Adaptations Financial Assistance Policy sets out how the council can offer financial assistance in the form of grants towards improving and repairing private housing stock in the city. This policy is for children and adults.</p> <p>This policy sets out assistance that the council can offer, who can apply, what it can be used for and any conditions attached to taking the assistance.</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are provided to adapt a home environment to restore or enable independent living for individuals with a disability. The maximum amount of grant funding that can be awarded under a mandatory DFG is currently £30,000.</p> <p>The purposes for which a DFG may be given are set out in Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating Access – works facilitate the disabled person’s access to their home or garden.</li> <li>- Making a Dwelling or Building Safe – adaptations to ensure the safety of the disabled person within their home.</li> <li>- Access to a room usable for sleeping.</li> <li>- Access to a bathroom.</li> <li>- Facilitating preparation and cooking of food – adaptations to enable the disabled person to utilise a kitchen.</li> </ul>	

- Heating, lighting and power – improvements to the home of the disabled persons home to meet their needs.
- Dependant Residents – works to enable a disabled occupant better access around the dwelling in order to care for a dependent.
- Common parts – works to the common parts of a building to facilitate access to the individual disabled person's home or garden.

Under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO 2002), Local Authorities have powers and the flexibility to grant financial assistance packages including the power to provide Discretionary Disabled Adaptations Financial Assistance schemes. To legally be able to offer discretionary financial assistance any council must have a published strategy, have a specific policy to provide financial assistance which also sets out how this assistance will be provided.

This discretionary financial assistance can include assistance to meet people's needs through adaptations to their homes in cases including (but not limited to) the following:

- Where the amount of spend exceeds, the maximum amount awarded as a Disabled Facilities Grant (currently £30,000).
- To facilitate the relocation to a more suitable property for disabled people.
- To facilitate urgent adaptation to a home to enable hospital discharge.
- To facilitate essential repairs in addition to the mandatory DFG, to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals.
- Where the individual is significantly impacted by statutory means testing in relation to adaptations.
- To facilitate early adaptation in advance of the disabled person becoming eligible for DFG in the next 2 years, and an early adaptation will reduce risk of harm and cost of care package over future years.
- To facilitate ongoing warranty for service, statutory inspection & maintenance of existing equipment so that it is safe, serviceable and legally compliant for continued use by the disabled person and/or carers.
- Financial assistance where Disabled occupant fails to qualify for Mandatory DFG due to calculated financial contribution level exceeding grant amount.
- Occupational therapy supported care or assisted technology adaptations needed to assist in improving the quality of life for those with disabilities and those living with Dementia.

Discretionary assistance may also be offered where a particular type of adaptation is not provided for within the mandatory DFG process, or where financial assistance will enable flexibility, quality and choice for the applicant to meet their specific needs and help achieve person-centred integrated care.

Evidence:

2023 data also shows that 3,538 children under 16 receive Disability Living Allowance in Southampton.

According to current statistics from 2023, there are 6,552 people aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own. This is predicted to increase to 8,631 Southampton residents aged 65 and over by 2040, an increase of 31.7% by 2040.

By age 60-64, over a third, have at least three long term conditions and by age 80, over a third have at least six long term conditions.

### Summary of Impact and Issues

This assessment is crucial in ensuring that the needs of all individuals, regardless of their background, are considered and addressed.

**Impact:**

The proposed policy is expected to have a significant positive impact on promoting equality and inclusivity within the community. By addressing the specific needs of diverse groups, the policy aims to reduce disparities and enhance access to opportunities for all individuals. Key areas of impact include:

- **Access to Services:** The policy will improve access to essential services for underrepresented groups, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to benefit from these services.
- **Employment Opportunities:** By promoting fair hiring practices and providing support for career development, the policy will help to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce.
- **Community Engagement:** The policy encourages active participation from all community members, fostering a sense of belonging and collaboration.

**Issues:**

While the policy has the potential to bring about positive change, there are several issues that need to be addressed to ensure its successful implementation:

- **Resource Allocation:** Adequate resources must be allocated to support the initiatives outlined in the policy. This includes funding, staffing, and training to ensure that the policy's goals can be effectively achieved.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** A robust framework for monitoring and evaluating the policy's impact is essential. This will help to identify any unintended consequences and make necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Continuous engagement with stakeholders, including community groups and advocacy organisations, is crucial to ensure that the policy remains relevant and responsive to the needs of all individuals.
- **Communication:** Clear and effective communication strategies are needed to raise awareness about the policy and its benefits. This will help to build support and encourage participation from all community members.

**No negative impacts identified**

### **Potential Positive Impacts**

The mandatory and discretionary grants made available by the Financial Assistance Policy will have a positive impact on older people living in Southampton by broadening the range of grants and types of adaptations available in a more flexible way.

The grants will:

- improve the homes of older people to make them warmer and help avoid exacerbating chronic health conditions.
- reduce the risk of falls.
- reduce the risk of ill health and injuries that lead to hospital admissions.
- ensure the homes of older people, are adapted to their changing needs to help them maintain their independence, live at home for longer, and avoid/delay the need for long term care and/or admission to a residential care service.

Children and young people will also benefit from the policy in similar ways, in particular young children who have chronic health conditions that may be exasperated by poor housing conditions.

Children with Behaviours that Challenge will also benefit as grants are considered to support with improving these behaviours to reduce the impact of these.

<b>Responsible Service Manager</b>	Peter Gaimster
<b>Date</b>	27.11.2025
<b>Approved by Senior Manager</b>	Maria Byrne
<b>Date</b>	27.11.2025

## Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>Due to increasing aging population there is a higher number of older persons in the community. Currently the life expectancy for men in Southampton is 77.9 years and for women 82.3 years.</p> <p>The older population is projected to grow proportionately more than any other group in Southampton in the next few years.</p> <p>The over 65 population is set to increase by 18.2%, or 7,021 people, between 2023 and 2030, with the over 75 population set to increase by 17.9%, or 3,448 people.</p> <p>This would suggest that there will be an increasing amount of elderly people who are likely to need adaptations.</p> <p>There has been a national concern about the delayed discharge of people from hospitals. Older people and disabled people are more likely to be affected by this. One of the reasons for delayed discharges is the individuals home no longer meets the person's care and support needs.</p> <p>The continued discretionary financial assistance will have a positive impact on this as it will enable individuals to have adaptations done more quickly and adaptations to be done where previously they had to be declined under the DFG.</p>	<p>The policy will have a positive impact on all age groups as it benefits children of all ages; the working age population and the older age population.</p>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>2023 data also shows that 3,538 children under 16 receive Disability Living Allowance.</p> <p>According to current statistics from 2023, there are 6,552 people aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own.</p> <p>This is predicted to increase to 8,631 Southampton residents aged 65 and over by 2040, an increase of 31.7% by 2040. By age 60-64, over a third, have at least three long term conditions and by age 80, over a third have at least six long term conditions.</p>	<p>The policy will have a positive impact by being able to support more vulnerable and disabled children and adults within Southampton.</p>

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	<p>The policy gives the group dignity and more independence, as without the adaptations, there may be a need for them to leave their home to go into care or to not be able to return home from hospital. The hope is that adaptations to the home may prevent falls.</p> <p>The discretionary financial assistance will have a positive impact on this as it will enable individuals to have adaptations done more quickly and adaptations to be done where previously they had to be declined under the DFG.</p>	
<b>Care Experienced</b>	The policy does not specifically mention care experienced however the DFG guidance outlines criteria and eligibility.	N/A
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	The policy does not specifically mention marriage and civil partnership.	N/A
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	The policy does not specifically mention pregnancy and maternity.	N/A
<b>Race</b>	The policy does not specifically mention race.	N/A
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	The policy does not specifically mention religion or belief.	N/A
<b>Sex</b>	<p>The availability of housing grants through the policy is not to be affected by the sex or gender of the applicant, the policy has a neutral impact dependent on gender.</p> <p>The policy is likely to affect females more as the life expectancy for women is longer.</p> <p>Further, 59% of carers are female according to Carers UK. Older women are providing the highest hours of unpaid care. Therefore, women are more likely to be affected by carers fatigue due to greater amount of people remaining independent in their homes.</p> <p>The draft policy and discretionary financial assistance will enable this</p>	The policy explicitly states that people will be treated as required by the Equalities Act 2010 and that people's rights are protected.

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	group of people to be more independent, fully enjoy their accommodation and lead fulfilled lives.	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	The policy does not specifically mention sexual orientation. Referrals are received from the occupational therapy teams if they meet the criteria as outlined in the policy.	The policy explicitly states that people will be treated as required by the Equalities Act 2010 and that people's rights are protected.
<b>Community Safety</b>	The policy does not specifically mention community safety.	N/A
<b>Poverty</b>	<p>The discretionary grants available in the policy will have a positive effect on people with low incomes. It is known that people on low incomes are more likely to have multiple health conditions and disabilities (Research completed by the Academy of Medical Sciences) and will therefore benefit from having greater range of adaptations available through a more flexible approach.</p> <p>The average cost of DFG adaptations has risen significantly over the past decade, whilst the means test and passporting arrangements (where some people receive a DFG automatically because of the benefits they receive) have remained the same since May 2008.</p> <p>Whilst the cost of adaptations is increasing the policy will make it easier for people with low economic status to receive financial assistance to adapt their home to make it more accessible and safer. Although the policy has financial eligibility criteria for high cost discretionary grants to ensure assistance is provided to the people that need it most and not to people that can afford their own adaptations, the discretionary grants enable more people to receive grants without a formal means test to ensure assistance is provided to people who need adaptations to help them maintain their independence but cannot afford them because of their low income and lack of savings.</p>	<p>Discretionary assistance offered within the policy of up to £16,000 of adaptations if the applicant is on means tested (passported) benefits</p> <p>Intention to work with Parity Trust to offer low cost, low interest loans to help improve the applicant's environment will help increase the number of options available to lower income households to meet repair costs and improve energy efficiency.</p>

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	Multimorbidity: a priority for global health research, The Academy of Medical Sciences, April 2018;	
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	The policy enables the council to use discretionary powers to deliver a broader range of housing grant assistance to disabled vulnerable children and adults in a flexible way. This should have a positive impact on health and wellbeing in the short and long term to improve housing conditions, reducing hazards and supporting with independence.	Referrals are received from the occupational therapy teams if they meet the criteria as outlined in the policy.  The council also works closely with the Environment Centre and Southampton Healthy Homes to support Southampton's residents to stay safe and warm in their homes and has introduced a new Winter Warmth initiative to help low income disabled residents this winter 2025-26.
<b>Other Significant Impacts</b>  <b>Gender reassignment</b>	The availability of housing grants through the policy is not affected by gender reassignment, the policy has a neutral impact on people who have re-assigned their gender or are in the process of doing so.	The policy makes housing grants available to people who have reassigned their gender or going through gender re-assignment in the same way as other people. The determining factors for eligibility to the housing grants are based on an individual's disability or chronic health need.