

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Aids and Adaptations Policy	
Directorate: Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	Service area: Housing Options
Lead person: Helen Caulfield-Browne	Contact: Helen.caulfield-browne@rotherham.gov.uk 01709 807831
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
The Councils Aids and Adaptations Policy was last written in 2015. The policy provides information about the Council's responsibilities, including legal duties, and

financial assistance to help deliver adaptations to the homes of local older and disabled people. The current policy is aimed at council tenants and private occupants. (Owner occupiers, private tenants, or tenants of private registered providers - housing associations). The policy is outdated and combines policy and operational procedures.

Some significant changes since the last Aids and Adaptation Policy was written in 2015. The screening is focused on the policy review.

Consideration as part of the planned policy review

- The Council's Housing, Adult Social Care and the National Health Service (NHS) are increasingly delivering integrated services for vulnerable households and recognising the benefits of enabling people to stay in their own homes wherever possible. The new refreshed Policy needs to be reflective of the development of preventative services to avoid more costly implications elsewhere, ensuring the policy is aligned with the Council Plan, Better Care Plan 2022 the South Yorkshire ICS Integrated Care Strategy, and the four key themes of the Adult Social Care operating model - Prevention, Integration, Care co-ordination and Maximising independence and reablement.
- The first new official government guidance for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in 18 years has been published (28 March 2022). The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have worked closely with Foundations (the national body for home improvement agencies). This guidance is to advise local authorities in England how they can effectively and efficiently deliver Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funded adaptations to best serve the needs of local older and disabled people.
- This publication follows calls from the home adaptations sector and local authorities for clearer guidance around local DFG delivery. It also follows the findings of the 2018 independent review of the DFG that recommended new guidance should set out expectations for local authorities in administering the DFG and the rights of a disabled person making an application for the grant to ensure the guidance builds on the needs of older and disabled people.
- Under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, Article 3 (RRO) housing authorities can use government funding for the DFG more flexibly once written into policy. This funding is primarily for the provision of home adaptations to help people to live independently. Local authorities can set out what additional adaptations assistance is to be provided. Wider powers enable local authorities to offer other forms of assistance such as repairs, or assistance to move, if an applicant's home is unsuitable for adaptation. An example is by the relaxation of the means test which can be lengthy and complex. In some cases, the means testing requirement makes households not eligible for assistance. This often means the works are not carried out or don't fully meet

the person needs, therefore does not support prevention, promote independence, and does not help to delay the need for more costly services. Discretionary DFG's can support the facilitation of urgent hospital discharges or support people with their end-of-life pathway when diagnosed with a terminal illness and remain at home.

- The objectives of an Aids and Adaptions Policy are the same for all residents. The Council currently use the DFG eligibility criteria and much of the statutory DFG guidance for Council tenants, unless there are exceptions which are governed by the conditions of the DFG's.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?	X	
Could the proposal affect service users?	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	X	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	X	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		X

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

N/A

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

An Aids and Adaptation review was undertaken in November 2020 by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. The work of the Panel is facilitated and supported by Rotherfed, the Council's Tenant Federation provider. Recommendations were considered and agreed. An action plan was developed by the service in response to the recommendations and implemented.

The report identified that the Policy needed a refresh, recommendations examples are:

- Consider accessibility for tenants, involve tenant representatives in the development of this.
- Explore links between adaptations and different services e.g., NHS, Occupational Therapists and Assistive Technology.
- Review the financial assessments for Council tenants and the re-housing of tenants to previously adapted accommodation, as the panel found the policy was found to be misleading and examine the charging policy and how clear it is.

The Council will ensure the needs of applicants are at the heart of the grant application process, including through the provision of clear information to applicants, and specification design.

Understanding the demographics of the customer group will need to be better understood to help identify any key factor to consider in the development of the policy and associated communication of the new policy.

Data, information, and analysis is from a range of local sources, including Joint Strategic Needs assessment data, Census Data, Projecting Adult Needs and Services Information (PANSI) Rotherham and Sheffield Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2018.

There are identified needs which the policy will address:

- Data shows that the Rotherham population has increased steadily by roughly 1,000 per year from an estimated 257,716 in 2011 to 266,200 in 2021 (+3.3%).
- The total population aged 18-64 predicted to have impaired mobility, (impaired mobility, defined as people who experience moderate or severe or complete difficulty with mobility, such as walking or climbing stairs) was estimated at 8,833 in 2020, this is predicted to increase by 2.4% to 9045 by 2025. People aged 35-44 are the highest age group predicted to have an increase in impaired mobility out of all adult age groups.

Older People:

The population aged 65 and over in Rotherham was estimated at 52,228 in 2021, this is predicted to increase by 7% to 57,100 by 2025 and by 16% to 61,900 by 2030. The age group of 75+ is showing the greatest rate of increase compared to national data.

In 2021 it was estimated that the number of people aged 65 and over who need help with at least one self-care activity, was 15,640. This number is expected to increase by 8% to 15,354 by 2025 and by 16% to 17,867 by the year 2030.

In Rotherham, there is a long-term trend moving away from traditional care home provision that mirrors the national picture. People are being supported at home for as long as possible and are entering 24-hour care for the last 2 to 3 years of their life when the complexity of needs has increased, and they are unable to manage their long-term conditions in their own home.

Older people are more vulnerable to accidents in the home, with those aged 65 plus having the highest risk of falling. Incidence of falls and the associated distress, pain and injury can also result in loss of confidence, independency, and mortality.

The full EIA aims to analysis all data available covering all protected characteristics.

The Aids and Adaptations equality data is not accessible on the data system used (Flare) by the service. This is due to the current system not being able to produce a report, also not all equality data has been captured. Therefore, equality data is limited and will not cover all protected characteristics. The minimum accessible data will be age and gender (male or female) Data from other sources such as the Joint Strategic Needs assessment data, Census Data, Projecting Adult Needs and Services Information (PANSI) Rotherham and Sheffield Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2018.

The data system is soon to be changing and part of the procurement package will specify that all equality and protected characteristic information must be reportable.

- **Key findings**

The policy is aimed at people who are disabled of any age and is inclusive of all people

that meet the criteria for Aids and Adaptations assistance. Although data demonstrated that older population are more likely to access aids and adaptations.

The demographic in Rotherham is aging. Because of this, we are likely to see a proportional year on year increase in the number of referrals for aids and adaptations.

The policy is there to support Council tenants and those living in the private sector to live independently and safely through the provision of equipment and adaptations. As such, no group or individual across Borough should be adversely affected or disadvantaged as a result of this policy.

The policy will have a positive impact by ensuring that aids and adaptations are accessible for everyone to ensure that everyone has a chance to live as independently as possible.

The policy will demonstrate a transparent approach to making decisions on who is eligible for assistance and how decisions are made for Council tenants and for private who's approval for funding is governed by legislation in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the 1996 Act) and where the Council decided to use its power under RRO powers.

An analysis on of those already accessing the service will help ensure that the policy has a positive impact across all communities and protected characteristics.

The Strategy will align with other key strategies and frameworks across the Council as part of the "One Council" approach. Such as the following:

- Council Plan and Year Ahead Plan
- Housing Service Plan
- Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Housing Strategy

Actions

- Complete a full Equality Analysis
- Highlight the challenges to complete Part B full EIA to the Head of Service
- Ensure supporting data is used to shape the policy and reflective of local demographics
- Collate equality data to help inform the full EIA during the review
- Plan the level of consultation required for the policy review
- Review the RotherFed Tenants Scrutiny Review of the 2015 policy

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	May 2023
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	October 2023
Lead person for your Equality Analysis	Helen Caulfield-Browne

(Include name and job title):	Housing Options, Operational Manager Adult Care, Housing and Public Health Directorate
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5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Sandra Tolley	Head of Housing Options	14/4/2023
Steve Eling	Policy and Equalities Manager	20/04/2023

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	16.03.2023
Report title and date	Aids and Adaptions Policy Review
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	10.07.23
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	14.04.2023