

Appendix V
Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Stage One Screening Record 2024

Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Home Adaptations Policy 2024
Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Tami Sabanovic, Housing Strategy and Development Officer

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	✓	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		✓

If completion of a Stage One screening assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above, and complete both part A and part B of of this template. If a Full or Stage Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Actions to mitigate likely negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

The policy has been developed to ensure fair, equitable and consistent treatment for all disabled people who require the Council’s assistance to adapt their home. It demonstrates consideration and due regard across all the protected characteristics outlined in legislation, and;

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups

To mitigate any negative impacts and enhance positive impacts, overall recommendations are around conducting thorough assessments of housing accessibility and adaptation needs for people with disabilities, implementing measures to prevent homelessness and address housing instability, and promoting social inclusion, equality and the wellbeing of Shropshire residents.

Given the recognised intersectionality across the nine Protected Characteristic groupings as set out in the Equality Act 2010, there will be a predicted low to medium positive impact for individuals and households across groupings,

particularly in the groupings of Age and Disability. The Council will seek to maximise positive equality impacts for those we may consider to be vulnerable, including people fleeing hate crime and people with disabilities. Additionally, there will be an anticipated positive impact for veterans 21/02/24 and serving members of the armed forces and their families, for whom the Council seeks to have due regard to need through our tenth category of consideration of Social Inclusion. This is not an Equality Act category, rather representing our efforts as a Council to consider the needs of households in Shropshire and the circumstances in which they may find themselves. There are additional positive impacts anticipated for people from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, who are considered as being included in the Protected Characteristic grouping of Race. For the groupings of Race and of Religion or Belief, the impact is anticipated to be neutral to low positive with outreach efforts to engage with those for whom English is not their first language, e.g. refugee families.

The policy changes will support independent living for disabled and older people, helping to prevent delays in necessary adaptations.

- Foster good relations between people from different groups

The outcome we want to achieve is independence and accessible and safe homes for all. There will be an overall positive impact helping overcome the barriers to independent living and reduce risks posed by the living environment for older disabled people living in their own home and to support the care provided by paid or unpaid carers.

There is a potential for a positive impact on disabled people of a working age who on paper people seem to have sufficient income (assessed by Shropshire Council) using the national financial assessment for Major Adaptations Grant) but in reality, have heavy outgoings that may mean they are unable to get loans to cover the element of the costs of work they would be responsible for.

We will continue to provide a service which is accessible to individuals beyond physical disabilities, such as cognitive and sensory impairments. The policy sets out the available support, ensuring that individuals with diverse needs can access the assistance they require, enhancing the positive impact of the policy change.

Actions to mitigate likely negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations

The initial assessment indicates that the policy may have both positive and negative impacts on health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider community. Anticipated positive impacts include improved accessibility to necessary adaptations, leading to enhanced safety and independence for individuals with disabilities and older adults. Additionally, the streamlined process may reduce stress and anxiety associated with navigating services.

There may be potential impacts such as increased waiting times for assessments or adaptations, which could temporarily disrupt individuals living arrangements and contribute to feelings of uncertainty. To mitigate these potential negative impacts and enhance positive ones, the following actions are anticipated:

- Implementing efficient assessment procedures to minimise waiting times and ensure timely access to support.
- Providing comprehensive information and support services to individuals and their families to alleviate concerns and facilitate a smooth transition.
- Collaborating with health and social care providers to offer holistic support, addressing both physical and mental well-being needs.
- Continuously monitoring the implementation of the policy to identify any emerging issues and make necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

Major Adaptations Register

Continuously reviewing the Major Adaptations Register to track the uptake of services and identify any disparities or trends among different demographic groups. This will ensure that support is equitably distributed and accessible to all who need it.

Consultation Feedback

Analysing consultation feedback to identify any underrepresented groupings and develop targeted engagement strategies. This may involve reaching out through alternative channels or collaborating with community organisations that represent these groups.

Learning from Comparative Good Practice

Seeking out and learning from comparative good practice in other rural local authorities facing similar challenges, such as ageing demographic profiles and access to services. This could involve knowledge-sharing initiatives, networking with other authorities, or participating in relevant workshops.

Government Reviews

By regularly reviewing and incorporating insights from published Government Reviews we can ensure that our policies remain aligned with best practices and evolving standards in the field.

Performance reports

Performance Reports provide valuable data and insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of home adaptations services. By analysing key metrics such as response times, customer satisfaction levels and outcomes achieved, we can identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. This ongoing

monitoring allows us to make informed decisions and alignments to optimise service delivery and better meet the needs of our community.

Associated ESHIAs

There is commonality of policy intent with ESHIAs recently undertaken for housing related strategic policy approaches, including the Housing Allocations Policy and Scheme, Health Inequality Plan, Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy, and more widely with ESHIAs undertaken for the Local Plan Partial Review and for the Shropshire Plan.

Actions to mitigate likely negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor the overall impacts with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts

Climate change

The following will help to enhance positive impacts in terms of climate change:

- Being able to access a home which meets a household's needs is essential to health and wellbeing, which includes homes that are affordable to heat
- Investment in adaptations for individuals with disabilities will make best use of existing housing stock

Economic and societal/wider community

Healthy People:

Accessibility and Inclusivity - Improved mental health and stress
Preventing homelessness and providing adaptive housing can alleviate the strain on healthcare services.

Healthy Economy:


Economic Employment and productivity - reduction in public costs associated with emergency services and health care.

Healthy Environment:

Societal and Wider Community Priorities - Social Inclusion, allowing individuals to actively participate in their communities, Reducing Disparities in housing access and quality, promoting social equity and reducing social inequalities.

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Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer for the proposed service change Tami Sabanovic		05.08.2024
Officer carrying out the screening		
Any other internal service area support*		
Any external support**		

*This refers to other officers within the service area

**This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g, the Performance and Research Specialist for Rurality and Equalities, Public Health colleagues, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, etc.

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name		05.08.2024
Service manager's name Jane Trethewey		05.08.24

*This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

A. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

The Council's Home Adaptations Policy has been drafted to set out the guidance on the available assistance for home adaptations in Shropshire. This policy addresses the housing needs of disabled individuals, aiming to promote independent living.

This policy sets out the current position with regard to financial assistance provided by the Council under the powers given by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002¹, which introduced a greater flexibility and discretionary power in providing housing assistance and funding to local authorities and applies to any residents living in owner-occupied homes, housing association and private rented tenants.

The Housing Grants, Construction, and Regeneration Act 1996¹, with amendments from the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008², makes it the council's legal duty to adapt homes for disabled people in accordance with local, regional and national priorities, while considering available funding.

Shropshire Council may only use powers identified within the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) if there is a published local Housing Assistance policy (Home Adaptations Policy).

The relevant Legislation is as follows:

- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- The Housing Act 2004
- The Housing Act 1985

Central government funding for Major Adaptations Grants in England was set to be £573 million in 2023/24 and to remain at this level in the next financial year and on 4 April 2023, an additional £102 million was announced as a capital top up. The grants are administered by local authorities (in England) and are aimed at enabling eligible disabled individuals to continue to live safely and independently at home through adaptations.

Funds will be prioritised due to limited resources.

- Financial assistance is only available for properties which are located within the boundaries of Shropshire Council Local Authority.
- The Council will attach specific conditions to funding and tell applicants what these conditions are before it gives an approval for a particular funding stream.

The main changes to the grant process will be a more generous monetary limit – from £30,000 to £100,000 – and a means test that reflects the current financial climate of the UK. The DFG means test has not been updated since 2008. There have also been some minor adjustments to the grant conditions regarding repayment of grant monies. These changes are all in the applicant's favour.

Where there is a disabled person in a household, in many circumstances local authorities have a mandatory duty to offer a Major Adaptations Grant (MAG) to assist with the cost of adaptation work. This assistance is provided, in accordance with statute. It is subject to a maximum grant limit of **£100,000**, for adaptations to facilitate better access into and around the home and for essential provisions within it for the disabled applicant and his or her family. This maximum grant will be reduced by the assessed client contribution. All works will be carried out in the most cost-effective manner to meet the disabled person's needs.

It aligns with the Shropshire Plan 2022-2025¹ "Healthy People", which centres on priorities promoting healthy living, a robust economy, a sustainable environment, and an efficient organisation and focussing on reducing inequalities, across all areas, all of which are connected to housing initiatives. It focuses on addressing the housing needs of vulnerable populations in Shropshire, to include home adaptations.

The Home Adaptations policy is designed to contribute towards the council's strategic aims and objectives by assisting with:

- a. The improvement of housing quality in all tenures
- b. Enabling people to stay in their home as they get older and provide disabled persons with maximum manoeuvrability around their homes
- c. Improvement of social care, health and social wellbeing

The Home Adaptations Policy replaces all previously published Housing Adaptations and Assistance Policies and will apply to all applications from 2024 implementation.

The new Policy provides a better and fairer grants process for all residents of Shropshire.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The intended audiences and target groups for the proposed service change remain consistent with previous housing adaptation initiatives in Shropshire. The Policy will affect any person making an application for funding to provide adaptations.

However, the significance of this change lies in its alignment with regulatory requirements stipulated by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO). Specifically, Shropshire Council is empowered to utilise the powers outlined in the RRO only in conjunction with a published local housing assistance policy, which, in this instance, is represented by the Home Adaptations Policy.

It's important to emphasise that the Home Adaptations Policy replaces all previously published housing adaptations and assistance policies, becoming the primary framework governing the provision of housing adaptation services in

¹ [The Shropshire Plan 2022-2025 | Shropshire Council](#)

Shropshire. Upon approval, the policy will come into effect from the 2024 implementation and will apply to all applications thereafter.

This policy framework is essential as it enables Shropshire Council to effectively deliver housing adaptation services in accordance with regulatory requirements and community needs. Throughout the process of consultation and approval, strategic partners will be actively engaged to ensure alignment with collaborative efforts and community priorities. During the consultation period, input will be sought from local elected councillors due to their strong relationships with their communities, as well as from other relevant agencies closely involved in providing advice and guidance to individuals accessing the service. This collaborative approach ensures that the Home Adaptations Policy reflects the diverse needs of the community and facilitates equitable access to housing support services for all residents of Shropshire."

Evidence used for screening of the service change

The draft strategy draws upon the previous Home Adaptations and Assistance Policy and is further informed by data collection through Power-BI dashboards.

From a national angle, the following evidence has also aided the strategy development:

- The mandatory DFG legislation & guidance can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/part/II/chapter/II/crossheading/disabled-facilities-grants> and Gov.UK guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-facilities-grant-dfg-delivery-guidance-for-local-authorities-in-england>
- Home Adaptations for Disabled People: A detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice [CHAPTER 1 \(cieh.org\)](#)

To ensure the strategy's relevance and effectiveness, the Council will examine on data from sources such as guidance from the Homes Adaptations Consortium and national guidance. This ongoing analysis will guide the Council's decision-making processes and enable us to adapt our approach based on real-time data and evolving needs.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

This policy does not require a public and stakeholder consultation. The current guidance on financial assistance for adaptations encourages local authorities to use discretionary powers to provide better assistance for people with disabilities.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below this table)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column. Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Stage Two ESHIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Stage One ESHIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Stage One ESHIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Stage One ESHIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with a disability)		Residents can apply for a MAG at any age, however older people are more likely to need certain adaptations to support them to remain in their home		
<u>Disability</u> (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)		All applicants for Home Adaptations Grants MAG and MAGE are disabled and require adaptations to their homes		
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓

<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				✓
<u>Religion or Belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				✓
<u>Sex</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
<u>Sexual Orientation</u> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
<u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty or on low incomes; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities)		The enhanced grant levels will impact on those households who have a low income and cannot afford to 'top up' their loans to have necessary adaptations completed.		
<u>Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families</u>				✓
<u>Other: Young people leaving care</u>				✓

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
<p>Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p> <p>.</p>		✓		
<p>Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p> <p>.</p>		✓		
<p>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p> <p>.</p>		✓		
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or</p>		✓		

access to health and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?

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