

## Home Assistance Policy

### Summary

To adopt a Home Assistance Policy setting out how the Council will use its powers under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 to deliver better outcomes for older, disabled and vulnerable residents while meeting Borough, CCG and Adult Social Care priorities.

### Portfolio - Regulatory

**Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 16 January 2018**

**Wards Affected All**

### Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the Home Assistance Policy be adopted and be put into immediate effect.

## 1. Resource Implications

- 1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government allocate Local Housing Authorities funding to deliver a capital Disabled Facilities Grant Programme. The funding is then placed unringfenced into the Better Care Fund and the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Adult Social Care make decisions on how the funding will be allocated.
- 1.2 The allocation for Surrey Heath increased from c.£300,000 in 2016/17 to £660,000 2017/18. In 2018/19 a similar sum is expected.
- 1.3 In the current and previous year the funding has passed from the Better Care Fund to Surrey Boroughs and Districts, although this year a contribution has been made from the funding to the Community Equipment Service.
- 1.4 At the current level of funding there is no requirement for the Council to make a capital contribution however if the funding is not allocated to the Council from the Better Care Fund there will still be a duty to deliver capital funding for Disabled Facility Grants.

## 2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council is required to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant programme under The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and has the power to be flexible in the way it delivers adaptations and other assistance through the Regulatory Reform Order 2002.

- 2.2 While there is a clearly stated Government policy that Disabled Facilities Grant allocations be passported to the Local Housing Authority it is un-ring-fenced within the Better Care Fund and therefore, with pressures on health and social care, there is a risk that a proportion of the money is top sliced.
- 2.3 The increase in Central Government funding was to enable the systems to be set up at a local level that will deliver more integrated, better targeted services that reduce hospital admission, improve re-enablement, promote and extend independence and delay admission to residential care. In short the argument was for proactive services that reduced reactive health and care costs.
- 2.4 In order to protect funding from the Better Care Fund it is essential that the Council can deliver fast and flexible services to residents in a way that meet the health and social care agenda, and that services are embedded in the local health and social care offer.
- 2.5 This Home Assistance Policy identifies the assistance that the Council can offer vulnerable homeowners, owners and tenants of privately and socially rented accommodation, and disabled adults and children to repair, improve or adapt their homes. It outlines the eligibility criteria and the terms on which assistance may be provided.
- 2.6 Our approach is one of enabling rather than simply providing funding, and is holistic in offering practical solutions as well as wider support and advice linked to other community services. We will work alongside residents to encourage self-help wherever possible and expect that a range of funding sources are sought to deliver identified works.
- 2.7 Priority funding will be offered to applicants of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants where it is being used for home adaptations to meet their specific needs and ensure that they and their carers have an environment that is as safe as possible. All other forms of assistance are discretionary and are therefore subject to the availability of funding.
- 2.8 This Policy supports preventing hospital admissions and speeds up hospital discharge by making residents home safe and providing adaptations, it supports independence and keeping people in their communities and it supports the strategic aims of the Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group and Surrey County Council Social Care priorities.

### **3. Options**

- 3.1 Executive can adopt the Home Assistance Policy as proposed or with amendments.

### **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 To adopt the Home Assistance Policy as attached at Annex A.

## **5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 It is extensively documented that poor housing, unsuitable housing and precarious housing circumstances have a detrimental effect on our physical and mental health. Generally speaking, the health of older people, children, disabled people and those with long-term illnesses is at greater risk from poor housing conditions.

## **6. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities**

- 6.1 As part of the Five Year Strategy the Council is committed to '*build and encourage communities where people can live happily and healthily*'.
- 6.2 A priority within this objective is to '*Support old and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes*'.

## **7. Policy Framework**

- 7.1 Adapting the homes of older and disabled people so they are safe and independent has a positive cost benefit on health and adult social care budgets, as well as providing a better outcomes for individual residents
- 7.2 In recognition of this proactive and preventative approach Government increased the DFG allocations to local authorities in 2016/17.
- 7.3 This Policy has been developed to meet the ambition of the Corporate Plan and the Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Plan, and is aligned to the priorities in the Frimley Health and Care Sustainability and Transformation Plan and Surrey County Council's corporate strategy, Confident in Our Future.

## **8. Legal Issues**

- 8.1 The legislative framework governing DFGs is provided by The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform Order 2002.

## **9. Sustainability**

- 9.1 The adoption of this Policy along with the operational alignment of the Council's Home Improvement Agency with new integrated health and social care services in Surrey Heath supports the allocation of funding from the Better Care Fund to this area of operation.
- 9.2 The recycling of fees and charges will support the revenue delivery of the service.

## **10. Risk Management**

10.1 Delivery of DFGs is mandatory on the Local Housing Authority and any loss of grant allocation may impact on Council budgets as funding would have to be found from an internal source.

## 11. Equalities Impact

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed that indicates positive benefits for residents with certain protective characteristics (notably older people and disabled people) and no negative impact's across any of the protected characteristics.

11.2 The Equality Impact assessment is at Annex B.

## 12. Officer Comments

12.1 In order to support vulnerable residents, attract maximum funding and to be able to use funding in a flexible way, officers consulted colleagues in Adult Social Care and Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group in the development of this Home Assistance Policy to ensure that it supports local priorities.

<b>Annexes</b>	<b>Annex A: Home Assistance Policy Annex B: Equalities Impact Assessment</b>
<b>Background Papers</b>	
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### Consultations, Implications and Issues Addressed

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Consulted</b>
Revenue	✓	
Capital	✓	
Human Resources	✓	
Asset Management		
IT		
<b>Other Issues</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Consulted</b>
Corporate Objectives & Key Priorities	✓	
Policy Framework	✓	
Legal		
Governance		
Sustainability	✓	
Risk Management	✓	
Equalities Impact Assessment	✓	
Community Safety		
Human Rights		
Consultation		
P R & Marketing		

**Review Date:**

**Version:**