



Home Assistance Policy

2018 - 2021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is developing a Healthy Home Strategy setting out its approach to working with the community to ensure our homes meet the needs of our residents and promote health, well-being and independence.
- 1.2 This Home Assistance Policy sits within that wider policy framework and sets out how the Council can use its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to improve the quality of homes for those most in need.

2 Why we are doing this

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Key features of the right home environment are:
 - It is free from avoidable hazards, the occupant is safe from harm and it offers them a sense of security;
 - It enables movement around the home and is accessible to all, including to visitors;
 - It is warm and affordable to heat; and,
 - There is support from others if needed.
- 2.3 The right home environment can:
 - Protect and improve health and wellbeing, and help prevent physical and mental ill-health;
 - Enable people to manage their health and care needs, including long-term conditions, and ensure positive care experiences by integrating services in the home; and,
 - Allow people to remain in a home of their own for as long as they choose.
- 2.4 The wider benefits of the right home environment is to:
 - Delay and reduce the need for primary care and social care interventions, including admission to long-term care settings;
 - Prevent hospital admissions;
 - Enable timely discharge from hospital and prevent re-admissions to hospital;
 - Enable quicker recovery from periods of ill-health or planned admissions; and,
 - Reduce health inequalities.

3 The Policy Commitment

3.1 The activity described in this Policy plays an important part in meeting the Council's ambition in the [Five Year Strategy](#).

3.2 In that strategy the Council recognises that whilst the next five years will bring its challenges, in a fast changing environment there are opportunities too. We are aware of the need to become self-sustaining in terms of our finances and we recognise the requirement to meet the needs of our community in terms of every age range.

3.3 We have grouped our approach to these challenges under 4 themes, one of which is 'People'.

3.4 Our Objective under this theme is:

We will build and encourage communities where people can live happily and healthily.

3.5 Included in our Priorities under this Objective are to:

- *Support older and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes;*
- *Work with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our community by promoting healthy living; and,*
- *Tackle housing need within the community.*

3.6 These priorities are reflected in the [Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Plan](#), produced by Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Board, which consists of members from Surrey Heath Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and the voluntary sector.

3.7 The priorities within the Plan have been chosen based on an assessment of the health and wellbeing needs of the Surrey Heath population and what added value each of the three main partners could bring to services to address these needs.

3.8 The Plan includes the following objectives:

- *Reduce social isolation;*
- *Reduce excess winter deaths;*
- *Help people live independently in their own home; and,*
- *Support older people.*

3.9 The activity in this Policy supports the Council's objectives, the objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Group, and is aligned to the priorities of Surrey Heath CCG, the priorities in the [Frimley Health and Care STP](#) and Surrey County Council's corporate strategy: [Confident in Our Future](#).

4 What we will offer

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 The Council will support vulnerable households with the management of works to their homes through the Home Improvement Agency.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 In assessing the priority for discretionary assistance the Council will have regard to:
- Priorities identified through consultation with local partners and residents;
 - Priorities identified by Surrey County Council (SCC) and Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group (SHCCG) to promote health and well-being, such as:
 - reducing hospital admissions;
 - allowing rapid discharge;
 - keeping people independent in a home that meets their needs, in which care can be effectively delivered;
 - reducing delay in admittance to long term care; and
 - reducing health inequalities.
- 4.6 The targeting of assistance will be based both on presenting need and targeted interventions that are evidenced based (for example on an area, tenure or client group basis or to tackle identified issues such as fuel poverty).

5 The Home Assistance Scheme

- 5.1 [Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002](#) gives the Council the power to adopt a Home Assistance Policy to improve living conditions in the Borough and to provide financial and other assistance in a way that best suits local circumstances and within the financial resources available.

5.2 This Policy sets out how the Council will use these powers to deliver a number of housing related health and well-being packages.

5.3 These packages fall under 4 headings: Priority, Protect, Prevent and Promote.

5.3.1 *Priority Package*

The Priority Package will be targeted at vulnerable residents in hospital or a residential setting who need a speedy response to move them back to the home environment to be provided with the appropriate care. This should help to promote their recovery and maintain independence.

It could also be used to assist with repairs to deficiencies in a person's home that have the potential to place them at risk of severe harm.

5.3.2 *Protect Package*

The Protect Package can deliver fast track adaptations and repairs designed to remedy a hazard or remove obstacles to independence to enable residents to live safely at home.

5.3.3 *Prevent Package*

The Prevent Package can provide works aimed at promoting health and well-being in the home with a focus on works that prevent ill health and injury and allow residents to be and to feel safe in the home environment.

There will also be the scope to pay for relocation for someone whose home becomes unsafe when it is not practical to adapt their current property and their needs could better be met in a more appropriate home. This can be further extended to fund bespoke adaptations at build stage in properties being developed by a housing association for rent, shared ownership or outright sale.

5.3.4 *Promote Package*

Promote funding can be used for take up and education campaigns that target certain client groups to self-serve and access services that promote housing related health and wellbeing. It can also be used for research and development to improve services provided.

5.3.5 Examples of work covered by this Policy, funding streams and policy links can be found at Annex A.

5.3.5 In order to ensure that the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme meets the needs of individual residents as well as the aims of this Policy in line with good practice the Housing Services Manager may agree additional top up to a mandatory DFG of up to £15,000. This discretion will

only be used after other housing options and funding streams have been exhausted and, in order to ensure value for money, the works are required to be managed through the Council's Home Improvement Agency.

What is not covered?

- 5.4 It is important that the Council maximise the value of the available funding and therefore the following works are unlikely to attract grant funding:
- Any works where it is within the means of the resident to fund adaptations or repairs (e.g. through equity release, loans, etc);
 - Works where a responsibility for the upkeep or repair of a property lies with a third party (e.g. landlords, insurance claims, etc.);
 - Properties that are under occupied by two bedrooms or more;
 - Property subject to Council enforcement
- 5.5 In all cases we will work with residents to find options that will allow them to meet their needs in their current or a more suitable home. Where works are being funded by a resident or another source the Council can still act as agent for the duration of the project to support the resident and ensure the works are properly managed.

Who qualifies for help

- 5.6 The Council welcomes direct approaches from residents as well as encouraging referrals from all partner agencies, including Adult Social Care, GPs and voluntary sector agencies working with vulnerable and disabled residents.
- 5.7 Each case will be assessed on its merits and, while provision of a Disabled Facility Grant has clearly defined financial criteria, help through the Home Assistance Scheme will include some flexibility to provide the best outcomes for individual residents and have a positive impact on health and social care delivery. This could include not making charges for small or fast track adaptations that prevent more expensive health or social care interventions.
- 5.8 As part of the enabling strategy where there is clear evidence that the applicant has either sufficient equity in their home or savings to pay for the adaptation they require the Council will endeavour to minimise bureaucracy and carry out the works on the understanding that the recipient will repay the costs involved as an ordinary debt.
- 5.9 The Council will work with the resident, their family and carers, and any relevant agencies to make a holistic assessment of their needs, and identify how best these needs can be met.

- 5.10 This could be by giving appropriate advice to allow the resident to access services or arrange work themselves, referral to other agencies or assisting with works through the Council's Home Improvement Agency. As well as the residents physical environment the Council's Case Officer can offer advice on other issues such as assistive technology, income maximisation, equipment and voluntary services that can have a positive impact on health and well-being.

6 Review

- 6.1 This Policy will run for three years but is reviewed annually to ensure that it is meeting the needs of residents, is delivering a responsive and cost effective service and is aligned to evidenced priorities in Health and Social Care locally.
- 6.2 An annual report will be presented to Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Board.

7 Home Improvement Agency

- 7.1 The Council makes a charge for works it carries out on behalf of residents through its Home Improvement Agency. Fees are reviewed and published annually. The fee income generated will be ring-fenced for reinvestment in delivering home improvement and adaptation work, either through meeting the revenue costs of delivering and expanding the service or on capital works.
- 7.2 Fee income could be supplemented by grant funding to provide services to better deliver improvements and adaptations, including but not limited to additional case officer time, fast track OT services and a Handyperson services
- 7.3 Residents receiving a Disabled Facilities Grant will have the option of managing the specified works themselves, called a 'client controlled' grant. Any discretionary Home Assistance Grant funded works must be managed through the Home Improvement Agency to ensure value for money is achieved and the policy objectives are met.

8 Customer Satisfaction and Policy Monitoring

- 8.1 The Council wants the work that it funds and commissions to both meet the needs of individual residents and contribute to delivering wider health and social care objectives.
- 8.2 To this end customer satisfaction monitoring will be carried out on an ongoing basis to inform day to day service delivery.
- 8.3 Follow up work may be commissioned to gather evidence to evaluate the longer term impact of the Council's work and inform future policy direction.

9 Disputes

- 9.1 Funding through the Home Assistance Policy is discretionary and limited by the availability of funding. When a resident is refused assistance through the scheme they will be advised of the reasons for refusal in writing along with advice on other options available to them. There is no right to appeal a decision however if a resident is unhappy with the way the Council has administered their application they can make a complaint using the Council's Complaint procedure.

Annex A

| | Package | Examples | Funding options* | Outcomes | Policy link |
|----------|---|--|--|---|---|
| Priority | Hospital to Home package (including palliative care) Maximum Home Assistance Grant £10,000 | Fast tracked repairs, adaptations or equipment to allow return home and access for carers NB linked with Community Services work | Disabled Facilities Grant, Home Assistance Grant, self-funded, charitable funding | Reduces hospital stays for emergency and planned admissions; Reduces home care costs as home suitable for patient and carers | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing Frimley Health & Care STP Priority 4: Redesigning urgent and emergency care, including integrated working and primary care models providing timely care in the most appropriate place Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Enable people to stay well at home in their community and to return home sooner from hospital with the care they need |
| | Emergency repair package Maximum Home Assistance Grant £10,000 | Intervention where there is an imminent and significant risk to health | Home Assistance Grant, self-funded, charitable funding, Home Improvement loan, landlord funded, works in default | Eliminate or reduce to acceptable levels category 1 hazards to prevent loss of life or serious injuries for occupants | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Support our residents to live longer and live well |
| Protect | Fast track adaptations Maximum Home Assistance Grant £8,000 | E.g. stair lifts | Disabled Facilities Grant, Home Assistance Grant, self-funded, charitable funding | Timely and less bureaucratic response to requests for adaptations providing more effective service for residents and producing savings by removing need for Adult Social Care input | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Enable people to stay well at home in their community and to return home sooner from hospital with the care they need |
| | Major repairs package Maximum Home | Boiler replacement, unsafe or unhealthy kitchen/bathroom | Home Assistance Grant, self- | Eliminate or reduce to acceptable levels category 1 and 2 hazards. Remove serious health threat, | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older |

| | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|--|--|---|
| | Assistance Grant £8,000 | replacement, major electrical work | funded, charitable funding, Home Improvement loan, landlord funded, works in default | reduce cold related health problems and the risk of excess winter deaths, reducing incidence of respiratory disease through tackling damp and mould. | adults health and wellbeing Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Support our residents to live longer and live well |
| | Child well-being package Maximum Home Assistance Grant £3,000 | E.g. remedial works to damp and mould, install extractor, refer to support, support, provide advice for self help | Home Assistance Grant, self- funded, charitable funding, Home Improvement loan, landlord funded | Tackle asthma and eczema, access support, improve school attendance | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 1: Improve children's health and well being |
| Prevent | Trusted Assessor/ Handyman package Maximum Home Assistance Grant £1,500 | E.g. Grab rails, bannisters, small access works, key safes etc. | Home Assistance Grant, self- funded, charitable funding, Home Improvement loan | Fast tracked small adaptations, reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls and other accidents in the home and improve security | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Support our residents to live longer and live well Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Enable people to stay well at home in their community and to return home sooner from hospital with the care they need |
| | Dementia Living Package Maximum Home Assistance Grant £5,000 | Improve lighting and colour contrasts, improve internal and external access (likely to include items from the Well-being package) | Home Assistance Grant, self- funded, charitable funding, Home Improvement loan | Promotes independent living with improved safety and home familiarity | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 3: Promote emotional wellbeing and mental health Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing Priority 2: Action to improve long term condition outcomes including greater self-management & proactive management across all providers for people with single long term |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| | | | | conditions |
| Minor repairs package Maximum Home Assistance Grant £3,000 | Repair or fix bannisters, carry out boiler repairs, kitchen and bathroom small works, leaks | Home Assistance Grant, self-funded, charitable funding, Home Improvement loan | Reduce risk on falls, reduce risk of infections with improved food preparation areas and bathrooms, reduce risk of damp by repairing leaks | Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Support our residents to live longer and live well Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing |
| Well-being package (home security, affordable warmth and energy efficiency, home security) Maximum Home Assistance Grant £3,000 | Smoke and CO2 alarms, window and door locks, door entry systems, replace non-safety glass in internal doors, scooter stores | Home Assistance Grant, self-funded, charitable funding, Home Improvement loan | Reduce risk of fire related injuries and CO2 poisoning, improves mental well-being and reduces anxiety with improved security Scooter stores promote independence and access to the community | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 3: Promote emotional wellbeing and mental health Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Enable people to stay well at home in their community and to return home sooner from hospital with the care they need |
| Relocation package Maximum Home Assistance Grant £10,000 | Grant used to move someone from a home that does not meet their needs and it is not cost effective or practical to carry out work. | Home Assistance Grant | Provides more suitable accommodation for a disabled resident and saves money otherwise spent on major adaptation to less suitable property | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing |
| New build package Maximum Home Assistance Grant £10,000 | A social housing unit is adapted at build stage to make the adaptations more effective | Disabled Facilities Grant/ Home Assistance Grant | Provides bespoke accommodation for a disabled resident and saves money otherwise spent on major adaptation to less suitable property | Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|--|
| Promote | Take-up campaigns | Targeted resident based campaigns to take up available assistance e.g. energy efficiency subsidised work, solid wall insulation grants | Home Assistance Grant | To ensure residents have the necessary information to access national, regional and local funding to maintain and improve their homes | <p>Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach</p> <p>Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 3: Promote emotional wellbeing and mental health</p> <p>Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing</p> <p>Surrey County Council Strategic Goal 1: Support our residents to live longer and live well</p> <p>Frimley Health & Care STP Priority 1: Making a substantial step change to improve wellbeing, increase prevention, self-care and early detection.</p> |
| | Education campaigns | Targeted issued based campaigns e.g. roadshows, town centre stalls, mail outs | Home Assistance Grant | Encourage people to carry out self-financing preventative work or access services at an early stage | <p>Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach</p> <p>Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 3: Promote emotional wellbeing and mental health</p> <p>Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 4: Improve older adults health and wellbeing</p> <p>Frimley Health & Care STP Priority 1: Making a substantial step change to improve wellbeing, increase prevention, self-care and early detection.</p> |
| | Research and development | E.g. Review of sustainable HIA funding across Surrey; E.g. Market testing to refresh contractor list E.g. gather evidence to evaluate the longer term impact of the Council's work | Home Assistance Grant | Access to additional funding; efficiencies through service improvement; increased prevention activity through intelligence based targeting | <p>Surrey Heath Health & Wellbeing Priority 2: Develop a preventative approach</p> <p>Frimley Health & Care STP Priority 5: Reducing variation and health inequalities across pathways to improve outcomes and maximise value for citizens across the population, supported by evidence</p> |