



# EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

## PART 1 - INITIAL SCREENING

<b>Name of Policy/Function:</b>		This is <b>new</b>
		This is a <b>change</b> to an existing policy
		This is an <b>existing</b> policy, Function, not previously assessed
<b>Discretionary Payments Policy</b>	x	This is an existing policy/function for <b>review</b>

<b>Date of screening</b>	11/03/2024
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### 1. Briefly describe its aims & objectives

Discretionary housing payments are intended to provide short term financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home.

Discretionary Council Tax Support Payments are intended to help people who are experiencing severe financial hardship who need extra help to pay the Council Tax

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council administers Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) on behalf of the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) The local authority receives an annual financial allocation from the DWP to provide this support. Although the DWP has issued guidance for local authorities, the method of allocation adopted and the decision-making process lies with individual authorities.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit and introduced a new local provision to provide Local Council Tax Support. Discretionary Council Tax Support Payments are funded locally and set by the Council each year.

The purpose of the Discretionary Payment Policy is to specify how Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's Revenues and Benefits Service will operate the discretionary payment scheme and indicate some of the factors that will be considered when deciding if an award can be made.

## 2. Are there external considerations?

*e.g. Legislation/government directive etc*

Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (DFAR)

## 3. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?

- **Customers** – Applying for discretionary payments
- **Benefits Staff** – Making decisions on and processing discretionary payment applications
- **Other Council Staff** – Sign posting and advising customers
- **Advice/Support Agencies** – Sign posting customers to the Council to make applications

## 4. What outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?

The council want to achieve the outcomes listed below:

This policy contributes towards one of the council's strategic objectives 'Our Community' to provide good, affordable, efficient housing for everyone. All applications will be considered on their individual merit and will seek through the operation of this policy to:

- Alleviate poverty
- Encourage and sustain people in employment
- Sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness
- Safeguard tenants in their own homes
- Help those who are trying to help themselves
- Keep families together
- Support the vulnerable or elderly in the local community
- Help customers through personal and difficult events
- Support young people in the transition to adult life, or
- Promote good educational outcomes for children and young people.

## 5. Has any consultation/research been carried out?

- Other Local Authorities Discretionary Payments policies have been researched
- The Revenues and Benefits Manager has spoken to peers at other Council about their policy and the approach they have taken
- The policy review has only resulted in minor changes that have been in response to customer feedback or to help make things like the eligibility and the decision making process clearer, therefore an external consultation has not been carried out

- The policy has however been shared with relevant staff within the Council for comment and feedback

**6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of Inequalities/negative impacts?**

*Consider and identify any evidence you have -equality data relating to usage and satisfaction levels, complaints, comments, research, outcomes of review, issues raised at previous consultations, known inequalities) If so please provide details.*

No

**7. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?**

**Positive** – *It could benefit*

**Negative** – *It could disadvantage*

**Neutral** – *Neither positive nor negative impact or not sure.*

	Type of impact, reason & any evidence
Disability	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Race (including Gypsy & Traveller)	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Age	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Gender Reassignment	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of

	renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Sex	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Sexual Orientation	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Religion/Belief	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax
Pregnancy and Maternity	<b>Positive</b> - The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of people, including those with protected characteristics by providing additional financial support to households who face financial difficulty on meeting the cost of renting their home or to people who are experiencing severe financial hardship needing extra help to pay the Council Tax

## 8. Could other socio-economic groups be affected?

*e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes, homeless?*

The policies are aimed specifically at addressing financial hardship for those households on low incomes. The policies will be used to enable households to achieve more sustainable financial situations without the need for additional financial support from the Council.

The number of applications and awards by this policies will be monitored by each equality group. This will help to provide an indication of the take up and awareness of the policies by each equality group.

**9. Are there any human rights implications?**

*Yes/No (If yes, please explain)*

No

**10. Is there an opportunity to promote equality and/or good community relations?**

*Yes/No (If yes, how will this be done?)*

No

**11. If you have indicated a negative impact for any group is that impact legal?**

*i.e. not discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation*

N/A

**12. Is any part of this policy/service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?**

No

**13. Is a Part 2 full Equality Assessment required?**

No

**14. Date by which a Part 2 full Equality Assessment is to be completed with actions.**

N/A

**Please note that you should proceed to a Part 2, the full Equality Impact Assessment if you have identified actual, or the potential to cause, adverse impact or discrimination against different groups in the community.**


We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full equality assessment **is not required\*** (please delete as appropriate).

Completed by:  
(Claire Werra - Policy/Function/Report written)

Date **11/03/2024**

Countersigned by: *Trish Hatton*  
(Trish Hatton - *Head of Service*)

Date: **11/03/2024**

Screened by:.......... Mark Smith, Community Safety & Youth Officer  
Date: **12/03/2024**

Please forward an electronic copy to our Equalities Lead mark.smith@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Equality Assessments shall be published on the Council website with the relevant and appropriate document upon which the equality assessment has been undertaken.