

## **Item: 11**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 5 June 2019.**

**Small Repairs Grants.**

**Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To consider amendments to the criteria relating to the Small Repairs Grant scheme.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to note:

#### **2.1.**

The level of work undertaken through the Small Repairs Grant scheme, as outlined in section 3 of this report.

#### **2.2.**

That, due to changes to the benefits system, amendments are required to the eligibility criteria for the Small Repairs Grant, as detailed in section 4.4 of this report.

**It is recommended:**

#### **2.3.**

That the eligibility criteria for the Small Repairs Grant be amended to incorporate the following:

- The applicant/household's principal or sole residence should be in Orkney.
- The applicant/household should be in receipt of any of the following benefits:
  - Employment Support Allowance.
  - Income Support.
  - Universal Credit.
  - Job Seeker's Allowance.
  - Pension Credit.
  - Attendance Allowance.
  - Disability Living Allowance.
  - Personal Independence Payment.
- The applicant/household should have less than £16,000 in savings.

- The applicant/household should have monthly take home pay not exceeding £435 or £935 if they are responsible for at least one child.
- Non-dependents within the household are to be disregarded for the purposes of the calculation.

### 3. Background

#### 3.1.

The Small Repairs Grant Scheme is administered by Orkney Care and Repair and is used to undertake essential household repairs subject to eligibility.

#### 3.2.

The Small Repairs Grant Scheme is intended purely to deliver repairs as opposed to aids and adaptations. Aids and adaptations sit within the remit of the Integration Joint Board.

#### 3.3.

A Small Repair Grant is currently available to elderly households to assist them to remain at home and to assist in keeping the property wind and watertight. Examples of available assistance include:

- Carrying out minor maintenance and repair works such as:
  - Leaking roofs.
  - New windows.
  - Doors.
  - Repairs with heating and hot water.
  - Small electrical repairs.
- Assessing properties for safety, security and trip hazards.
- Assisting with hospital discharge.

#### 3.4.

An advantage of the Small Repairs Grant is that minor works can be progressed relatively quickly allowing the household's needs to be met in a short space of time.

#### 3.5.

The following table provide further detail undertaken within the Small Repairs Grant:

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Approved Budget.</u>	<u>Spend.</u>	<u>Number of cases.</u>
2018/2019.	£48,600.	£16,302.	20.
2017/2018.	£48,600.	£23,860.	16.

### **3.6.**

Changes to the benefits system have led to Orkney Care and Repair finding that access to the Small Repairs Grant is becoming increasingly restrictive for many households particularly those who do not claim pension credit and yet are on a very low income.

### **3.7.**

Consequently, the criteria used is no longer reflective of the client base which requires assistance and, therefore, some households in need of assistance are being refused access to the Small Repairs Grant.

### **3.8.**

An analysis of cases who have been unable to access the Small Repairs Grant, would indicate a need to consider a much broader range of benefit entitlement.

## **4. Proposed Amendments to Criteria**

### **4.1.**

The current criteria for accessing the Small Repairs Grant is as follows:

- The applicant's principal or sole residence is in Orkney.
- They must be aged 60 years or over.
- They must be in receipt of pension credit.

### **4.2.**

The existing criteria requires review on the basis of equalities as it is no longer appropriate to have a criteria based on age.

### **4.3.**

The intention is to provide a service to low income households who require some assistance in order to continue to maintain their property and to keep it wind and watertight.

### **4.4.**

Consequently, it is proposed that the eligibility criteria for the Small Repairs Grant be amended to incorporate the following:

- The applicant/household's principal or sole residence should be in Orkney.
- The applicant/household should be in receipt of any of the following benefits:
  - Employment Support Allowance.
  - Income Support.
  - Universal Credit.
  - Job Seeker's Allowance.

- Pension Credit.
- Attendance Allowance.
- Disability Living Allowance.
- Personal Independence Payment.
- The applicant/household should have less than £16,000 in savings.
- The applicant/household should have monthly take home pay not exceeding £435 or £935 if they are responsible for at least one child.
- Non-dependents within the household are to be disregarded for the purposes of the calculation.

#### **4.5.**

The revised criteria will potentially allow a broader range of low-income households to be able to access the Small Repairs Grant Scheme.

### **5. Equalities Impact**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

### **6. Corporate Governance.**

This report relates to governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

### **7. Financial Implications**

The Small Repairs Grant is administered by Orkney Care and Repair and £48,600 is allocated from the Council's General Fund for this purpose each year.

### **8. Legal Aspects**

#### **8.1.**

The Housing Scotland act 2006 section 71 allows the Council to give grant for improvement repair or maintenance of a house and in terms of section 72 the Council must prepare a public statement containing the criteria by reference to which it determines whether to provide assistance. There is specific provision for disabled persons in that the local authority must provide assistance where a house is being adapted for the needs of a person with disabilities or is reinstated following an adaptation.

#### **8.2.**

Section 73(2) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Scheme of Assistance) Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/406) set out the duties of a local authority in relation to works required to meet the needs of a disabled person.

### **8.3.**

Where the application is for an adaptation to suit the needs of a person with disabilities and is for the provision of standard amenities then the assistance must take the form of a grant. All recommended adaptations, with the exception of work to provide additional living accommodation, are eligible for a mandatory grant award.

## **9. Contact Officers**

Wilfred Weir, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2436, Email [wilf.weir@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:wilf.weir@orkney.gov.uk).

Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, extension 2177, Email [frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk).

## **10. Appendix**

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment.



## Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

<b>1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan</b>	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Review of Small Repairs Grant
Service / service area responsible.	Housing Services
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services Ext 2177 E-mail <a href="mailto:frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk">frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk</a>
Date of assessment.	3 May 2019
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	Existing

<b>2. Initial Screening</b>	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	The Small Repairs Grant is intended to provide some assistance to low income households in order to keep their homes wind and watertight.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	The Small Repairs Grant links strategically with the Local Housing Strategy.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Low income households in the private sector who require some assistance with small repairs.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	Key agencies have been involved being Orkney Care and Repair and the Department of Works and Pensions to ensure that the ideas proposed

	<p>aligned with the services they deliver.</p> <p>Orkney Care and Repair work closely with frontline service users and are therefore able to provide information relating to views expressed to them.</p>
<p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>A broad range of research exists regarding property condition and the difficulties facing certain groups within society.</p>
<p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See <a href="#">The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies</a> for further information.</p>	<p>There is a broad range of research in relation to various aspects of the cost of living and the impact on low income households. This research includes that relating to the cost of undertaking home repairs / improvements.</p>
<p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?</p>	<p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p>
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p>	<p>No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.</p>
<p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p>	<p>No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.</p>
<p>3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p>	<p>No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.</p>
<p>4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p>	<p>No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.</p>
<p>5. Pregnancy and maternity.</p>	<p>No not specifically. Clients may come from any</p>

	group within society.
6. Age: people of different ages.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society however older households living on a low income may be particularly likely to access the grant as they may find it more difficult to undertake repairs themselves.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
9. Care experienced.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society however households with a disability, who are living on a low income may be particularly likely to access the grant as they may find it more difficult to undertake repairs themselves.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Socio-economic disadvantage is likely to be more prevalent amongst households who may require some assistance with small repairs.
13. Isles-proofing.	Not specifically. Orkney Care and Repair deliver services across Orkney and therefore there shouldn't be any specifically different issues for island communities.

### 3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	There may be a differential impact from certain groups within society particularly older households and those with disabilities. The Small Repairs Grants are intended to assist any group within society who require assistance and are on a low income.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	The Small Repairs Grants are intended to assist any group within society who require assistance and are on a low income.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes



#### 4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	<b>No.</b>
What action is to be taken?	N/A
Who will undertake it?	N/A
When will it be done?	N/A
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	N/A

Date: 3 May 2019

Signature:



Name: Frances Troup

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at [hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk)