

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Minor Adaptations Charging Policy

Assessment ID	IIA-003342
Lead Author	Nicola Murray
Additional Authors	Billy Wishart, Kahlia Seivwright
Service Reviewers	Hannah Russell
Subject Matter Experts	Susan Forbes, Shona Campbell, Kakuen Mo, Jane Wilkinson, Annette Johnston, Ricki Lyon, Christine McLennan, Kay MacDonald
Approved By	Ally Macleod
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1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

This assessment sets out to consider the potential impacts of introducing a charging policy for minor adaptations in private sector homes which are supplied and installed by Aberdeenshire Council. Minor adaptations include non-structural adaptations such as grab rails, handrails, lowered thresholds, bathroom aids, and other modifications intended to support safety, mobility, and independence within the home.

The proposed policy introduces a financial charge for homeowners or private tenants for the provision and installation of these minor adaptations, with the aim of ensuring long-term service sustainability, enabling those who can afford to contribute to do so, and allowing the local authority to focus resources on preventative work and major adaptations for individuals with the highest levels of need.

Intended mitigation measures, alternative options, and opportunities to minimise harm or disadvantage are identified to ensure that any negative impacts on vulnerable groups—such as older adults, disabled people, and those on low incomes—are understood, addressed, and where possible, reduced. The assessment also considers how income generated through charging may support early intervention, enhance service capacity, and deliver improved outcomes for those requiring major adaptations or more complex support.

Overall, this Integrated Impact Assessment supports transparent, evidence-based decision-making and ensures that the introduction of a charging policy is considered in a holistic, person-centred and equality-focused manner.

During screening 7 of 12 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 3 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Children's Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities

In total there are 0 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 11 negative impacts, of these negative impacts, 12 have been mitigated and 0 cannot be mitigated satisfactorily.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by ally.macleod2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and / or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on inequality of outcome?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy relate to budget proposals?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on consumers of Council services?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Health Inequalities	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

4.1. Wellbeing Indicators

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Safe		Yes		
Healthy		Yes		
Achieving		Yes		
Nurtured		Yes		
Active		Yes		
Respected		Yes		
Responsible		Yes		
Included		Yes		

4.2. Rights Indicators

<p>UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy</p>	<p>Article 1 - Definition of a child Article 2 - Non-discrimination Article 3 - Best interests of the child Article 4 - Protection of rights Article 5 - Parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities Article 6 - Life, survival and development Article 18 - Parental responsibilities and state assistance Article 23 - Children with disabilities Article 24 - Health and health services Article 27 - Adequate standard of living Article 31 - Leisure, play and culture</p>
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4.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	Service users over the last 12 month period	<p>350 service users who have accessed the service over the previous 12 months were consulted. 120 (34%) have replied so far with responses showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptations are overwhelmingly essential. 77.1% rated their adaptation as essential, 19.5% as important, and 3.4% as helpful but not urgent. • 72% were aware Aberdeenshire Council currently covers the full cost of minor adaptations; 28% were not. • Cost sensitivity is significant. When asked If funding became limited, 37% said they would contribute, 50.4% said “Maybe – depends on the cost,” and 12.6% said No. • When people quoted a percentage, they would be happy to pay, the most common choices were “less than 25%” (30), 25% (29), and 50% (29); • 23.9% say they may not proceed if asked to contribute; 41.0% are unsure; 34.2% would still proceed. 	<p>The consultation clearly shows that the majority of respondents rated minor adaptations as essential for daily and independent living. 72% knew the Council covered 100% of the full cost and 87% said if funding was limited, they would be or may be willing to contribute but it would be dependent on cost, so people are willing to pay something, but affordability is a concern. Feedback from service users highlights that charging cannot be a “one size fits all” approach and a means tested approach is essential along with clear communication and financial advice to reduce uncertainty and un-engagement</p>

4.4. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

Parents and Guardians of young children who had accessed the service were included in the consultation and given the opportunity to feed back on the impact minor adaptations have had on their children's living environment from their child's and a family perspective

4.5. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

By ensuring that minor adaptations remain accessible, the policy will help create a safer living environment for children and young people, reduce accidents, slips, trips or falls. Minor adaptations will enable children with mobility needs to participate in daily life supporting physical health and emotional wellbeing. Means tested contributions will ensure that children or young people from low income families are not disadvantaged, upholding fairness and reducing inequalities

4.6. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights

The policy will support children's rights to a safe living environment, reducing health risks and

promoting independence and avoiding any unnecessary moves or

4.7. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

for each risk identified practical measures can be put in place to mitigate the risk such as means testing for low income people and families, providing advice, support and assistance by signposting to welfare rights or any other support agency, by continuous monitoring of the impact and outcomes and reviewing where necessary.

5. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

5.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)			Yes	
Age (Older)			Yes	
Disability			Yes	
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

5.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income			Yes	
Low wealth			Yes	
Material deprivation			Yes	
Area deprivation			Yes	
Socioeconomic background			Yes	

5.3. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
<p>Age (Older)</p>	<p>Older people are more likely to require minor adaptations as a result of mobility issues and long-term health conditions. When adaptations are delayed or declined due to financial barriers, the risk of slips, trips, and falls increases, potentially contributing to higher rates of hospital admission. These delays can also compromise personal safety and independence, and may generate additional stress or anxiety associated with unexpected costs or apprehension about seeking assistance. Over time, insufficient access to timely adaptations can lead to avoidable incidents, ultimately creating greater long-term financial pressures on health and social care services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation We will develop criteria to ensure that minor adaptations can be accessed easily and quickly by a means tested contribution or a set fee.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>
<p>Age (Younger)</p>	<p>Introducing charges could push families already on low incomes into further hardship, especially those reliant on benefits or single-parent households. If families cannot afford adaptations, children may live in unsafe environments, increasing risk of injury and limiting participation in daily life. Parents or guardians who care for children with disabilities may face additional financial pressure, affecting family wellbeing and stability.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Means tested contributions will apply and families will be signposted to welfare rights to be ensure income maximisation and for further advice and support.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>People with disabilities often rely on minor adaptations to maintain safety within their homes. Financial barriers can create inequitable access to these essential modifications, increasing the risk of slips, trips, and falls. Such barriers may also limit an individual's ability to live independently, reduce opportunities to minimise care needs, and heighten reliance on carers and family members for everyday support.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation We will develop a means tested contribution scheme to ensure that there is equitable access for people with disabilities to prevent accidents and inequality in service provision. We will ensure that information about minor adaptations is easily accessible with clear eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
<p>Area deprivation</p>	<p>Deprived areas have higher rates of chronic illness, mobility and disability issues. People in deprived areas are often more likely to be on lower incomes, facing financial insecurity, debt or fuel poverty and less able to absorb unexpected costs. This could result in a person delaying or declining an adaptation making their home an unsafe environment and increasing the risk of slips and trips. It could make people choose between safety and essentials and be more hesitant to engage with services ultimately increasing the risk of poor mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Introducing a means tested scheme means that the lowest incomes will contribute little or nothing. This should remove any financial barriers from stopping low wealth households receiving essential safety measures. We will refer people where necessary to welfare rights and other debt or support agencies to receive financial assessments, support and assistance.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>
<p>Low income</p>	<p>Households or individuals may delay or forgo adaptations, increasing safety risks. There may be a reluctance to engage with services due to fear of unaffordable charges or an increase in financial hardship due to debt.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Using a means tested contribution model should reduce the fear of unaffordable costs and encourage earlier engagement and prevent people from delaying essential safety measures.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>
<p>Low wealth</p>	<p>Low wealth households often lack a financial buffer to absorb unexpected costs. This may result in an inability to pay upfront costs leading to no adaptation despite the clear need.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Introducing a means tested scheme means that the lowest incomes will contribute little or nothing. This should remove any financial barriers from stopping low wealth households receiving essential safety measures.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Material deprivation	<p>Households experiencing material deprivation may already struggle to afford basic goods, therefore, adaptation charges may be entirely unaffordable, leading to unsafe living conditions, increased family stress and reduced capacity to manage health and mobility needs and increased risk of social isolation.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Introducing means tested criteria will mitigate this. We will provide clear explanations of the eligibility criteria and reassurance that safety critical adaptations will not create financial hardship</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>
Socioeconomic background	<p>Charging for adaptations create a barrier to equal participation and safety at home and reduce engagement with social care or housing services due to fear of charges</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation We will mitigate this by providing clear eligibility criteria and reassurance that safety critical adaptations will not create financial hardship. We will ensure that staff provide a supportive approach and signpost people to welfare rights advisers for benefits checks and financial support.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>

5.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	Service Users	<p>350 service users who have accessed the service over the previous 12 months were consulted. 120 (34%) have replied so far with responses showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptations are overwhelmingly essential. 77.1% rated their adaptation as essential, 19.5% as important, and 3.4% as helpful but not urgent. • 72% were aware Aberdeenshire Council currently covers the full cost of minor adaptations; 28% were not. • Cost sensitivity is significant. When asked If funding became limited, 37% said they would contribute, 50.4% said “Maybe – depends on the cost,” and 12.6% said No. • When people quoted a percentage, they would be happy to pay, the most common choices were “less than 25%” (30), 25% (29), and 50% (29); • 23.9% say they may not proceed if asked to contribute; 41.0% are unsure; 34.2% would still proceed. 	<p>The consultation clearly shows that the majority of respondents rated minor adaptations as essential for daily and independent living. 72% knew the Council covered 100% of the full cost and 87% said if funding was limited, they would be or may be willing to contribute but it would be dependent on cost, so people are willing to pay something, but affordability is a concern. Feedback from service users highlights that charging cannot be a “one size fits all” approach and a means tested approach is essential along with clear communication and financial advice to reduce uncertainty and un-engagement.</p>

5.5. Engagement with affected groups

Consultation with clients who have accessed the service over the previous 12 month period

5.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

The consultation was sent out in paper format with pre-paid return labels, plain language was used, consultees were of various ages with various different mobility impairments.

5.7. Evidence of engagement

key outcomes of the consultation has been provided. Consultees were given the opportunity to provide their own views which will be shared with key stakeholders when developing policy and procedures.

5.8. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Introducing a charge for minor adaptations may disproportionately impact people with disabilities, older adults, and those on low incomes. To reduce this risk, safeguards will include clear communication, signposting to welfare rights for benefits checks and financial support, means-tested exemptions or reduced charges for low-income households, and ongoing monitoring to ensure the policy does not widen health or housing inequalities.

5.9. Improving Relations

By being transparent, and keeping communication clear and effective during policy development and by monitoring and evaluating outcomes for service users

5.10. Opportunities of Equality

By ensuring that minor adaptations remain accessible to everyone, the policy will help people with disabilities, older adults, and those with mobility challenges live safely and independently at home, reducing the need for home care or extra support. The introduction of means tested contributions for low income households ensures that costs does not become a barrier. Offering referrals to Welfare Advice will help those who may struggle with affordability.

6. Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

6.1. Health Behaviours

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Healthy eating			Yes	
Exercise and physical activity			Yes	
Substance use – tobacco		Yes		
Substance use – alcohol		Yes		
Substance use – drugs		Yes		
Mental health			Yes	

6.2. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Exercise and physical activity	<p>If someone delays or declines an adaptation because of cost, it may affect their ability to safely enter or leave their home, manage stairs, or move around indoors. This can reduce their daily activity, movement, or exercise, which in turn may negatively impact their overall health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Introducing means tested criteria will mitigate this. We will provide clear explanations of the eligibility criteria and reassurance that safety critical adaptations will not create financial hardship. Were necessary we will refer people to welfare rights teams for benefits checks, advice and additional support. Signpost to community support, healthy activity groups or mobility schemes where necessary.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>
Healthy eating	<p>Introducing a charge may negatively impact people or families food choices for a short period of time if income is reduced in the short term to pay for an adaptation. They may choose to avoid higher cost fresh foods, opting for cheaper lower nutrient foods</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Introducing means tested criteria will mitigate this. We will provide clear explanations of the eligibility criteria and reassurance that safety critical adaptations will not create financial hardship. Were necessary we will refer people to welfare rights teams for benefits checks, advice and additional support.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
<p>Healthy eating</p>	<p>Introducing a charge may negatively impact people or families food choices for a short period of time if income is reduced in the short term to pay for an adaptation. They may choose to avoid higher cost fresh foods, opting for cheaper lower nutrient foods</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Introducing means tested criteria will mitigate this. We will provide clear explanations of the eligibility criteria and reassurance that safety critical adaptations will not create financial hardship. Were necessary we will refer people to welfare rights teams for benefits checks, advice and additional support.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>
<p>Mental health</p>	<p>A person's mental health may be affected by anxiety about the unexpected costs of an adaptation, or by worrying about how their health, mobility, and independence might decline if they decide not to proceed. These concerns can also reduce motivation to stay active and increase the risk of low mood or depression.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Introducing means tested criteria will mitigate this. We will provide clear explanations of the eligibility criteria and reassurance that safety critical adaptations will not create financial hardship. Were necessary we will refer people to welfare rights teams for benefits checks, advice and additional support.</p> <p>Timescale April 2026</p>

6.3. Evidence

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External Consultation	Service Users	<p>350 service users who have accessed the service over the previous 12 months were consulted. 120 (34%) have replied so far with responses showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptations are overwhelmingly essential. 77.1% rated their adaptation as essential, 19.5% as important, and 3.4% as helpful but not urgent. • 72% were aware Aberdeenshire Council currently covers the full cost of minor adaptations; 28% were not. • Cost sensitivity is significant. When asked If funding became limited, 37% said they would contribute, 50.4% said “Maybe – depends on the cost,” and 12.6% said No. • When people quoted a percentage, they would be happy to pay, the most common choices were “less than 25%” (30), 25% (29), and 50% (29); • 23.9% say they may not proceed if asked to contribute; 41.0% are unsure; 34.2% would still proceed. 	<p>The consultation clearly shows that the majority of respondents rated minor adaptations as essential for daily and independent living. 72% knew the Council covered 100% of the full cost and 87% said if funding was limited, they would be or may be willing to contribute but it would be dependent on cost, so people are willing to pay something, but affordability is a concern. Feedback from service users highlights that charging cannot be a “one size fits all” approach and a means tested approach is essential along with clear communication and financial advice to reduce uncertainty and un-engagement.</p>

6.4. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Introducing a charge for minor adaptations may disproportionately impact people with disabilities, older adults, and those on low incomes. To reduce this risk, safeguards will include clear communication, signposting to welfare rights for benefits checks and financial support, means-tested exemptions or reduced charges for low-income households, and ongoing monitoring to ensure the policy does not widen health or housing inequalities.

7. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
<p>Working Group to be set up with relevant colleagues from Aberdeenshire Council's Care & Repair, Health and Social Care, Occupational Therapy Managers, Joint Equipment Store and Finance to develop policy, procedure charging structure, etc. Following on from the working group a monitoring meeting will be held bi-monthly to monitor and evaluate the impact and review processes if necessary</p>	<p>Lead Officer Nicola Murray</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Monday January 26, 2026</p> <p>Planned Finish Friday March 27, 2026</p> <p>Expected Outcome Agreed policy, charging structure and exemptions should be in place by 31st March 2026 so that phased or full implementation can start from 1st April 2026.</p> <p>Resource Implications The new policy and procedure will need to be closely monitored by all key stakeholders and there will be extra admin work required to raise invoices and ensure payment before works orders are passed. This should hopefully be absorbed within current workloads within the relevant teams.</p>