

Appendix 1 - Disabled Facilities Grants for Council Tenants

1.0 Introduction

Disabilities Facilities Grants (DFG's) may be available to disabled people, their families and carers to enable adaptations to their homes to improve their quality of life and help them to live more independently.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 provides the legal framework for DFG's.

This policy reflects the principles set out in the Home Adaptations for Disabled People – A Good Practice Guide 2013 and should be read in conjunction with that document.

This policy covers the application, decision making process and procedure for the grant of a DFG to a council tenant, including those living in Partners for Improvement (Partners), managed properties. There are separate policies that deal with applications for DFG's for owner-occupiers, private and housing association tenants, and private landlords.

2.0 What is a DFG available for?

A DFG may be available to provide facilities or adaptations to a home. The aim of the facilities/adaptations is to:

- Improve access to and from the home and garden.
- Improve access to and use of certain rooms within the home, including the kitchen, bathroom or bedroom.
- Facilitate the preparation and cooking of food.
- Improve and enable full use of heating, lighting and power.
- Ensure the safety of a disabled person and those they live with.

Common adaptations include level access showers, stair lifts, door widening, and provision of ramps.

3.0 Who is eligible for a DFG?

Disabled people and those that live with them can qualify for a DFG.

The disabled person does not need to be registered disabled.

Applications can be made on behalf of children.

A person will be disabled for the purposes of a DFG if:

- Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired;
- They have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind; or
- They are physically and substantially disabled by illness, injury, impairment present since birth, or otherwise.

4.0 How to make an application?

An Occupational Therapy Referral form (see Appendix 1) should be completed, or contact should be made with the Access Service (020 7527 2299) to request support around adaptations. The law requires that an applicant must be able to make an application for adaptations by themselves and this need not be on the DFG3 form itself. Applicants who wish to make their own application are advised to discuss their application with the Occupational Therapy Team.

The referral will be passed to the Occupational Therapy Team (OTT) who will conduct an initial paper assessment for adaptations.

If the application passes the paper assessment, then an Occupational Therapist (OT) will be allocated to the case and will arrange a home visit so that a formal assessment can be conducted in the applicant's home. The disabled person will be fully involved in the assessment.

If the cost of the facilities/adaptations is less than £1000, the facilities/adaptations will be arranged by the OT, on the basis of need.

If the costs of the facilities/adaptations are more than £1000, the OT will make a referral for a DFG to Homes and Neighbourhoods using form DFG3 (see Appendix 2). The DFG form will be completed by the OT. The OT will make a decision on what adaptations are "necessary and appropriate" before making a referral to the Homes and Neighbourhoods or Partners.

5.0 How the decision will be made?

Homes and Neighbourhoods will decide whether the application for a DFG is approved and decide the type of adaptations to be made, if any. This relates to both council-managed and Partners managed properties.

In making a decision, Homes and Neighbourhoods will satisfy themselves whether it is 'reasonable and practicable' to carry out the works for the proposed adaptation. The decision will be made:

- Having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building; and
- In light of all the circumstances of the case.

This will include:

- Reviewing recommendations made by the OT on what facilities the disabled person needs and any proposed adaptations.
- Consulting with Housing Property Services to determine whether the adaptations are 'reasonable and practicable'.
- Considering suitable alternative accommodation which can meet the needs of the service user. – add this to report

The applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application within 6 months of the date of their referral, (this is the legal time frame for responding). However, the council will aim to notify applicants of the outcome of their application in a shorter period of time.

6.0 Completion of the Works

For directly managed properties and Partners managed properties - If the DFG is approved, the adaptations will be referred to the Homes and Neighbourhoods Adaptation's Team who will arrange for the works to be completed, or Partners may be commissioned to carry out the works in properties they manage.

7.0 Means Test

The DFG may be subject to a contribution by the disabled person called a means test.

The amount that an applicant is required to contribute will be based on an assessment of their financial circumstances and the financial circumstances of their spouse/partner.

If the disabled person qualifies for child benefit the DFG will cover the full cost of the facilities/adaptations up to the maximum of £30,000.

If the disabled person or their spouse/partner is in receipt of the following benefits, they should be entitled to a DFG up to the maximum of £30,000 without contribution

- Universal Credit,
- Income Support,
- Income based employment and support allowance (not contribution-based ESA),
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance (not contribution based JSA),
- Guaranteed pension credit (not savings credit alone),
- Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit where their income for the purposes of tax credits assessment was below £15,050, or
- The disabled person is in receipt of housing benefit,

If the disabled person or their spouse/partner is in receipt of another income-based benefit, or does not receive any benefits, they may be required to make a contribution towards the adaptations.

The amount that an applicant is required to pay towards the adaptations will be calculated in accordance with government regulations.

The amount of the DFG will be the cost of the works less the applicant's contribution up to the maximum of £30,000.

8.0 Grant Conditions

The grant is only available for works that are recommended by the OT.

The grant will only pay for the reasonable cost of adaptations up to a maximum of £30,000.

The disabled person must continue to live in the property for five years unless their health causes them to move.

9.0 Complaints

If the applicant is not happy with the outcome of their application for a DFG or the way in which their application is processed, they should contact Housingfeedback@islington.gov.uk to submit a complaint via the council's complaints process.