

London Borough Of Havering

Home Adaptation Policy

January 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The goal of this policy is to explain the requirements for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and other home adaptations and to make the most of the flexibility allowed by the 2002 Regulatory Reform Order (ROO). This flexibility helps provide extra support to disabled and older people, helping them stay healthy, safe, and independent without needing regular services.

Policy summary

Scope

1. **Who Can Get Help:**
 - People living in their own homes, whether they own or rent (including if you are a council tenant), can get help. Private landlords and housing associations can also get help to adapt homes for disabled tenants.
2. **Landlords' Legal Duty:**
 - Landlords must make sure their properties are safe and liveable.
 - The help in this policy is not for landlords to meet these basic legal duties.

Timescales

This policy will be reviewed after 5 years, or sooner if required by new legislation or new guidance from the Government.

Aims, objectives and outcomes

This policy supports the Council's vision for Havering, as outlined in "The Havering you want to be part of: a new Vision for Havering" from November 2022. It aims to help disabled people stay healthy, safe, independent, and well in their own homes. The goal is to help them avoid long-term care and reduce their need for government services.

The policy is expected to:

- Reduce falls and accidents at home.
- Lower the risk of people with chronic health conditions living in poor and cold housing, which can worsen their health.
- Help people with dementia stay independent at home for as long as possible.

- Support people with autism and/or learning disabilities to live independently throughout their lives.
- Delay the need for residential or nursing care.
- Reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and delays in leaving the hospital

Detail

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) helps disabled people make necessary changes to their homes. The Council must provide these grants if the changes are needed reasonable and practical. The grant is based on income (except for children), and the work must meet certain rules.

The Council can include some extra service charges in the total grant amount.

According to the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO), this policy includes details about:

1. Types of assistance the Council may offer.
2. Eligibility conditions for the assistance.
3. Amount of assistance available.
4. Conditions that apply to the assistance.

FINANCING THE POLICY

Each year, the Council gets a specific amount of money for DFGs through the Better Care Fund (BCF). This money helps disabled people in Havering live independently.

The Council must first use this money for mandatory DFGs. The second priority is to give discretionary grants to help people improve or adapt their homes. If there is any money left, it can be used to create more adapted housing for people with disabilities. The Council will also look for other funding opportunities to improve housing conditions in Havering.

Discretionary assistance will only be given if there is adequate funding available. The Council may change or stop some discretionary help if there isn't enough money for mandatory DFGs.

GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

In this policy:

- **Assistance:** Any financial help for housing maintenance, improvement, or adaptation.
- **Condition:** Any conditions attached to the assistance that must be met before the grant is awarded.
- **Owner or person responsible:** Anyone responsible for meeting these requirements, either alone or with others. This includes the original applicant or anyone who later becomes responsible by acquiring the property or an interest in it.

Definitions

1. **Legal Charge:**
 - Some financial assistance will be secured as a legal charge against the property.
 - If conditions are broken, the assistance must be repaid.
 - The charge remains until conditions expire or the assistance is repaid with any interest.
 - A charge on the title register binds any current owner.
 - The Council can enforce the charge if conditions are broken.
 - The council can waive the charge in exceptional cases
2. **Repayment:**
 - **Discretionary** assistance must be repaid if the person moves out within the specified timeframe.
 - If the home is social housing, the grant may not need to be repaid if the adapted home is used for another person in need.
3. **Compliance:**
 - The Council may require proof that conditions are being met.
 - Failure to provide this proof is a breach of conditions and requires repayment.
4. **Responsibility:**
 - The person responsible must prove compliance with conditions.
5. **Enforcement:**
 - Conditions will be enforced unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 - Repaid money will be used for the private housing health assistance program.
6. **Other Consents:**
 - Approval of assistance does not imply approval of other required consents, like planning permission.

- The applicant must obtain any other necessary consents.

Eligibility

1. Applicants Must:

- Be over 18 years old.
- Live in the dwelling as their main residence.

2. Not Eligible If:

- Ownership of the dwelling is disputed.
- The owner has a duty to do the necessary work.
- The work is covered by insurance.
- Work has started before approval.
- The work is for sheds or outbuildings.
- The application is incomplete after 6 months.

Enquiries and Appeals

- Contact the DFG Team for enquiries.
- Appeals against grant refusal must be in writing, detailing the grounds for the appeal. The relevant officer will make the final decision.

If the Council provides more than £5,000 in funding, it will be registered as a charge on the property. If the property is sold within 10 years after the work is completed, the money must be repaid. However, the council can waive this charge in certain cases (see General Eligibility Criteria & Conditions for Discretionary Grants, paragraph (ii)).

- The repayment amounts are as follows:

Grant (£)	Repayment Requirement (£)
30,000	10,000
25,000	10,000
20,000	10,000
15,000	10,000
10,000	5,000
5,000	0

The Council will not pay for extra work done without prior approval. All work must be finished within 12 months of approval.

Summary of Discretionary Housing Assistance Grants:

The Council offers discretionary assistance through seven different grant schemes.

- All discretionary grants depend on the funds available to the Council.
- The Council can change or stop some or all of the discretionary grants if needed to ensure mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants continue.

	Type of Assistance	Means Test	Land Charge	Key Outcomes	Max. Funding
1	DFG TOP-UP.	Yes (already done for DFG).	Yes.	Enable disabled people to make major home adaptations to maximise independence.	£30,000
2	FAST TRACK GRANT (for small urgent grants in specified circumstances).	No.	No.	Minimise the risks associated with disabled people waiting for small adaptations in a number of specified circumstances (see grant specification for further details).	£5,000
3	DISCRETIONARY DISABLED ASSISTANCE GRANT.	No formal means test. Financial eligibility criteria apply.	Yes.	Provide assistance to eligible disabled people who would (in the Council's view) endure financial hardship if they had to pay a contribution to a Disabled Facilities Grant following a formal means test.	£15,000
4	SAFE, WARM AND WELL GRANT.	No formal means test. Financial eligibility criteria apply.	Yes.	Provide a safe and warm home for older and disabled people to promote health, wellbeing, & independence.	£15,000
5	MOVING ON ASSISTANCE GRANT	No formal means test. Financial eligibility criteria apply.	Yes.	Financial assistance to move to more suitable accommodation.	£12,000
6	EXCEPTIONAL DISCRETIONARY GRANT	See details in scheme 6.	See details in scheme 6.	Provide flexible discretionary housing assistance to individual disabled people that falls outside of the parameters of other	See details in scheme 6

				schemes.	
7	PRS DAMP/MOULD ASSISTANCE SCHEME	No formal means test. Financial eligibility criteria apply.	No	Minimise health risks associated with minor damp/mould problems	£1,500

Grants are available to help both children and adults with disabilities, but an appropriate adult must apply for the grant.

[READ A MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF DISCRETIONARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE GRANTS](#)

COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT

The Council's DFG allocation funds a wide range of community equipment, available through the Occupational Therapy Service. This equipment is provided to Havering residents with assessed health and social care needs to:

- Maximise health, wellbeing, and independence
- Minimise the risk of hospital admission
- Reduce the need for long-term nursing or residential care.

MAKING AN APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF ASSISTANCE

1. **Administration Fee:** The Council may charge a fee for professional/technical services, which will be included in the total assistance amount.
2. **Contract Responsibility:** The applicant is responsible for the contract with the contractor, even if the Council provides a list of builders. The Council ensures listed contractors follow a code of conduct and have the necessary insurances.
3. **Quotations:** The Council usually requires two written quotes and will base the grant value on the lowest reasonable quote.
4. **Payment:** The Council typically pays the contractor directly upon satisfactory completion of the work, unless the owner has already paid and provides proof.
5. **Management Agent:** For larger projects, the Council may appoint an agent to manage the work, with the cost included in the grant.
6. **Dispute Resolution:** The Council will help resolve disputes between the applicant and contractor, unless an agent is involved. If unresolved, legal advice may be needed.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

- **Council Responsibility:** The Council is not responsible for ongoing maintenance or repair, except for ceiling track hoists.
- **Warranties:** Some items may have extended warranties from the manufacturer. It's the applicant's responsibility to follow warranty conditions.
- **Extended Warranty Costs:** These are usually agreed upon when the grant is approved.
- **Documentation:** Copies of guarantees/warranties will be given to the applicant after the work is completed.

PROFESSIONAL FEES AND CHARGES

- **Included Fees:** Fees for services like architects, surveyors, engineers, and legal services will be included in the grant application and award.
- **Other Professional Fees:** These will be recovered according to the Regulatory Reform Order 2015.

CEILING TRACK HOISTS

Ceiling track hoists are funded by the Council's DFG allocation and provided through the Occupational Therapy Service for those with eligible needs. An Occupational Therapy Manual Handling Assessment determines the need for a hoist.

Common reasons for providing a ceiling track hoist include:

- Enabling single-handed care
- Inability to use a mobile hoist due to space or flooring issues
- Pain management
- Assisting family/informal carers with safe manual handling

REPAYMENT WHERE AN APPLICANT IS NOT ENTITLED TO A GRANT

All applicants must complete and sign an application form, confirming that the information they provided is correct. The Council will recover any grant awarded as a result of a fraudulent application.

DATA PROTECTION

All data will be held according to GDPR (EU) 2016/679. The Council may check any information provided in an application. To process an application, information may be shared with Havering Council services (such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Revenue and Benefits, Planning &

Building Control), other agencies, individuals, or family members specified by the applicant, and relevant Government Departments.

The Council may use the information to prevent and detect fraud and may share it with other bodies administering public funds for this purpose. Applicants will be informed about data use through a Privacy Notice, as required by GDPR. Safeguards will ensure data security and compliance with GDPR.

IF YOU WANT TO APPLY FOR A GRANT PLEASE READ A MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

Applicability

To apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), you must be eligible under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. An Occupational Therapist must recommend the grant, confirming that you are disabled and that the proposed works are necessary and appropriate.

For a discretionary grant, you must meet the specific eligibility criteria for that grant scheme (see appendix 1 for details). Under the Care Act 2014, the Council must meet the unmet needs of people with eligible social care needs. This policy also helps those who don't qualify for such support and aims to prevent the need for long-term care.

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants take priority over discretionary grants. During high demand, waiting times for discretionary grants will increase before those for mandatory grants. The Council may amend or suspend discretionary grants if demand exceeds the budget and does not guarantee a waiting list for these grants. The Council can also prioritize resources for discretionary assistance to achieve broader strategic goals.

DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION

List of who the policy has been disseminated to for comment:

- Key Officers in in the Council
- Key Officers in Children's Services
- ASC Legal Business Partner
- ASC Finance Business Partner

Details of the policy and housing grants for older and disabled people will be publicised through:

- Local newspaper ads
- LIVING Magazine
- Havering Council's social media
- Leaflets from local organisations and associations

The policy will also be available on the Adult Social Care pages of Havering Council's website. Hard copies can be obtained from the Disabled Facilities Grants Team (contact details below).

IMPLEMENTATION

The Council's leaflet about Disabled Facilities Grants and other housing grants for disabled and older people will be updated according to this revised policy. Information about the policy and the availability of these grants will be shared with relevant front-line staff to raise awareness.

The procedure for administering Disabled Facilities Grants and discretionary grants will also be updated in line with the revised policy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information and advice on the Policy can be obtained by contacting the Disabled Facilities Grants Team on:

Email:

DFG.Grants@haverling.gov.uk

Tel: 01708 434070.