



A great place to live, work & play

SCARBOROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Disabled Facilities Grants Policy

March 2019

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Author	Housing Manager
Owner	Housing Manager
Protective Marking	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED
Cabinet Approval Date	18.10.2016
Council Approval Date	7.11.2016
Policy Date/Period	Indefinite
Policy Review Frequency	Annual

REVIEW HISTORY

Date	Reviewed By	Version	Any Revisions?
Feb 2018	A Rowe		
Mar 2019	A Rowe		Clarification of points 1.2, 3.5, 6.1-6.3,9.1,9.3 & Appendix C

REVISION HISTORY (only required where changes made)

Date	Revised By	Version	Description of Revision

DOCUMENT REVISION APPROVALS

Version	Approval	Date

Contents

1 Introduction

2 The role of the Council as Housing Authority

3 The role of the Home Improvement Agency

4 The role of the Social Services Authority

5 Prioritisation Process

6 Emergency Adaptations

7 Means Tested Contributions

8 Sources of referral and direct applications

9 Discretionary assistance

10 Re-housing to more suitable accommodation

11 Re-payment of grant

Appendices

Appendix A - Priority Pointing System

Appendix B - Works Eligible for Assistance

Appendix C – Discretionary Assistance

1.0 Introduction

1.1. The purpose of the Policy is to:

- i) Assist Officers of the Council in the interpretation and implementation of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (The Order) so far as it relates to the adaptation of the homes of disabled people.
- ii) Ensure fair, equitable and consistent treatment for all disabled people who require the Council's assistance in adapting their home.

1.2 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:-

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (The Act).

Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (The Order)

Scarborough Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2017-2021

York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Strategy 2015-21

1.3 The Council accepts that there may be circumstances that warrant exceptions to this Adaptations Policy. The Director is authorised to assess individual cases and where appropriate, and reasonable to do so, decide that an exception be made to the normal Adaptations Policy.

1.4 In addition the Council has determined that under certain circumstances it shall use its discretion under the legislation to provide additional discretionary grant assistance (see xxx). This grant assistance is intended to allow additional flexibility within the DFG process however can only be provided should adequate levels of funding allow.

2.0 The Role of the Council as Housing Authority

2.1 The legal responsibility for the provision of DFGs sits with the Borough Council as Housing Authority. All applications for DFGs must meet the relevant requirements as set out within the legislation. This means that works being requested must be deemed as being 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practicable'.

2.2 By law the Borough Council must consider applications for DFGs and make determinations on those applications within 6 months of receipt. The Council considers that an application for a DFG has been submitted at the point of a satisfactorily completed application form, along with quotations for the work, landlord certificates and any relevant permission. Where a grant is to be means tested, evidence of financial income and savings and signed

certificates of future occupation. The Home Improvement agency shall provide support to applicants to assist them with this process.

- 2.3 Whilst applications must be determined within 6 months of receipt. Once an application for a DFG is approved the Council must ensure that the DFG is completed within 12 months.
- 2.4 As part of the consideration of an application the Council has a duty to determine whether works being requested are necessary and appropriate. To inform this decision, during the application process the Council has a duty to consult with the County Council as Social Services Authority. Where the Social Services Authority is unable to provide a response to this consultation in a reasonable timescale, the Council reserves the right to use private Occupational Health contractors to undertake the assessment needed.
- 2.5 In addition as part of the consideration of an application the Council has a duty to determine whether works being requested are reasonable and practicable. Factors considered in deciding if the works are reasonable and practicable include the size of the property, the number of occupants, its location and any environmental or physical constraints.
- 2.6 In addition a property should normally meet the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Standard (free from Category 1 hazards) before adaptation works are undertaken, however the Council reserves the right to use its discretion to undertake such works as required to resolve identified hazards in order to enable the adaptations to proceed.
- 2.7 Where the Council is likely to refuse an application for a DFG, the Council will contact the applicant to give them the opportunity to provide additional information which may affect such a decision, prior to a formal refusal being made.
- 2.8 Where the Council has no option but to refuse an application for grant, the Council will advise the applicant of the reasons for such refusal.
- 2.9 An applicant will have the right to a review of such a decision and if so desires should request a review in writing to the Director within 28 days of the date of the refusal letter.
- 2.10 Where works approved and undertaken they must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Council. The Council will have the overriding decision as to whether the works have been carried out to a satisfactory standard and will make direct payments to contractors, other than where a prior agreement has been made with the applicant.

3.0 Role of the Home Improvement Agency

- 3.1 The Council operates a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to deliver its DFGs.

3.2 Applicants are encouraged to utilise the comprehensive service provided, which includes:

- i) Support, information and advice
- ii) Information/assistance with applying for funding for adaptations
- iii) Technical advice, schedules of works and drawings
- iv) Assistance/advice with planning applications and building control
- v) Assisting clients to choose contractors
- vi) Monitoring work to ensure it meets the Council's standards
- vii) Other ancillary services

3.3 A key role of the HIA is to assist clients with the procurement of a suitable contractor to undertake works. The Council has an agreed framework of contractors to undertake such works. Should applicants wish to use an alternative contractor they will be given the option to self-fund any additional costs and will be solely responsible for ensuring all works are completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

3.4 Applicants not wishing to use the HIA's service can still apply for a DFG should they want to. Under these circumstances the applicant shall be solely responsible for making the application, sourcing contractors and overseeing any works undertaken. Works undertaken in these circumstances must be completed to the satisfaction of the Council prior to the release of any grant funding.

3.5 The Council will charge a 15% fee for the services detailed above. In addition (subject to available funding) the Council may also fund ancillary services, which address the housing, social care and health needs of their clients, such as Handyperson Services and Well Being Services.

4.0 The Role of the Social Services Authority

4.1 North Yorkshire County Council in their role as the Social Services Authority has a duty to respond to consultation requests from the Housing Authority to help determine whether a request for a DFG is necessary and appropriate.

4.2 In addition, many requests for a DFG arise as a result of a Social Services assessment. In these instances, following the assessment of a disabled person, social services shall advise if adaptations are considered necessary, send to the Council a written recommendation of their assessment detailing the purpose for the grant in accordance with section 23(1) of the Act. In these

4.3 The Council may, if it deems appropriate, instruct an independent occupational therapist to carry out this assessment. This would typically be done where the Social Services department are unable to undertake an assessment within a reasonable period. In these instances the cost of such an assessment would be met and included within the DFG award.

- 4.4 The Social Services Authority will highlight any works requested that are over- and above that which is necessary and appropriate. In these instances the application would be required to contribute to the enhanced scheme.
- 4.5 The Social Services Authority has a responsibility to provide community care equipment and minor adaptations, which a person has been assessed to need and for which he or she is eligible, free of charge provided the costs (including fittings) is less than £1000.

5.0 Prioritisation Process

- 5.1 During periods of high demand, the Council reserves the right to use a needs based prioritisation scheme to ensure priority is given to those applicants for DFGs who in are greatest need (see appendix).
- 5.2 In these circumstances written advice will be provided to the disabled person and/or their carer regarding how their request for assistance with adaptations will be processed, likely timescale and the priority scheme in operation for dealing with adaptations.
- 5.3 Level of priority is determined following a needs based assessment. If a client's health deteriorates from the initial assessment there will be the opportunity for their case to be reprioritised, subject to advice and information from Health or Social Services.
- 5.4 Additional points will also be awarded where the Social Services recommendation elapses 6 months to ensure progression through the waiting list.
- 5.5 If an applicant is dissatisfied with the level of prioritisation they have received, the HIA should initially deal with such concerns and where appropriate arrange for the enquiry to be re-assessed.
- 5.6 If an applicant is still dissatisfied once this re-assessment has been carried out they may appeal against the decision made, in writing, outlining the reasons why they feel the case has been incorrectly assessed to the Councils Director.

6.0 Emergency Adaptations

- 6.1 Emergency Cases will be classified as follows:

Critical Fast Track – Grants will be awarded where works are able to be undertaken within weeks and **limited** to works such as stair lifts, ramps and wet floor showers. These applicants will be given the highest priority and contractors will be paid extra to deliver these grants within a short timescale

Cases are deemed as **Critical Fast Track** where the application:

- a) Allows the applicant to be discharged from hospital, or;

- b) The applicant is at the end of their life (with a life expectancy of less than 6 months), or
- c) The applicant cannot access essential hospital appointments, dialysis or care without adaptations.
- d) The current situation is placing the service user and their Carers at considerable risk of injury e.g. from unsafe moving or handling.

6.2 The next priority of grant will be **Fast Track** – Grants will be awarded for people with a life expectancy of between 6 and 24 months. As these applicants have a longer life expectancy, a wider range of work will be eligible for grant funding

6.3 Cases will only be deemed as an emergency following a health or social care assessment will be 'fast tracked' through to completion and not be subject to any prioritisation process or means test.

7.0 Means Tested Contributions

7.1 As part of the standard DFG application process a standard test of resources is undertaken to determine whether the applicant needs to make a financial contribution toward the cost of works undertaken. The Council has however agreed to use its discretion under the Regulatory Reform Order to provide a 'non-means tested' DFG where the value of proposed works are less than £5000.

7.2 In addition a means test shall not be applied where the works needed are considered to be an emergency (see 2.6).

8.0 Sources of Referral and Direct Applications

8.1 Whilst many requests for a DFG come to the Council via a Social Services assessment, applicants also have the right to make applications to the Council directly. In addition, referrals for DFG applications may come from other organisations, including health professionals, voluntary sector organisations and different Council departments.

8.2 As part of their service, the HIA shall inform potential clients of their different options regarding how to access the adaptations needed, including Social Services assessments, direct applications or self-funding.

8.3 Where applications do not come via a Social Services assessment the HIA shall proceed with the DFG application in the normal way and help the client complete the necessary application. The Council has a legal duty to determine the application within 6 months of receipt. As part of the consideration process, the Council has a duty to consult with Social Services department to ensure that the works being requested are necessary and appropriate. Where the Social Services department are unable to provide feedback to that consultation request within a reasonable timescale, the Council reserves the right to employ a private contractor to provide the necessary assessment.

9.0 Discretionary Assistance

- 9.1 Subject to the availability of funding, the Council reserves the right to use its discretion under the Regulatory Reform Order to pay for works under a DFG that may otherwise not be eligible for assistance. Typically these works could include the cost of undertaking repairs to a property for a disabled or extremely vulnerable resident. These could include:
- a) Insulating a home or providing uPVC double glazing where a DFG is being provided to install a new heating system.
 - b) Undertaking works to resolve category one hazards within a property, such as remedial works to tackle damp or excess cold.
 - c) Undertaking electrical repairs to a home where a new level floor shower or chair lift is being provided.
 - d) Undertaking measures to improve the safety and security of eligible households such as windows and door locks, fixing loose flooring, undertaking repairs to pathways and the removal of trip hazards.
 - e) Providing a 'top-up' to the grant contribution where costs exceed the normal maximum amount of £30,000.
- 9.2 In addition, where levels of funding permit, the Council shall fund the replacement of existing adaptations where they meet the end of their lifespan. These could include the replacement of stair lifts, through floor lifts and step lifts.
- 9.3 Such discretionary assistance shall only be awarded to households eligible where a disabled or extremely vulnerable person is resident. In addition, the Council has placed some additional restrictions and rules regarding eligibility for such discretionary assistance. A full breakdown of the different awards is included within Appendix 3.
- 9.4 The availability of all discretionary grant assistance is subject to the Council's annual budget setting procedure and the availability of sufficient levels of external funding. All such payments are at the Council's discretion and will be removed once available funds are exhausted.

10.0 Re-Housing to more suitable accommodation

- 10.1 Where required adaptations involve substantial structural alterations or extensions and in any event where the cost of the adaptation work exceeds £30,000, then re-housing shall be considered to address the needs of the household.
- 10.2 In order to help facilitate a move to appropriate alternative accommodation the Council shall provide relocation assistance to cover the 'moving costs' associated with such a move.
- 10.3 Eligible 'moving costs' include removal expenses and the connection or disconnection of appliances or the payment of a bond to a landlord.

Assistance is offered to cover 100% of these costs up to a maximum payment of £5,000.

11.0 Repayment of Grant

- 11.1 The Council will reclaim funding for extensions that exceeds £5,000 up to a maximum of £10,000 where home owners sell the home within 10 years of the grant award. This money is recouped via a land charge.
- 11.2 In addition any recipient of a DFG that has a home owners interest in the property that has had any adaptation carried out and subsequently moves property within the Borough and is seeking further grant aid to install similar adaptations to those previously funded then any cost over £5000 will also be subject to a land charge.
- 11.3 Where charges are levied, then in each case the Council must be satisfied that it is reasonable to require the repayment and will consider this in line with the legislation.

Appendix A

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants – Priority Pointing System



TOTAL SCORE	
--------------------	--

NAME OF APPLICANT:

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY:

Fast track request	Points
The Occupational Therapist has flagged the case as extremely urgent due to health and safety issues or life threatening illness (to be applied in exceptional circumstances).	Fast track requests are outside pointing scheme
1.0 Time waiting for adaptation	Points
OT recommendations made in last 6 months.	0
For every month elapsed over 6 months since recommendations.	+2
2.0 Reason for recommending adaptation (Note: score up to three categories only.)	Points
To facilitate access into/out of the property	+10
To facilitate access to the toilet.	+20
To facilitate the use of the kitchen/enable food preparation.	+7
To facilitate getting up and down steps and stairs.	+10

To facilitate the use or access to bathing/showering.	+10
To facilitate access to a room used or usable as the principal family room	+5
To facilitate access to or the provision of a room used or usable for sleeping	+5
To improving or provide a heating system	+10
Other (specify and score 1 – 7) Give reasons: e.g. To facilitate access to garden, ergonomics within the dwelling	
3.0 Adaptations	Points
Existing adaptations exist, which partially meet needs or would do so in the short term.	-10
4.0 Mobility (Note: only apply one score for the client.)	Points
Client is room bound or house bound without proposed adaptation.	+ 30
Client is a total wheelchair user.	+15
Client is mainly a wheelchair user but can stand for short periods.	+10
Client is ambulant indoors but needs wheelchair outdoors.	+8
Client is ambulant but uses frame/sticks or support system.	+6

Client is ambulant but unsteady or blind/deaf.	+4
5.0 Safety factors (Note: score one category only.)	Points
Client is a single parent with disabled child.	+20
Client lives alone.	+15
Client has carer who is not managing	+10
Client is a disabled parent with able bodied child aged under 16.	+5
Client lives with/well supported by family/others or has occupying related carer.	+2
6.0 Child or Young Person's application	Points
As defined in the DFG Regulations	+10

Date Signed

Comments
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix B

Works Eligible for Assistance

1.1 General

1.1.1 The adaptation works eligible for assistance will be those listed under section 23 (1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as follows.

1.2 Access to the Dwelling

1.2.1 Works eligible for assistance may include:

- i) Ramped access to main entrance door for wheelchair use; widened or shallower steps to main entrance door or a step lift;
- ii) Widened entrance door for wheelchair use;
- iii) Resurfaced or re-graded path to entrance door;
- iv) Alterations to secondary entrance door/patio window to provide access to rear garden/yard where access cannot easily be gained via the adapted main entrance and drive/side path;
- v) Structural alterations required to allow installation of stair lift through floor lift or step lift equipment.

1.3 Making the Dwelling Safe

1.3.1 Works eligible for assistance may include:

- i) Works to provide means of escape from fire (usually to flats);
- ii) Provision of guards or cladding etc; to prevent persons with behavioural problems harming themselves;
- iii) Specialised glazing or shades to windows to protect occupants with a medical condition which make them sensitive to sunlight;
- iv) Repairing defective stairs or floors etc which are hazardous

1.4 Access to Principal Family Room

1.4.1 Works eligible for assistance may include:

- i) Widened doorway for wheelchair access;
- ii) Provision and installation of stair lift/through-floor lift equipment and structural alterations required to allow installation, if the principal living room is on an upper floor;
- iii) Widened doorway in entrance hall to access principal family room for wheelchair use;

1.5 Access to Sleeping Room

1.5.1 Works eligible for assistance may include:

- i) Provision and installation of stair lift/through-floor lift equipment and structural alterations required to allow the installation, where access is required to a bedroom or room suitable for sleeping which is above ground floor level;
- ii) Conversion of a ground floor room into a bedroom; Widened doorway for wheelchair access to sleeping room;
- iii) Construction of bedroom extension (see notes on extensions);
- iv) Strengthened ceiling and/or preparation works for ceiling track hoist, where hoist is to be provided by North Yorkshire County Council Adult & Community Services.

1.6 Access to WC

1.6.1 Works eligible for assistance may include:

- i) Provision of a WC where one does not exist.
- ii) Provision and installation of stair lift/through-floor lift equipment and structural alterations required to allow the installation, where access is required to a WC above ground floor level;
- iii) Strengthened ceiling and/or preparation works for ceiling track hoist, where hoist is to be provided by North Yorkshire County Council Adult & Community Services
- iv) Repositioning WC to facilitate access by wheelchair user;
- v) Raised/lowered WC pan;
- vi) Provision of grab rails;
- vii) Provision of ground floor WC where upper floor cannot be accessed;
- viii) Widened doorway for wheelchair access;

- ix) Extension for a WC (see notes on extensions).

1.7 Access to Bathing Facilities

1.7.1 Works which may be eligible for assistance include:

- i) Provision and installation of stair lift/through-floor lift equipment and structural alterations required to allow the installation, where access is required to an existing bathroom above ground floor level;
- ii) Provision of bath or shower for the first time;
- iii) Provision of shower (thermostatically controlled) over a bath, including necessary curtain, tiles and grab rail;
- iv) Replacement of bath with shower facility;
- v) Replacement of shower with a bath;
- vi) Provision of bath and shower where there are 2 or more disabled occupants with differing needs;
- vii) Provision of bathroom extension (see notes on extensions);
- viii) Relocation of bath/shower to facilitate use by wheelchair user;
- x) Strengthened ceiling and/or preparation works for ceiling track hoist, where hoist is to be provided by North Yorkshire County Council Adult & Community Services;
- xi) Widened doorway for wheelchair access;
- xii) Provision of fixed seat/grab rails;
- xiii) Non-slip/sloping floor to create shower facility.

1.8 Access to Wash Basin

1.8.1 A wash-hand basin will normally be provided in the same room as the WC. Works to provide access may include:

- i) Relocation of wash-hand basin to facilitate use by wheelchair user;
- ii) Replacement of wash-hand basin with more suitable type e.g. replace vanity unit with wall fixed wash-hand basin;
- iii) Replacement of taps with lever taps in association with above.

1.9 Access to Kitchen Facilities

1.9.1 The extent of adaptation work in a kitchen should be related to the extent of cooking and food preparation normally undertaken by the disabled person.

1.9.2 Works which may be eligible for assistance include:

- i) Rearrangement of kitchen fittings/appliances to facilitate their use;
- ii) Enlargement of the kitchen if it is too small to allow its safe use by wheelchair user;
- iii) Adapted work-top/storage unit for wheelchair user;
- iv) Adapted doorway for wheelchair user;
- v) Widened doorway for wheelchair user

1.10 Access to Power, Light and Heat

1.10.1 Works which may be eligible for assistance include:

- i) Relocating power points to make them accessible;
- ii) Adaptation of heating/lighting controls to make them accessible;
- iii) Replacement of solid fuel fire with other heating appliance in living/sleeping rooms normally used by a disabled occupant;
- iv) Improvement of inadequate heating in living/sleeping rooms normally used by disabled occupant;
- ii) Provision of central heating.

1.11 Access to Permit Care of Other Persons

1.11.1 Where the disabled occupant cares for other persons e.g. spouse, young children or elderly relatives who are normally resident in the dwelling, works may be provided to other rooms in the dwelling to allow the disabled person access to care for those persons, including:

- i) Provision and installation of stair lift/through-floor lift equipment and structural alterations required to allow the installation, where the disabled person lives on the ground floor but needs access to bedrooms;
- ii) Widened doorways to bedrooms of those being cared for by disabled, wheelchair user;

1.12 Access to the Garden

1.12.1 In deciding the extent of providing access to the rear garden, the following will be taken into account.

- i) Grant assistance will not be given where there is already access to the garden but grant assistance may be given to improve an existing access to make it safe for the disabled occupant to use. It does not include extending an existing access e.g. creating a side access so a person can also go around the side of a house.
- ii) Generally, the most modest solution for providing access to both the house and the garden will be considered and this can mean that one access may be sufficient to access both the house and the garden.
- iii) Where homes have communal gardens, e.g., blocks of flats served by a single access, grants will not normally be provided for an individual access to the garden unless it can be demonstrated that because of the disabled persons condition the travel distance to the garden would be excessive and unreasonable.

APPENDIX C – DISCRETIONARY ASSISTANCE

Repairs Assistance	
Purpose/key outcomes	<p>The purpose of this financial support is primarily to fund additional works for disabled and extremely vulnerable residents to help to alleviate the most significant hazards within domestic dwellings that have the potential to impact on the health of the most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Where no external funding solution is available the Council will consider funding any necessary works by way of additional grant (subject to conditions). The scope of the works will be limited to those required to alleviate category 1 hazards and high category 2 hazards as defined under the HHSRS.</p>
Eligibility Criteria	Any applicants who are deemed to be disabled as per DFG legislation or extremely vulnerable, who are owner occupiers or who live in private rented accommodation.
Eligibility Criteria (works)	<p>The works can include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical Repairs • Damp • Structural repairs • Measures to tackle excess cold within dwellings including heating upgrades, additional insulation, windows etc.
Special Conditions and Requirements	<p>Maximum of £15,000 per property</p> <p>The grant amount (above £1000) will be placed as a Local Land Charge on the property for a term of 5 years.</p> <p>Where charges are levied, then in each case the Council must be satisfied that it is reasonable to require the repayment and will consider this in line with the DFG legislation</p> <p>Where the applicant is a tenant the landlords consent will be required and the grant will only be provided where the landlord agrees to make a 50% contribution towards the cost of works.</p>

Discretionary Adaptations	
Purpose/key outcomes	<p>The council can allow at its discretion pay additional grant to assist DFG applicants and their Carers with adaptations falling outside the normal criteria of the DFG.</p> <p>Additional assistance may be given with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for carers • Provision for people with dementia/Alzheimer • Provision for people with behavioural difficulties
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Any applicants who are deemed to be disabled as per DFG legislation who are owner occupiers or who live in private rented or housing association accommodation.</p> <p>In addition the carers of those applicants.</p>
Eligibility Criteria (works)	<p>Works may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soundproofing to improve the quality of life for carers • Safety rooms for children • Highly specialised bathing equipment to aid carers • Providing a 'top-up' to the grant contribution where costs exceed the normal maximum amount of £30,000.
Special Conditions and Requirements	Maximum of £15,000 per property