



Factsheet

Disabled facilities grants (children)

This factsheet explains what a Disabled Facilities Grant is, who may be entitled and explores other types of funding for adaptations to the home.

Adaptations may be necessary to ensure someone can stay living in their own home safely and can include various changes such as ramps, extensions or hoist installations.

In order to maintain independence for a disabled adult, the Local Authority should always consider the possibility of making adaptations to the home, if and when appropriate.

What is a Disabled Facilities Grant?

Local Authorities have a power to provide funding to carry out essential works in the home that are required to assist disabled people to live independently. This type of funding is called a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

The types of work for which you may receive a DFG are:

- To make it easier for you to get into and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors and installing ramps;
- Providing you with a specially adapted room in which it would be safe to leave you unattended or with improved lighting to ensure better visibility;
- To make access easier to the living room;
- By providing or improving access to the bedroom, and kitchen, toilet, washbasin and bath (and/or
- To improve or provide a heating system in your home which is suitable to the needs;
- To adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier for you to use; and
- To improve access and movement around the home to enable you to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a spouse, child or another person for whom you care for; and

- To improve access to and from the garden of your home where feasible.

Eligibility

DFGs are available to all people who are “substantially and permanently handicapped”, and who are homeowners or tenants. The right to funding only arises where you have been assessed as needing a particular adaptation to meet your individual needs following a community care assessment.

You are only entitled to a grant if you are substantially and permanently handicapped, so you cannot get adaptations if your needs are due to age or short-term illness. There are also conditions in respect of the accommodation you are living in. Although you do not have to own the property, you must be occupying it as your main residence. As part of the agreement with the Local Authority to undertake the works, you will also be expected to remain there for at least five years after the works have been completed.

When an application is made for a DFG, the Local Authority will check that the proposed works

- Necessary and appropriate to meet your needs; and
- Reasonable and practicable depending on the age and condition of the property.

In most circumstances this will have been considered during the assessment process.

DFG's are means tested and are limited to a maximum amount of £30,000. Only in exceptional circumstances can this figure be increased.

Timescale

Any DFG application should be completed within 6 months of being made. This means from the date of the application to a final decision from the Local Authority being made. Failure to do this can justify a complaint, or other legal action being considered such as a Judicial Review.

Other Adaptations

Under the Community Care (Delayed Discharges) Act 2003 you may be entitled to minor adaptations to your home if the cost of these falls below £1,000.

Similar to DFGs the identification of minor adaptations will usually come when you are primarily assessed. If a particular need or outcome can be met with the purchase of specific equipment, the Local Authority will often opt to meet that one-off cost to ensure your

needs are met going forward. This could range from specialist grip cutlery, installation of handles and support around the home or even seating equipment needed for mobility purposes.

Under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 adaptations may be provided if the Local Authority are satisfied that services are necessary. However, the Local Authority are more likely to use a DFG as the main method of funding, particularly where these might be more substantial.

Where the Local Authority has decided that it is necessary to make provision, it must provide the services; it cannot introduce a waiting list or other eligibility criteria in order to evade the responsibility however limited its financial resources.

Services that can be provided include:

- Practical assistance in the home such as personal care, bathing, help using the toilet, moving, assistance with feeding and routine household chores.
- Home based short breaks giving you and your child some time apart. This could be in the form of a sitting in service; leisure activities, horse-riding, swimming, attending a football club.
- Recreational or educational facilities such as day centres; as well as travel needs to access services.
- Home aids and adaptations including ramps, grab handles, wheelchair accessible shower rooms, floor lifts and extensions.

How we can help

For many individuals the assessment process can be challenging, and disputes frequently arise in relation to what work should be considered “necessary and appropriate”. There are the inevitable arguments about the cost of the work and whether this can be met within the scope of the grant. We are experienced in assisting individuals with the process to ensure that the home they return to is fit for their needs.



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