

Subject:	Disabled Facilities Grant Underspend and Update	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	19 th March 2025
Report of:	Housing Renewal Team Leader	Lead Member:	Communities, Housing, Health and Wellbeing
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Once approval for relevant projects has been obtained from the Health and Wellbeing Board, Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development in conjunction with the Lead Member to allocate unspent DFG funds to support Social Care Capital projects that provide wider community benefits.
- 1.2 Approve an amendment to the Housing Assistance Policy to formally include Social Care Capital Projects.
- 1.3 To approve the proposed Disabled Facilities Grant investment plan.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- We have accumulated reserves from previous years underspent DFG budgets and rather than rolling these funds over, we would like to utilise them to support community capital projects.
- We plan to seek approval from the Health and Wellbeing Board and Better Care Fund Board for these Capital Projects.
- It is proposed to make a minor addition to the Housing Assistance Policy to include the Social Care Capital Projects.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Rossendale Borough Council's reserves for Disabled Facilities Grants currently has £2.64m. This has been ring-fenced previously with little opportunity to spend.
- 3.2 It is suggested that the remaining underspend held in reserves is utilised for Health and Wellbeing Board/Better Care Fund Board approved capital projects. The below table summarises the proposed investment plan.

3.3

Investment Plan - Capital project	Amount allocated
Haslingden Market	£165,000
Rawtenstall Market	£200,000
Cobble reshaping at Deardengate Haslingden	£110,000
Flexibility for other town centre or community facility projects	£220,000
Home development projects	Allocate remaining underspend
Contingency for increased demand in DFGs	

- 3.4 The allocation of DFG underspend at Haslingden market is to provide suitable disabled WC facilities and contribute towards DDA compliant paving throughout the market. We have already received written approval for this item, therefore, if receiving permission to receive from Cabinet, we will not be required to seek any further approvals for this piece of work.
- 3.5 The allocation of DFG underspend at Rawtenstall market is to provide suitable disabled WC facilities, re-aligning of an entrance, associated paving upgrades, ramped access and canopy.
- 3.6 The DFG underspend will also be allocated for future adaptations in town centres, including other necessary improvements to enhance accessibility, such as reshaping the cobbles in Haslingden Town Centre, improvements to community facilities, adaptations to shared spaces or investment in assistive technology.
- 3.7 By reallocating these funds, the Council can provide a sustainable, community focused solution that ensures residents live in a safe, accessible, and appropriately designed environment that meets their needs.
- 3.8 There is a significant shortage of adapted social housing for disabled residents. This result is in many individuals living in unsuitable accommodation that does not support independent living. This lack of appropriate housing contributes to increased demand for social care services and places additional pressure on health and social care systems.
- 3.9 A contingency fund will be maintained to mitigate the impact of increased demand for DFG services. This ensures that, even in the event of a funding shortfall, the number of completed adaptations remains unaffected.
- 3.10 In December 2023, it was agreed that the Director of Economic Development in conjunction with the lead member can sign off minor amendments to the Housing Assistance Policy.
- 3.11 Following the first year's establishment of the policy, it is recommended that an amendment is made to the Housing Assistance Policy to include:
- The Corporate Management Team (CMT) conducting an annual review of any DFG underspend.
 - As part of this review, the Director of Economic Development will assess the feasibility of allocating these funds to Social Care Capital Projects in readiness for submission to the Health and Wellbeing Board for prior approval.
 - Any proposed projects must align with strategic social care objectives and deliver measurable community benefits.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 Rossendale Borough Council introduced the Housing Assistance Policy in January 2024 to ensure the effective allocation of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding and other housing-related financial assistance.
- 4.2 At the time of implementation, the Council held a total reserve of just over £2.2 million.
- 4.3 The reserve had been accumulating for a number of years but until now, there had been limited chance to strategically allocate the funds.

- 4.4 The new Housing Assistance Policy has increased the opportunities for spend and this financial year, it is expected to utilise our full allocation from Lancashire County Council of £1.265m.

Financial Overview for 2024/25

Financial Component	Amount (£)
DFG Underspend (Carried Forward)	£2,200,000
2024/25 Allocation from County	£1,265,328
Expected Top-Up	<i>Pending</i>
Projected Spend (2024/25)	(£2,000,000)
Estimated Remaining Underspend	£1,500,000

4.5 Strategic Considerations

- The remaining underspend provides an opportunity to support Social Care Capital Projects that benefit the wider community.
- A minor amendment to the Housing Assistance Policy will enable the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to annually review the use of underspend for such projects.
- Future allocations and spending plans will align with strategic housing and social care objectives.
- Additions have been picked up on equality impact assessments to ensure this protected characteristic is considered.

4.6 Impact since Policy Implementation

- Increased Spend: 58% rise in funding allocated compared to previous levels.
- Expanded Support: 54 additional individuals assisted through alternative grant funding this year alone.
- Enhanced Accessibility: Greater reach and impact on vulnerable residents requiring housing adaptations and assistance.

4.7 Monitoring the reallocation of Disabled Facilities Grant

To ensure transparency and accountability in the use of reallocated Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funds, the Council will implement a robust monitoring and reporting framework.

This includes KPIs such as:

- Number of disabled residents using market-adapted facilities
- Feedback from users and disability groups
- Number of adapted properties developed
- Number of residents successfully relocated
- Impact on residents' independence and quality of life

- 4.8 The Council will also provide reports to the Better Care Fund board. The Better Care Fund board is Lancashire County lead and interlinks the Disabled Facilities Grant. The reports will outline fund allocation and expenditure breakdown, measurable outcomes achieved and updates on completed and ongoing projects.

- 4.9 Approval has been given by the Better Care Fund board representative to support Haslingden Market.

- 4.10 An annual report will be completed to review the project's effectiveness in meeting the Better Care Fund objectives, including data on cost savings, improved health outcomes, and resident satisfaction.

4.11 Consultation

Those stakeholders who were engaged with as part of the development of the Housing Assistance Policy have been consulted on the proposed investment plan to ensure the investment continues to align to the community needs, namely enhancing accessibility, independence, and quality of life for vulnerable individuals.

There have been no issues raised.

5. RISK

- 5.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Increase in Minor Works Adaptations as Lancashire County Council propose an amendment to the Minor Works Contract. Mitigation, careful team organisation, planning and early work with contractors will mitigate this concern.
- The increase of capital projects outbalances the spend on home adaptations. This is mitigated by ensuring that all underspends are considered through the Council's Corporate Management Team. Home adaptations will remain a priority of the funding.
- The Better Care Fund do not recognise the significance of the requests to support social care capital projects. This will be mitigated by the support of local groups, stakeholders and organisations who have expressed strong support previously. No funding will be allocated to such projects unless approval in writing has first been given.

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 To avoid breaching the conditions of grant and allow the repurpose the proposal must be reviewed and approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). The HWB ensures that the reallocation aligns with the Better Care Funds goals and complies with relevant regulations.
- 6.2 Once approved, the Head of Housing and Regeneration must ensure that monitoring and reporting of the use of the reallocated funds and the impacts achieved must be reported back to CMT and the HWB as dictated in its approval. This ensures transparency and accountability in the use of BCF resources.

7. LEGAL

- 7.1 Any money paid under the Council's Better Care Fund DFG grant determination must only be used for the specific purpose of funding adaptations for disabled people who qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant made under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 or under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 or any other social care capital projects where first agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board as detailed in the body of this report.
- 7.2 The proposed amendments to the policy sit outside the delegation to the Director of Economic Development and Lead Member to deal with minor amends as they do materially affect the policy and the application of DFG funds and use of reserves.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Consultation has been carried out with interested stakeholders with no negative implications on the proposed amends having been identified.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

- 9.1 Approving the Council's strategy to reallocate underspent Disabled Facilities Grant funds will improve accessibility and support integrated community projects in Rossendale. To amend the Housing Assistance Policy to align with the approvals herein.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Housing Assistance Policy	Housing Assistance Policy Rossendale Borough Council
Tracked Changes HAP	Appendix 1



Housing Assistance Policy

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

First Draft July 2023

Amended November 2023

Published December 2023

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1.0 Introduction

This document sets out Rossendale Borough Council's policies in relation to home improvements and focusses specifically on the provision of financial assistance and other forms of assistance that the Council can offer to improve the standards of housing and the quality of life for qualifying residents.

The Council must approve mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applications made under section 23(1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. In 2002 the Government provided opportunities for Local Authorities to provide other forms of financial assistance to address particular housing issues. This was the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, which was further extended in 2008-9 to include use of the DFG money. This enables authorities to use specific DFG funding for wider purposes. The Council has discretionary powers under the legislation to provide assistance in any form for the purpose of improving living conditions and specifically for:

- I. The acquisition of living accommodation, where the Council wish to purchase a person's home as an alternative to adapting, improving or repairing it
- II. The adaptation or improvement of living accommodation (including by alteration, conversion or enlargement)
- III. The repair of living accommodation
- IV. The demolition of buildings comprising or including living accommodation
- V. The construction or replacement of living accommodation to replace living accommodation that has been demolished

In 2016-17, the Better Care Fund (BCF) was introduced to be used locally on health and social care through pooled budget arrangements between Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). Part of the fund must be allocated for DFGs, which is paid to the Local Authorities. As DFGs are now a component within the Better Care Fund there is greater flexibilities to maximise the benefits for service users.

In order for the Council to use its discretionary powers under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to tailor local delivery, it must have this policy. This policy sets out the new flexibilities the Council is adopting in respect of DFGs, including, but not restricted to, changes to bypassing the means testing, supporting Rossendale Borough Council to meet its responsibilities and legal duties to support local communities and the individual needs of residents.

This policy will remain in force until such time as it is amended. It is intended that there will be a review of this policy biennially.

Policy Priorities:

- I. To improve the lives of people with disabilities by enabling access and movement around their own home with the use of adaptations
- II. To allow more effective use of the Better Care Fund by contributing to the aims of the fund, in particular, reducing hospital admissions and allowing early hospital discharges

- III. To reduce the need for domiciliary and residential care by allowing people with disabilities to live more independently in their own homes
- IV. To provide advice, information and support regarding the adaptation of properties to meet accessibility needs, and provide a framework of assistance to vulnerable groups
- V. To treat individuals fairly regardless of age, sex, gender, disability and sexual orientation and to protect their rights under Data Protection and human rights legislation

Strategic context for the Policy

The Councils Corporate Plan 2021-2025 details the vision for the Borough and how that vision can become a reality.

“Our vision is to have a thriving economy, built around our changing town centres, creating a quality environment for all and improving the life chances of all those living and working in our Borough”.

Our place, Our plan – Healthy and proud communities

“Enable residents to remain in their own homes and live independent lives through a comprehensive adaptations programme and working closely with health partners”.

The Councils Housing Strategy 2023-2027

Our vision “In the next 5 years, housing in Rossendale will be accessible, affordable and appropriate”.

Objective two: Introduce new policies that enable people to remain in their own homes in suitable and sustainable properties.

2.0 The Rossendale Home Improvement Agency (HIA)

The Rossendale Home Improvements Agency is dedicated to helping vulnerable older and disabled residents live safely and with dignity in their own homes.

The agency service is available to people who are vulnerable and need help repairing, maintaining, or adapting their home. The HIA deliver a range of financial assistance as well as having trained advisers offering help and advice on a wide range of problems that might affect resident's homes. Services include

- Visiting clients at home
- Where alternative housing is needed, a referral will be made to Rossendale's Housing Options Team
- Delivering a wide range of minor adaptations within residents homes
- Assistance with repair work around the home
- Provision of a handyperson service, to carry out small jobs around the home
- Helping to make homes more energy efficient

Rossendale Borough Council's HIA strives to extend the healthy life expectancy of older people, by reducing the need for intensive emergency services, maximising income by offering advice on benefits. The HIA provides quick and flexible responses to local needs, improving resident's health and wellbeing and make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable residents.

Summary of the types of assistance available

In brief, assistance will be provided for the following purposes, details of which are provided later in this document

Adaptations to the home

- Disabled Facilities Grants (Mandatory)
- Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants
- Relocation Grants
- The Hospital Discharge Grant
- The Homes Displacement Grant
- Minor Adaptations
- Dwelling Dementia Grants

Improvements to the home

- Handyperson Services
- Emergency Works Grants
- Safe and Secure Grants

3.0 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

Introduction

The Council has a statutory obligation to administer mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to provide adaptations to enable disabled residents to live independently within their own homes.

The provisions governing mandatory disabled grants are contained in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Advice on delivery of DFG's and the role and responsibility of the Council and Social Services is contained in the Department for Education and Skills/Department of Health good practice guides "Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People" and "Home Adaptations for Disabled People, A detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice (Home Adaptations Consortium 2015)".

Purpose

This grant is intended to help people with disabilities to live more independently in their home. It includes essential adaptations to enable a disabled person to gain access into their dwelling, to move around it and to access kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Where it is not reasonable and practical to carry out the works, the applicant may be eligible for assistance to relocate to a more suitable property.

Eligibility Criteria

All owner-occupiers, tenants, licensees, or occupiers who can satisfy the criteria in sections 19-22 of the 1996 Act are eligible. Private tenants may apply following approval by the landlord to the adaptation work. Housing Association tenants are also eligible and are assessed for need and means tested on the same basis as private owners and tenants. The eligible works are set out in section 23(1) of the 1996 Act.

The property must be the person with a disability's main or only residence to be eligible to be adapted, and if that is not currently the case, then the person with a disability must intend to occupy it as their main or only residence, once the work has been completed, for the grant condition period.

The grant condition period is for 5 years and starts when the works have been completed to the satisfaction of both the Council and applicant. If an applicant is proposing to buy a new home, then a DFG can only be awarded once the purchase has been completed and this can be proven. If an applicant is looking to buy a new property, then they will be encouraged to liaise with the OT service and the Council regarding the suitability of the dwelling, to meet the needs of the person with a disability, whether it is possible to adapt the property, and the likely timescales, cost and contribution expected to do so.

If an applicant is eligible then the Council has a maximum of six months to 'determine' the application, which means approve or otherwise, however the determination should be carried out as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Works covered under Disabled Facilities Grant include:

- Facilitating access to the dwelling and garden, to overcome or remove any obstacles, and allow free movement around the property
- Making the dwelling or building safe, e.g. lighting or provision of a safe space
- Facilitating access to a living or family room
- Access to, or the provision of, a W/C, bath or shower (or both) and wash hand basin facilities
- Facilitating accessible food preparation/cooking amenities
- Improving or providing a suitable heating system where necessary
- Providing accessible sockets, switches and controls for power, light and heat
- Allowing better access to care for a dependant resident in the dwelling
- To allow access to the dwelling through common-parts of a building
- Fixed hoists, stair-lifts, through floor lifts, external step lifts
- Windows openers
- Facilitating wheelchair access internally

Where additional facilities are provided, the Council will generally expect adaptation of the living or dining room rather than the use of a bedroom.

Wherever possible adaptations will be provided within the existing curtilage of the building, with extensions only being considered where the adaptation could not fit within the property.

The Council will look at the total occupation and use of the property when making the assessment.

The grant will not be given towards alternative works and cannot be granted retrospectively if works had already started.

Amount and Application

The maximum mandatory DFG in England is £30,000 and this amount would be reduced by any contribution determined as payable under the means test.

The grant is means-tested, except if the application is on behalf of a child or young person aged 19 or below. Therefore, the applicants income and savings are required to be assessed to determine if the applicant has a contribution to make or even pay the whole cost. Applicants who receive certain specified “passport” benefits are exempt from the means-test, however the means-test is set by law and the Council does not have any discretion when applying it.

Referrals for DFGs are received from Lancashire County Council (LCC) who have the social care responsibility for Lancashire, to undertake assessments to determine the needs of disabled adults and children who live in Lancashire. The assessment is normally carried out by LCC’s Occupational Therapist (OT) service prior to an application for DFG funding. In some cases, the customer may come direct to the Council, who can employ a private OT to carry out the assessment of need if required.

Referrals can also be made by Trusted Assessor (Level 4) for similar adaptations including level access showers, stair-lifts and ramps.

On receipt of a referral from LCC, the Council will deal with each case on a priority basis, regardless of their tenure. Each case will be classified, by the recommendation of the OT, into one of the following categories:

- Urgent Priority
- Non Urgent Priority

Urgent priority cases will be dealt with first by the Council in periods of high demand, the date a referral is received is also taken into account when determining priorities.

An applicant must be 18 years or older. Parents or guardians are able to apply on behalf of children. Landlords are able to apply on behalf of their tenants.

If the applicant is an owner occupier then an Owners Certificate must be obtained certifying that the person with a disability intends to live in the property, as their main or only residence for at least 5 years from the date the work was finished.

If the applicant is a tenant, then a Tenants Certificate must be obtained certifying that the tenant (or the person with the disability), intends to live in the property as their main residence for at least 5 years from the date the work was finished.

As detailed legislation requires a decision from the Council to approve the grant or not within 6 months of receiving the full application (this includes all necessary information e.g. proof of home ownership or landlord consent and received estimates/tenders for the required work). The Council will also aim to complete the installation of all disabled adaptations within 12 months from the date of grant approval.

While the applicant can choose any contractor of their choice, the Council can support the applicant with the appointment of contractors through an 'Advisory List of Building Contractors' who are willing to undertake grant work to the legislative standards and specification required by the Council.

This is not an 'approved' list in that the Council does not act as a guarantor for the quality and standard of work achieved by these building contractors. However, the list does include contractors who have, in the opinion of the Council, generally carried out satisfactory work in the past, and who are prepared to provide estimates in connection with grant applications.

In most cases three estimates/tenders will be required for the proposed grant work, the successful contractor will be based upon price, availability and customer satisfaction. There are exceptions to the tendering process as stair lifts, through floor lifts, step lifts, ceiling track hoists and automatic wash-dry WCs and rise and fall baths form part of a scheme for the provision of equipment with LCC. The stated items are recommended by LCC, Rossendale then take ownership of the item, other than hoisting equipment who are then responsible for maintaining once the manufacturers warranty has expired. When the item is no longer needed the Council will remove the item so that it can be utilised by another customer.

4.0 Legal Charge and Repayment of Grant

In accordance with the legislation set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008, where the adaptation is carried out to a property which is privately owned and the cost of work is £10,000, or more, the Council may place a legal charge on the property through the Local Land Charges Register. The legal charge will last for 10 years. If the property is sold or otherwise changes ownership within 10 years of the completion date, the Council will normally require repayment of the grant, however each case will be judged on its own merits as detailed on the Repayment Conditions form the owner is required to sign. The maximum repayable amount at the change of ownership is £10,000 for a mandatory DFG up to £30,000, however in some cases where discretion is shown, and a grant is paid by the Council in excess of £30,000 then a legal charge may be placed on the property for the additional amount for a period of 10 years.

5.0 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant

The Council has approved the discretionary element of the DFG allowing maximum assistance of £60,000 to account for the demand for more complex adaptations with the requirement for more specialist equipment and the increased in building and material costs.

The Council has removed the financial assessment (means test) for DFGs where the approved grant does not exceed £10,000, again, due to increased building and material costs.

The council has also removed the need for a financial assessment for DFGs where the cost exceeds £10,000 for the following types of adaptation requests, submitted by the Occupational Therapy service, providing the request contains only one of the following items:

- Level access shower
- Stairlifts
- Through floor lifts
- External step lifts
- Ceiling track hoists
- Wash-dry toilets

6.0 DFG Fees Grant

The Council, at its discretion, may pay professional fees and associated charges required for preliminary DFG work to see if the project is feasible. The fees must be reasonable, and are limited to £2,000, and cover, but are not limited to, Surveyors fees, structural engineer and private OT fees. All fees must be agreed with the Council before any work takes place.

7.0 Disability Relocation Assistance

Purpose

Where a disabled person needs their home to be adapted to allow them to live independently or to be cared for and the costs of the adaptation are unreasonable, not reasonable and practicable and not cost effective, the Council will consider assistance towards the purchase of an alternative dwelling that is either adapted or has greater potential for suitable adaptation. This will be in the form of Disability Relocation Assistance.

Eligibility Criteria

The approval of assistance is subject to an option appraisal looking at financial, social and technical aspects to ascertain the best course of action in relation to the disabled person's needs. Persons eligible include:

- Owner-occupiers, their dependants, mother, father, grandparents regardless of age, who are disabled or registerable as disabled
- Persons who are eligible and have applied for a mandatory DFG, where it is considered that the proposed adaptation is not reasonable or practicable
- The applicant lives at the existing property as their sole or main residence

Owner-occupiers may be assisted to move to a more suitable property (in the following circumstances):

- Where it is more appropriate to assist in the purchase of a fully adapted dwelling or flat that suits the individuals medical needs. The suitability of the new property for adaptation would need to be agreed with both the Occupational Therapist and the Housing Renewal Team
- Where it is more appropriate to assist in the purchase of a dwelling or flat that has greater potential for adaptation
- Where it is more appropriate to assist in the rehousing of the individual or family into a privately rented property, RSL property, sheltered housing scheme, care home

Amount and Application

The maximum amount of assistance will be £5,000 and can be made up of a number of elements including legal fees, surveyors and estate agents fees and removal costs. The cost of assistance will be taken out of the £60,000 maximum individual entitlement for DFG. This amount will be in addition to the grant awarded for the adaptation works to the applicants new property.

The Relocation Assistance will not be means tested. The applicants contribution to the DFG, if any, will not affect the amount of assistance available. Where the applicant is transferring from home ownership into a tenancy, there will be similarly be no means test. Where the disabled person is a child, the assistance will not be subject to a test of resources (in line with current legislation for DFGs).

An application for assistance must:

- Be in writing specifying the dwelling the applicant is proposing to move to

- Be accompanied by a report from the Occupational Therapist confirming the new qualifying dwelling is suitable for the medical needs of the disabled person
- Be accompanied by a report confirming the new qualifying dwelling to be free from serious Category 1 Hazards under the HHSRS and will be suitable for the applicant and family to occupy. If requested, the Council can undertake this inspection. The Council retains the discretion to award an Emergency Work Grant in circumstances where it considers appropriate to do so in order to facilitate the relocation and adaptation works
- Be accompanied by an undertaking by the applicant where Category 1 Hazards exist, that the dwelling will be repaired prior to occupation and that assistance will not be released until it is. As indicated above, an Emergency Works Grant may be available for this purpose for persons who are eligible under the criteria
- Be accompanied by an owners certificate that it is intended that the house be occupied as the applicants main or sole residence throughout a 5-year grant condition period or shorter if health or other relevant circumstances dictate. If the applicant is required to move to another property, it is at the councils discretion whether further relocation assistance is reclaimed if the property is sold within the 5-year condition period
- An application will only be approved if accompanied by a proof of title from the applicant or their solicitor, showing the owns legal interest in the new property

8.0 The Hospital Discharge Grant

Purpose

The council will help facilitate hospital discharges by supporting people with disabilities or vulnerabilities to return to a home which is suitable, safe and clean.

Eligibility Criteria

Residents of Rossendale living in their own home either in the private rented sector, social rented sector or owner occupiers who are disabled or vulnerable. Eligible works are not restricted to but can include:

- Small emergency repairs
- Removal of trip/falling hazards
- Clearing properties
- Cleaning properties

Amount and Application

The grants are not means tested and can fund works up to the cost of £3000. The funding will be available where there is no other relevant health or social care funding obtainable, and following a referral from an Occupational Therapist, Clinical Health Practitioner from the Integrated Neighbourhood Team or other health care professional. The grant does not cover packages of care or resettlement funded by the NHS or Social Care.

An application for assistance will be in writing and include either a tenant or owners certificate.

9.0 The Home Displacement Grant

Purpose

In extreme and rare circumstances residents and in some cases their household may have to move to temporary accommodation whilst major adaptation work through a disabled facilities grant is undertaken. This grant is to support the residents to move temporarily, it is not to cover the social care costs or residents staying in residential care temporarily.

Eligibility Criteria

A disabled facilities grant has been approved for major adaptation work, it has been agreed in writing by the Council that temporary accommodation is required during the grant work being undertaken and residential care is not a suitable form of temporary accommodation for that resident.

Amount and Application

The grants are not means tested and can fund alternative accommodation up to £5,500 or £55 per night of temporary accommodation, whichever amount is the lowest. While the Council will support the resident, they are responsible for finding suitable alternative accommodation and providing evidence such as an invoice of the cost. The Council will not pay more than the actual cost of the temporary accommodation.

An application will be made in writing.

10.0 Minor Adaptations

Purpose

If an adaptation is expected to cost below £1,000 then it will be considered to be a minor adaptation and Lancashire County Council will arrange for those works to be completed without the need for a referral to the Council.

11.0 Dwelling Dementia Grants

Purpose

Home improvement dementia grants are available for people with dementia or memory loss to help fund a range of adaptations to their home or to provide equipment which may help people to live well at home. This could include buying bespoke products or the use of colour and contrast to aid orientation in the home.

Eligibility Criteria

Residents of Rossendale living in their own home either in the private rented sector, social rented sector or owner occupiers and who have received a clinical diagnosis of dementia or who are experiencing memory loss. Eligible works are not restricted to but can include:

- High lumens light bulbs
- Coloured sticky covers for light switch plates
- Coloured strips to indicate edges of stairs
- Key locators
- Memo minder
- Coloured key fobs
- Key safe
- Signage
- Notice board/white board
- Big button telephone
- Dementia clock
- Magiplug (for all sinks)
- Large or small locks for cupboard doors
- Additional shelving
- Touch bedside light
- Day/night clock
- Bathroom slip mat
- Coloured toilet seat
- Coloured towel rail
- Grab/handrails
- Wet rooms/bathroom adaptations

Amount and Application

The grants are not means tested and can fund aids/equipment up to the cost of £2000. The grants will take the form of adaptations and equipment to the home rather than a monetary award.

Referrals can be made in writing from a range of agencies including Age Concern, GP's, early intervention dementia service, integrated neighbourhood team, Beacon Dementia and Wellbeing, social prescribing workers, occupational therapists, social services, carers link and via self-referral and through family members.

12.0 Improvements to the Home

Handyperson Services

Purpose

To assist older (over 65's), disabled and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes for longer in greater levels of comfort and security by undertaking small jobs that will:

- Prevent falls and accidents
- Prevent delayed discharges from hospital
- Improve home security
- Improve energy efficiency
- Prevent fire and detection of carbon monoxide

To give residents support from somebody they can trust to provide a wide range of affordable small jobs where it is difficult to find “ordinary” trades people who would be prepared to undertake such work.

Eligibility Criteria

Residents of Rossendale living in their own home either in the private rented sector, social rented sector or owner occupiers who are aged 65 or over, disabled or vulnerable. Eligible works and services will include:

- Small handyperson jobs
- Minor adaptations (such as installation of grab rails or temporary ramps)
- “Odd” jobs (for example, putting up curtain rails and shelves, moving furniture, installing smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, changing light bulbs)
- General home safety checks with remedial action (for example safety checking or repairing/replacing appliances)
- Falls/accident prevention checks with remedial action (for example, securing loose carpets or putting up grab rails)
- Security checks with remedial action (for example, checking and replacing window and door locks)
- Energy efficiency (for example installing low energy light bulbs, draft proofing)
- Signposting clients for other services

Jobs in private or social rented properties will only be undertaken providing the works are not the responsibility of the landlord.

Handyperson jobs will not normally take more than 1 hour to complete. It will sometimes, however, be efficient to combine numerous smaller jobs in one visit.

Amount and Application

This assistance is not means tested and the hourly labour rate is subsidised by the Home Improvement Agency to cost £12. Residents are required to pay for any materials that are needed to carry out the requested work.

Enquiries for the handyperson service will be made by telephone or email.

13.0 Emergency Works Grant

Purpose

The grant is available to remedy urgent disrepair where there is a danger to the occupants health, safety or welfare. The grant is available where works or repair have been identified as being Category 1 hazards (A to C) or high Category 2 hazards (D to F) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System that pose a risk to the occupants of a property. The grant is not for larger scale home improvements but to help remove significant hazards to help the resident stay in their own home.

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify a person must be an owner-occupier (including a Park Home owner) in receipt of income related benefits and aged 65 or over or must be a disabled person in receipt of income related benefits.

For the Council to consider applications for Emergency Works Grant the applicant must occupy the property as their only residence or care for an elderly, disabled or infirm person.

In most cases, private tenants will not be eligible as usually the landlord would be expected to carry out such works as part of their repairing obligations for the property. Housing Association tenants are not eligible as there are systems in place to report and deal with emergency repairs.

All applicants will be asked whether they have an emergency response service contained within an insurance policy. If so, they should approach their insurance company in the first instance.

Eligible works include but are not restricted to:

- Essential repairs to electrical wiring where this has been assessed as dangerous
- Dry and wet rot
- Extensive raining in, damp and mould growth
- Essential repairs to heating or hot water systems
- Rotted windows and or doors that are causing excess cold

Amount and Application

The maximum amount of grant is £10,000 and it is means tested. In cases of Emergency Works Grants where the amount of assistance required to remove a Category 1 hazard or high Category 2 hazard or to deal with unforeseen works exceed £10,000, the grant limit can be raised to a maximum of £15,000. The additional amount will be reserved for essential major works where imminent risk exists such as re-roofing, structural works and other works considered essential by the Council.

The application will be made in writing and will require an owners certificate.

On completion and payment of the works, further terms and conditions will apply. There will be a condition period, which means the period of 5 years beginning with the certified date in the case of

any grant assistance. The certified date is the date the eligible works were completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

Within a period of 5 years from the certified date, the property must be occupied by the applicant(s) and/or members of his/her immediate family. This means the property must be occupied by one of the following as their only or main residence:

- The applicant
- The applicants spouse or partner
- The applicants son/daughter (including stepson/daughter)
- The applicants mother/father (including stepfather/mother)

If the property is sold or other relevant disposal made or the Council has reason to demand repayment of the financial assistance within the condition period, the Emergency Works Grant must be repaid in full.

The Council may waive its demand for immediate repayment of Emergency Works Grant and allow the transfer of conditions to a new or additional owner(s) if there has been an exempt disposal.

In most circumstances, one grant only will be permitted to the property in a period of 5 years. The Council will only permit a successive grant application on the same property within the 5 year period if the application is to remedy a new Category 1 hazard, which has arisen in the property and which poses a serious risk of injury to the occupier. After the 5 year period, a successive grant application will only be permitted for items of work, which are different to the previous grant or require the same type of work to a different part of the property.

All eligible grant works shall be carried out within 12 months from the date of approval of the application. The Council may extend this period if it is satisfied that the eligible works cannot be carried out without carrying out other works, which could not have reasonably been foreseen when the application was made.

If the eligible works are not completed within 12 months from the date of approval and there is deemed to be unnecessary delay, or the Council has reason to believe that the grant will not be completed, the Council may pay grant on the completed works undertaken then cancel the grant on the remaining works.

14.0 Safe and Secure Grant

Purpose

The grant is to help older, disabled or vulnerable residents to feel safe and secure in their own home.

Eligibility Criteria

Residents of Rossendale living in their own home either in the private rented sector, social rented sector or owner occupiers who are aged 65 or over, disabled or vulnerable.

Eligible works can include but are not restricted to:

- New window and door locks
- New front and rear doors if they are insecure
- Secure gates
- Fencing
- Security lighting
- Installation of home security items as required

Amount and Application

The maximum amount of grant is £5,000 and it is means tested.

The application will be made in writing.

In most circumstances, one grant only will be permitted to the property in a period of 5 years.

15.0 Affordable Warmth Assistance

The Affordable Warmth Scheme is a Government initiative designed to help householders who receive certain state benefits or a combined household income of less than £31,000/annum, to replace their faulty electric storage heaters or faulty central heating boilers.

Affordable Warmth Scheme Qualifying Criteria regarding your home.

You live in your own home, or if you rent your home from a private landlord it must have an EPC rating of E or above.

Affordable Warmth Scheme Qualifying Criteria regarding your State Benefits.

You receive at least one of the following state benefits or qualify under eco flex rules (combined household income of less than £31,000/annum):

Pension Credit – Guarantee Credit

Pension Credit – Savings Credit

Universal Credit

Child Tax Credit

Working Tax Credit

Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Income-Based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)

Income Support

Child Benefit (subject to maximum household income thresholds)

Housing Benefit

ECO Flex Rules allow local councils to recommend that a householder qualifies for the gas central heating grants for pensioners scheme without the need to receive one of the qualifying benefits above.

To satisfy Affordable Warmth Scheme Qualifying Criteria for a Storage Heater Grant:

You must have at least one existing electric night storage heater installed in your home which is faulty or inefficient, OR you have electric panel heaters in your home.

To satisfy Affordable Warmth Scheme Qualifying Criteria for a Boiler Grant:

You must have a boiler installed in your home which is either:

Over 10 years old, or an approved Contractor advises it is more cost efficient to replace.

(In most cases you must also have insulation installed under the ECO Scheme)

16.0 Social Care Capital Programme

Should the council carry over an underspend from previous years, the Social Care Capital Programme will allocate those funds to support projects that provide broader community benefits. The Health and Wellbeing Board will review and approve the reallocation to ensure alignment with the Better Care Fund's objectives and compliance with relevant regulations.

Once approved, the Head of Housing and Regeneration will oversee the monitoring and reporting of the reallocated funds, ensuring that the outcomes and impacts are communicated to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Health and Wellbeing Board as required. This process will uphold transparency and accountability in the use of Better Care Fund resources.

17.0 Review of the Policy

Where it is considered that there are exceptional circumstances, which warrant consideration outside of this policy, an application may be made to the Head of Housing and Regeneration in conjunction with the Lead Member for an appropriate decision and each case will be considered with regard given to the Council's statutory responsibilities, overall priorities, and the financial resources available.

This policy will be kept under review and will be subject to progressive amendment. The development of further measures and options for intervention and assistance will continue in line with the Council's priorities and resources.

18.0 Compliments, Complaints and Appeals

The Council is keen to receive feedback from all applicants for assistance on how it performed. Applicants may include comments on the customer satisfaction questionnaires, which will be sent out following the completion of the individual casework.

All applicants for Council assistance who are dissatisfied with the way the Council performed have the right to make comment to the Council using the formal complaints procedure about any aspect of the service received. A detailed response will be given in all cases.

Any applicant wishing to appeal against a decision on the provision of financial or other assistance may appeal in writing to the Head of Housing and Regeneration, setting out the grounds for appeal.