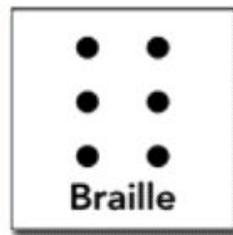
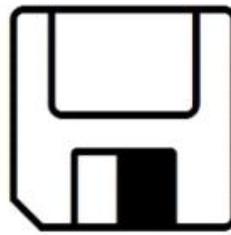


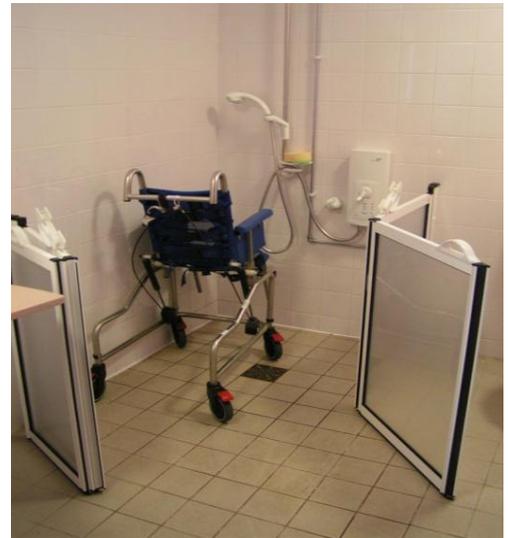
A Guide to disabled facilities grants and grant conditions



What is a Disabled Facilities Grant?

A Disabled Facilities Grant is money from the council to adapt the home of a person with a disability to enable them to continue to live there. A grant is offered when Lancashire County Council considers that the changes are necessary and appropriate to meet specific needs and that Rossendale Borough Council considers the work proposed is reasonable and practicable depending on the age and condition of the property.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants for essential adaptations to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and around their homes and to give access to essential facilities within the home.



Level Access Shower

The legislation governing DFGs in England and Wales is the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act.

What type of work does the grant cover?

The types of works that mandatory DFGs can cover include:

- Making it easier to get into and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors and installing ramps;
- Safe access to and from a garden by a disabled person and making a garden area safe.
- Ensuring the safety of the disabled person and other occupants by, for example, providing a specially adapted room in which it would be safe to leave a disabled person unattended or improve lighting to ensure better visibility;
- Making access easier to the living room;
- Providing or improving access to the bedroom, and kitchen toilet, washbasin and bath (and/or shower) facilities; for example, by installing a stair lift, providing a downstairs bathroom or replacing a bath with a level access shower.
- Improving or providing a heating system in the home which is suitable to the needs of the disabled person;
- Adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use.

Who can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant?

If you are disabled and you are an owner-occupier (live in and own your own home with or without a mortgage) or you are a tenant, including a Housing Association tenant, then you can apply for a grant. If you are a parent or guardian of a disabled child then you can apply for a grant and the means test will not apply.

If you have a disabled person living with you and you are an owner-occupier or a tenant, then you can apply for a grant on behalf of the disabled person.

If you are a landlord with a disabled tenant, then you may apply for a grant on behalf of your tenant

In all cases, the adaptation must be necessary and appropriate and the design or condition of the property must be such that the adaptation is reasonable and practicable. If it is not deemed reasonable and practicable by Rossendale Borough Council, then the Council may, at its discretion and subject to a means test, award a grant of up to £3000 to assist with the expenses incurred in moving to a more suitable home in addition to any adaptations required.

What is the maximum amount of grant?

The mandatory maximum amount the Council can pay is currently £30,000

What will I have to pay?

The Disabled Facilities Grant may meet all, or part, of the cost of the adaptations. The grant is **means tested** to ensure that financial aid goes to those found to have the most need. The means test will take into account the income and capital (savings) of the disabled person and their spouse or partner.

Where the disabled person is a child, (under 19) a means test is not applicable.

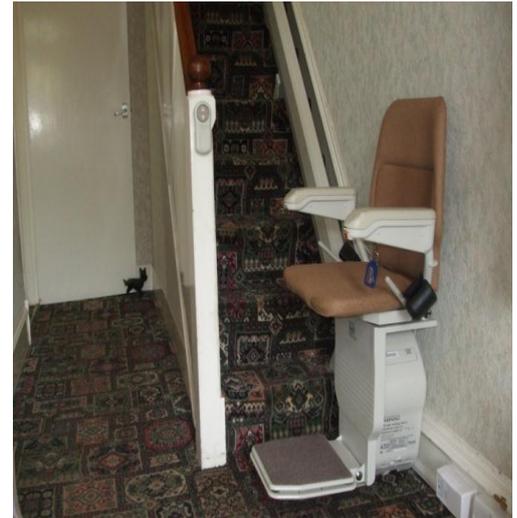
If you are getting one of the benefits below you will not be required to pay a contribution unless the cost exceeds the maximum grant or if you wish to pay privately for extra works.

- Income Support
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Guaranteed pension credit
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Joint claim job seekers allowance
- Housing benefit / Local housing allowance (tenants only)
- Council tax benefit (not single persons discount)
- Working or child tax credit and earnings less than £15,000 per annum

If you have been assessed that you can afford a financial contribution towards the work, the grant will be the difference between your contribution and the cost of works.

If the cost of works exceeds the amount of the grant that the council is able to pay, you will be required to fund this difference yourself. If this is the case, we will discuss this with you and advise you of any available sources of additional funding.

Rossendale Borough Council has implemented repayment conditions in relation to mandatory disabled facilities grants. The aim of this is to assist the Council in recycling resources to meet the ever increasing demands.



Stairlift

In the case of grants in excess of £10,000 being paid to owner occupiers, if the property is disposed of within 10 years of the date of completion of works, then the Council may demand the repayment of such part of the grant that exceeds £10,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000). This condition is a local land charge and is registered against the property.

How will I know if I am eligible?

There are four main organisations involved in providing an adaptation service and these are;

Social Services (provided by Lancashire County Council), Rossendale Borough Council, Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Primary Care Trust who provide the Occupational Therapy service for people over 18 years old and Lancashire Care Foundation who employ Paediatric Occupational Therapists for people up to the age of 18 years old.

1. Initially, all applicants over 18 years old are advised to contact Lancashire County Council Social Services on **0845 0530009**, to speak with a customer service officer to request an Occupational Therapist assessment.
2. To make an initial enquiry for young people up to the age of 18 years old contact Reedley Hall on **01282 731062** or the Acorns Centre Accrington on **01254 282592**.

3. Social Services will liaise with the Occupational Therapist or other appropriate professionals who will contact you to arrange to carry out an assessment to determine what equipment, adaptations or alterations are necessary and appropriate. This may also apply to adapting a home to improve the ability of the carer to look after the disabled person. If a person's needs can be met by the provision of equipment then no recommendation for a grant will be made. All minor adaptations under £500 are not referred to the Council, but are dealt with by Lancashire County Council Social Services



Height Adjustable Bath

directly; these can include grab rails, stair rails and other small works, only if the necessary adaptation costs over £500 would the matter be referred to the Council for DFG.

4. Once agreement has been reached between the disabled person and carer, the Occupational Therapist will make recommendations to Social Services.
5. Depending on your needs, your Occupational Therapist will prioritise your case so that the budget can be targeted to the most urgent and needy cases. The Council currently directs 75% of its Disabled Facilities Grant budget to urgent referrals, the remaining 25% to referrals not classed as urgent.
6. Social Services will write to the Council with details of the adaptation recommended.

What steps are there in making an application for a DFG?

After receiving the recommendation from Social Services, we will write to you within 5 working days to acknowledge that your request for a Disabled Facilities Grant has been received, you will also be sent a `Preliminary Test of Resources form` in order to give you the opportunity to have a means test carried out at an early stage, rather than



Ceiling Mounted Hoist

wait for a long period of time and then possibly be told you were not eligible.

Please note; this is only a provisional indication of your contribution and you will be required to provide more detailed information when a full application is submitted.

The length of time before an officer visits you will be dependent on what priority (urgent or non-urgent) the Occupational Therapist has classified your case.

We aim to carry out visits for urgent cases within 4 weeks. Non urgent cases are placed on a waiting list and are visited in date order when the recommendation was received, these visits are subject to resources being available. We will write to you on a 6 monthly basis to keep you informed on the progress of your enquiry.

The grant officer will contact you to arrange a visit, they will assess whether the work to your home is reasonable and practicable, considering the age and condition of your property. The officer may also discuss other options with you and the Occupational Therapist to see if there are other ways of meeting your needs.

The grant officer will also assess your financial circumstances by carrying out a test of your financial resources, (except for applications in respect of children). You will need to provide details of your income and savings. The test of resources will determine whether or not you are eligible to receive a grant, and if you are eligible, it will determine the amount of grant you will receive. The maximum grant that can be awarded is £30,000 .If the cost of the work is more than £30,000 then the difference would have to be met by you, however, depending on your financial circumstances and tenure, Social Services may be able to help you fund the difference.

If you are a private tenant or Housing Association tenant, the grant officer will ask your landlord for permission to carry out the work to your home.

If you are eligible for a grant, the grant officer will send you a letter which clearly lists the work that is needed. This is known as a schedule of works. If you need any help to understand this please contact the grants officer dealing with your case.

Rossendale Borough Council offers a service to assist you with the application forms, selecting a contractor and helping to ensure the works are completed properly. You should note that the contract for the works is between you and the contractor. If you choose to use this service, the Council will make a charge for this and we will include this in your grant. You do not have to use the service.



Through Floor Lift

You may decide to appoint your own architect or agent to look after the grant works on your behalf, if you choose this, then the cost can be included within the grant. All architects fees will have to be paid by yourself initially and you will be reimbursed when the grant and associated works are completed. If you do not go ahead with the work, this fee will not be recoverable from the Council.

After you have completed the application form, proof of ownership/tenancy, proof of income/savings, obtained a minimum of two estimates for the works, we will consider your application and issue an approval based on the lowest cost of works and any personal contribution resulting from the financial assessment. Approval will be subject to resources being available.

Once the Occupational Therapist has made a recommendation you will receive a letter from Social Services to let you know what has been recommended and what will happen next. In most cases you will then be contacted by the Council to discuss the adaptation. However in certain cases where the cost of the adaptation is small, or is just for a piece of specialist equipment, this will be arranged without involving the Council or the need to apply for a grant. The Occupational Therapist will let you know if this is the case.

Things to remember

If you are thinking of applying, then do not carry out any adaptations or alterations until you have applied and had your grant approved in writing. If you do the work first without agreement from the Borough Council or Social Services, then you will not be eligible for financial assistance.

There is usually a high demand for grants, so you may have to wait sometime before your application is approved.



Ramp for Easier and Safe Access

Only work which is considered to be necessary and appropriate by Social Services and reasonable and practicable by the Borough Council will be eligible for assistance.

Grants are based on the cost of adapting the property in the most economic way in accordance with the requirements of the Scheme. Applicants wishing to carry out works which are more extensive or to a higher standard than those allowed for may do so but the grant will be based on the notional cost of the basic scheme. General repairs to your home are not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant assistance.

Take your time to think about your needs and what is best for you. You may decide that it would be more beneficial to move to a more suitable house or a ground floor flat to suit your long term needs. The Private Sector Renewal Team, Occupational Therapist or Social Services will be glad to discuss this option with you.

Further information about the grant, the procedure and what standards you can expect can be obtained from the Councils Private Sector Housing Renewal Team

Private Sector Housing Renewal Team Room 204, Council Offices
Business Centre, Futures Park
Bacup, Lancs OL13 0BB
Telephone (01706) 252407/252408

**For applicants over 18 years old
contact:-**

Social Services
Customer Service Officer
Telephone 0845 0530009

**For applicants up to the age of 18
years old contact:-**

Reedley Hall Tel 01282 731062 or
Acorns Centre Accrington
Tel 01254 282592

Other contact numbers

Occupational Therapy Department

Telephone (01706) 242375

St Vincent's Homecare and Repair Service

The Service offers practical help and support to elderly people or disabled people or family members in receipt of means tested benefits.

The Agency offers a range of services such as a Handyperson service for small repairs and improvements taking 2 hours or less to complete for which a charge of £5.00 per half hour is made.

The agency maintains a panel of trusted contractors who are carefully chosen and monitored.

The agency carries out minor adaptations for people with mobility problems on behalf of Lancashire County Council Social Services Department and the agency can also help you identify what is wrong with your property and what repairs or improvements would help you to be more comfortable in your home. The Agency may also be able to provide advice on possible funding sources for any works required.

St Vincent's Homecare & Repair
41 Bury Road, Haslingden
Rossendale Lancs
Telephone 0845 0500570 or (01706) 221849