



Disabled Facilities Grants Fact Sheet 2020

If you, or a person living with you, is disabled you may qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to help you adapt your property to enable the disabled person to live as independently as possible.

1. Who can apply for a DFG?

Owner-occupiers, landlords and a wide-range of tenants can apply for a DFG. You can apply if you are the disabled person or their partner, or the owner/occupier of a property to be adapted.

2. Who will qualify?

The DFG must be for a person who is registered or could be registered as a disabled person. The disability can be caused by physical illness or injury, a major sight, hearing, speech or mental-health problem, or a learning disability.

Initial enquiries are assessed by East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care team (0345 60 80 191). The disabled person will then need to undergo an assessment by our Housing Occupational Therapist (OT) who will advise what work is considered necessary and appropriate for their needs. Based on this assessment, the OT will provide a recommendation of those works. (It may be that major adaptations are not appropriate at your property and it could be a move to a more suitable property is recommended.) All reasonable and practical works will be considered for a DFG.

Due to the high number of requests for OT assessments, each case is prioritised to ensure that those most in need receive assessment first. This, and the current Covid situation, means that there may be a delay before any assessment is carried out.

3. What work can be carried out?

DFGs are available for:

- Making it easier to get in to and out of your home
- Making it easier to get to your bedroom, bathroom, living room and kitchen, toilet, bath and shower

- Making it easier to prepare and cook food
- Improving, or installing, a suitable heating system to meet the needs of the disabled person
- Making it easier to control power and lighting
- Making your home safe
- Making it easier to get in and out of your garden

4. Does the Council have to give a grant?

If recommendations are made by the Occupational Therapist, we will decide whether the work is reasonable and practical. We can refuse a grant if we consider the scheme to be unreasonable or impractical.

5. Do I have to repay the DFG?

If the grant exceeds £5,000 and you are an owner-occupier, the amount of grant over £5,000 is registered as a Local Land Charge against the property. This is for a maximum of £10,000 where the works are £30,000 or less. For discretionary funding over £30,000 further land charges will be applied to a maximum total of £30,000. The Local Land Charge will be registered for 10 years. Normally, this must be repaid if the property is disposed of (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) within this time period. The Council will consider whether it is reasonable to seek repayment on a case-by-case basis.

For example:

- Total cost of works £5,000 or below, no Local Land Charge applied.
- Total cost of works £7,000 Local Land Charge applied £2,000 for 10 years from the completion date of the works.

6. How will the grant be calculated?

To make sure that the grant goes to the people who need it most, the amount of grant is decided by carrying out a statutory means test. This looks at the income, capital and savings of the disabled person and their spouse or partner. We will need to see documentary proof of all your income and savings in order to carry out a statutory means test. You may have to make a contribution towards the cost of any work. At present the Council will fund the first £8,000 of any assessed contribution. The maximum limit for the grant is normally £30,000.

If the grant is for a child, or a young person under the age of 20 and you receive child benefit for that child, there is no means test assessment for the DFG.

If you are in receipt of one of the following income-related benefits you would normally be eligible for a 100% grant:

Income Support

Housing Benefit

Guaranteed Pension Credits

Job Seeker's Allowance (Income Based)

Employment & Support Allowance (Income Related)

Universal Credit

Child Tax Credit with an annual household income of less than £15,050

Working Tax Credits with an annual household income of less than £15,050

7. How long will the whole process take?

The council legally has to approve a DFG application within six months of receipt. A 'complete' application comprises all necessary forms, two independent estimates of work required, financial information and proof of title details.

However, once we have received a complete DFG application, the current average time taken to approve it is 3 weeks.

8. Who can help you apply for a DFG?

We encourage applicants to engage an agent, architect, architectural technician or surveyor to help with the following:

- Providing necessary documents and consents
- Providing drawings and detailed specification of work
- Obtaining quotes from contractors
- Making the grant application
- Supervising the work
- Arranging payment for the work

Reasonable fees can normally be reclaimed as part of the grant, however, as fees usually have to be paid 'up front' the applicant will be responsible for them until the grant is approved. It can be quite difficult to choose a surveyor who is familiar with adaptation work. For this reason we have compiled a list of local surveyors who can provide technical support for adaptations.

If instructing your own technical advisor, applicants should ensure they are members of an approved professional body, for example:

- Royal Institute of British Architects
- British Institute of Architectural Technicians
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Guild of Master Craftsmen
- and/or approved by recognised trade lists e.g. Buy With Confidence, Contractor Call, Check a Trade, Trust a Trader, Trust Mark.

Applicants are advised to have a clear agreement on what they have commissioned to be done and should consult with the Council Officer assisting with the DFG prior to appointing an Architect/Surveyor and agreeing fees in order to check what level of fees might be grant-aided.

9. What if something goes wrong after the work is completed?

The Council has no responsibility or liability for any work for which grant aid was paid. However, should you experience any problems and your Surveyor is unable to rectify the issue, the Council Officer who dealt with your application will be able to advise you.

Please note:

No work should start on an adaptation until the funding has been fully approved, as grants are not normally awarded when work has started.

It is important to remember that you are applying for a grant to help pay towards the cost of adapting your home. Please note that legally you are employing the surveyors and contractors to carry out work and the Council is assisting you to pay them. The approved grant works will be to meet your needs and any making good. The grant is paid when work has been completed in a satisfactory manner. Any additional works over that approved in the grant will be your responsibility to pay for. It is the householders' responsibility to register any guarantees and maintain equipment and appliances etc.