



**Westmorland
& Furness
Council**

Private Sector Housing Assistance and Renewal Policy

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

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

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Definitions

“Applicant”, “Disabled Person”	the person who the grant is being applied for.
“Client”	to collectively refer to the older person, or the disabled person, the applicant. their family and or carers.

1. Introduction

The Private Sector Housing Assistance and Renewal Policy details how Westmorland and Furness Council (the Council) delivers assistance to help private owners and tenants to repair maintain or adapt their homes.

The quality and accessibility of housing has major implications for people's health and well-being. Poor housing is associated with a wide range of health conditions such as respiratory diseases including asthma and cardiovascular diseases, injuries, infectious diseases including tuberculosis and influenza, and has an impact on mental health, causing depression and anxiety. The longer the exposure to these conditions the greater the detriment on both physical and mental health, as well as an increased risk of harm.

Accessible housing is essential in meeting the needs of our residents. A home that enables residents to live independently or supports others to deliver safe and effective care contributes to the promotion and preservation of good physical and emotional health and wellbeing, and restores privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families whilst supporting them to live a full and active life.

Making a home safe and free from serious hazards can help reduce hospital admissions or re-admissions, reduce reliance on health and social care support from health and social care services.

The Council intends to use its discretion to develop schemes with regard to the needs of the Westmorland and Furness area, the availability of funding, and the Council's priorities.

This Policy forms part of the Council's overarching Housing Strategy.

2. Legal Context

In 2002 the government brought in the **Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO)** which provide freedom and opportunities for the Local Authority to address housing issues.

In 2008-9 the government extended the scope of the RRO to include use of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) money. This enables the authorities to use specific DFG funding for wider purposes. The Council has discretionary powers under "the Order" to provide assistance in any form for the purpose of improving living conditions.

Other relevant legislation includes:

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 introduced the concept of Renewal Areas in order to improve housing and general amenities in an area where poor housing is combined with social and environmental issues.

The Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 introduced a duty to assist people with disabilities to enable them to live independently within their own home through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants. Within this act, local authorities have a duty to carry out a means test of the

disabled applicant to assess if they have a contribution to pay towards adaptations being provided at their home.

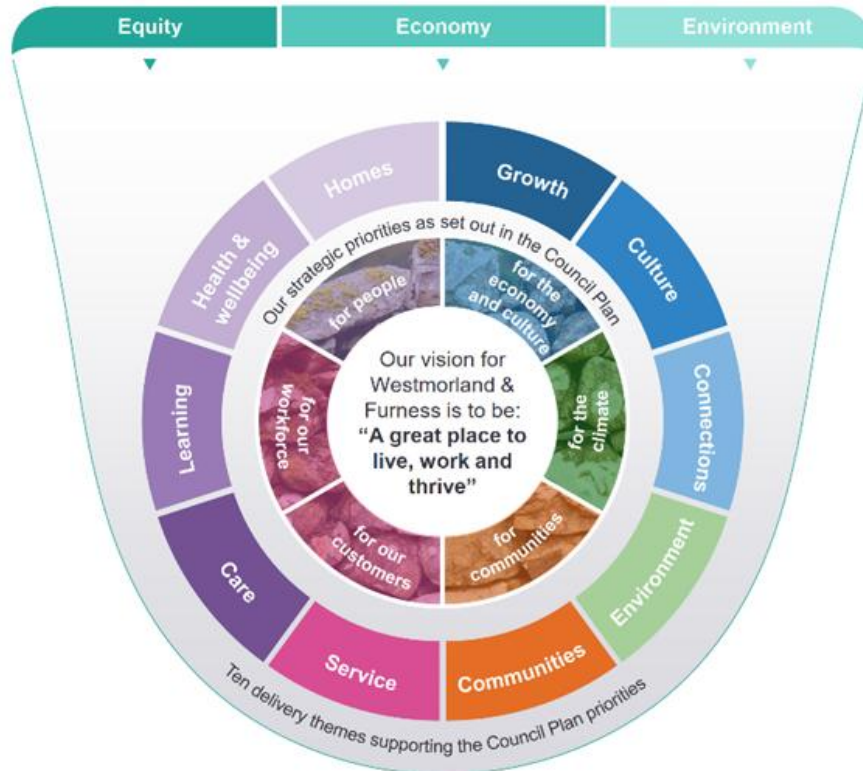
The Housing Act 2004 introduced a number of changes including the introduction of the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to replace the Housing Fitness Standard. This assists Councils to target those properties in the worst conditions, which often house some of the most vulnerable people.

The Care Act 2014 The Housing Assistance Policy contributes to meeting the Council's obligations under the Care Act 2014 to improve people's independence and wellbeing. Under the Care Act, local authorities must provide or arrange services that help prevent people developing needs for care and support or delay people deteriorating such that they would need ongoing care and support.

Part 3 of the Children's Care Act 1989 and the Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. These documents outline local authority support for children's and families. It sets the legal duties for local councils to safeguard and promote the welfare of "children in need".

3. Strategic Vision, Aims and Objectives

Our vision for Westmorland and Furness Council is to be "A great place to live, work and thrive".



Our Housir

Our people

- Preventing and tackling homelessness
- Meeting the needs of our ageing population
- Meeting supported housing needs and the needs of specific groups

Our place

- Growing the supply of affordable and available housing
- Addressing the rural housing crisis
- Supporting communities through neighbourhood renewal and regeneration

Our homes

- Decarbonising the housing stock, including our Council homes, making them more energy efficient and affordable to live in, reducing fuel poverty
- Ensuring that new housing supply of all tenures contributes to our net zero ambitions
- Addressing stock condition issues, improving poor quality housing in all tenures
- Ensuring that our Council housing stock remains at decent homes standard and continues to improve

Private sector housing, be it rented, or privately owned plays a key part in “a great place to live”.

A home that is affordable, clean, safe and warm, from which people can build stable, independent lives with access to schools, work and cultural activities is of utmost importance.

We will do this by:

- Bringing **Empty Homes back** into use to improve the number of properties available to our communities.
- **Improving standards** to the private sector stock, by being pro-active and enforcing legislation when necessary.
- Supporting our residents to **live safely** by providing relevant advice and assistance.
- Accessing government funding to deliver measures for our residents to live in **Warm, Affordable, and Easy to Heat** homes.

There are also clear links to other corporate strategies and policies:

- Housing Strategy
- SHENA – Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment
- Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy

- Empty Homes Strategy
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy
- Disabled Facilities Grant Policy
- Health & Well Being

3.1 Financing the policy

Since 2015, the Government has provided funding for the DFG through the Better Care Fund (BCF) in recognition of the importance of ensuring adaptations are part of an integrated approach to housing, health and social care locally, and to help promote joined up local person-centred approaches to supporting communities.

The Government provides ring-fenced DFG funding to Better Care Fund budget holders (usually authorities responsible for the provision of social services). Funding must be spent in accordance with Better Care Fund plans, which are agreed between local government and local health commissioners, and owned, by the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is important that those responsible for housing and home adaptations locally are involved in developing these plans.

Government funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant is intended to fund adaptations for owner-occupiers, private tenants, or tenants of private registered providers (Housing Associations). Eligible council tenants can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant in the same way as any other applicant and the same legislation would apply; however local housing authorities with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) should self-fund home adaptations for council tenants through this account. The Council does not require our own tenants to complete an application for adaptations to their homes, they will however still need to have an Occupational Therapist assessment carried out to confirm necessary and appropriate adaptations.

Westmorland and Furness Council will:

Use our discretionary powers under the RRO to:

- Provide information regarding the provision of financial assistance. The Council may make funding available for Discretionary Housing Assistance Grants, Empty Homes Grants and Housing Renewal Grants;
- improve the quality of life of elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents by providing assistance with improvements to their homes, where those residents are not in a position to do so;
- assist occupiers in addressing category 1 hazards, as defined by the Housing Act 2004, which may have a significant impact on their health, safety and wellbeing;
- provide assistance to those living in areas blighted by poor quality housing, by offering assistance via our Housing Market Renewal Projects in Barrow;
- simplify the application process, where appropriate, to speed up delivery of assistance and adaptations;

- contribute to other funding schemes that benefit our residents;
- Promote and signpost relevant services offered by other organisations.

3.2 Equality & Diversity

We believe in treating everyone fairly and promoting equality while preventing discrimination on any basis. This policy will be applied consistently to all residents, taking into account the unique needs of individuals and communities. We will not discriminate against anyone, and we will take proactive measures to reduce discrimination.

The Housing Assistance Policy complies with the law and addresses all the “protected characteristics” outlined in the Equalities Act 2010. Our aim is to ensure equal opportunities and fair treatment for everyone in our community.

4. Summary of Types of Grant Assistance

With the exception of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, all other discretionary financial assistance grants, described in this policy, are at the discretion of the Council and will be subject to the availability of appropriate funding being in place, internally or externally. The delivery and provision of mandatory grants will take priority over all other discretionary grants. The budgets associated with the provision of assistance within this policy will be reviewed annually and the Council reserves the right to amend or suspend any discretionary element of this policy if demand for assistance exceeds available funds.

If there are unique situations where individuals genuinely need urgent support but are precluded from accessing assistance due to specific aspects, the Council may consider offering assistance in exceptional circumstances, especially if it helps to meet strategic objectives. Such decisions will be made by the Senior Manager - Housing Standards and Services or equivalent.

Whilst the responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of homes within the private sector is with the owner, the Council recognises that some people will not have the resources necessary. For these groups the Council has an important role to play. The Council will make the best use of the funds it has available to improve the quality of housing and thereby the quality of life using the forms of assistance detailed in this policy.

This policy must not fetter the discretion of the Council to provide assistance. The Council may legitimately turn down an application for assistance that falls outside their policy, but cannot refuse to consider an application, or refuse an application that is outside their policy, without each case being considered on a sound and informed basis and approved where appropriate. This will be achieved through a delegated decision process.

The use of Public Funds will mean a DFG will provide the most modest, practical and cost-effective adaptation that is reasonable and appropriate to meet the **assessed needs** of the disabled person, ensuring that the limited

resources are able to meet demand across the Council. The spending of this money is annually audited to ensure the needs, **not the wants** of the client/s are met and specific to the client/s. The Occupational Therapy assessment will consider an incremental approach e.g. equipment and minor adaptations will be tried before major adaptations are recommended.

For Local Authority tenants, Local Authorities with Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) have specific budget provision set aside for adaptations to social housing stock. They have an Adaptation Policy and Technical Officers/Surveyors in place to assess each request/recommendation in accordance with the policy, alongside any professional input, to determine the most suitable and feasible options.

4.1 Disabled Facilities Grant – Mandatory

Government funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is intended to fund adaptations for owner occupiers, private tenants, or tenants of private registered providers (housing associations).

Disabled Facilities Grants are available to provide assistance to those residents who qualify and meet the criteria as laid out in Section 100 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Funding will only be allocated to the most appropriate, reasonable, necessary, modest and cost-effective way of meeting the needs of the disabled person as assessed by an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor.

Minor Works up to £1,000 are referred to and undertaken by Adult Social Care who can be contacted using the following link:

[Adult social care | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

The maximum statutory grant available is £30,000

The Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are subject to a formal means test of the disabled person and where applicable their partner, that is taken into account.

4.2 Discretionary Housing Assistance Grants

Westmorland and Furness Council provide the following Discretionary Assistance Grants as summarised below:

- **Top Up Grant** – This is to top up a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants where the cost of the eligible work exceeds the statutory mandatory maximum grant. The maximum grant available is up to £30,000 which includes professional fees.
- **Adapted Homes Grant** – This is intended to assist disabled persons by making the grant process more flexible. It is for those people who would not be eligible for a mandatory grant through the means testing process but have been referred by an Occupational Therapist and have an assessed need for an adaptation costing up to £12,500-
- **Relocation Grant** - This is discretionary assistance is to enable disabled person/s to move to a more suitable property within Westmorland and

Furness Council area, who are eligible for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, but it would not be appropriate, reasonable and/or practicable to carry out the eligible work in their current home. Maximum grant available up to £10,000.

- **Urgent Care Grant** - To support applicants who have received a life changing diagnosis, through trauma or illness such as MND or a life changing incidents. The grant will also assist applicants in receiving palliative care, advancing dementia and where the ASC colleague has stated immediate assistance is needed and classed as urgent and is available up to a maximum of £15,000.
- **Prevention and Wellbeing Grant** - To assist applicants to remain safe and warm within their home. Available to owner/occupiers and tenants where the works are not under the duty of the landlord. Maximum grant available £3,500.
- **Handy Person Scheme** - To provide a range of practical support services for older, disabled and vulnerable residents with the aim of helping them maintain independence and safety within their home. Small building repairs, odd jobs, and basic essential services relating to the maintenance and support within their home.

4.2.1 External Grant Funding

- **Warm Homes** – These government-funded schemes that provide grants to reduce energy bills by supporting the transition towards more energy efficient homes and low carbon heat sources.

The schemes focus support to lower-income households and will work towards decreasing fuel poverty and progress towards Net Zero ambitions.

- **Gas Safety Fund** – Used in conjunction with the Prevention and Wellbeing Grant. *Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT)*, in partnership with the **Gas Safe Charity**, offers funding to support vulnerable households who need help with gas safety.

It is designed for people on low incomes or with a disability who might otherwise go without essential checks or repairs.

The Gas Safe Charity funding works with the Home Improvement Agency to arrange the safe replacement/repair of selected gas items within the criteria, to help clients stay warm and well at home.

Further details for all Grants are in Appendix 1, page 32

5. Means Testing and Successive Grants

Mandatory Grant

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 requires all Mandatory DFGs to be means tested, except if the application is on behalf of a child or young person aged 18 or below or certain criteria.

There are Discretionary grants, detailed in Appendix 1, page 32 of this policy, some are means tested. There are also some other types of discretionary grants which are not means tested.

Details of the applicant's income and that of their partner, both earnings and assets (including properties in addition to their main residence) are required to be assessed to determine if the applicant has a contribution to make through the nationally recognised financial means test.

If the means test contribution is less than the cost of works, the DFG will be the difference between the cost of works and the means test contribution.

Applicants who receive certain specified "passport" benefits are exempt from the means test but would have to evidence their benefit entitlement - see Appendix 1 page 32 for details of "passport" benefits.

The council does not have the discretion to "waive" any means test contribution for a DFG in line with the above legislation, but in some cases where an applicant has a contribution and they are in hardship, the HIA will support them in seeking other funding sources.

In situations where an applicant has had a means tested contribution to a DFG within the previous 10 years for owners and 5 years for tenants, and the DFG was completed, that contribution can be deducted from any subsequent means test contribution.

6. Repayment conditions at disposal

A Local Land Charge will be placed on an owner-occupier's property, where the mandatory or discretionary grant recipient is an owner-occupier, and where the DFG adaptation exceeds £5,000. The land charge will be limited to a maximum of £10,000 (this is a mandatory limit). The Charge will be incurred if the property is disposed of (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) within 10 years of completion of the grant works (subject to the consideration of certain criteria by the council).

If the disabled person is in receipt of a Mandatory Top Up Grant, the whole amount of the Top Up Grant will be placed as a Land Charge alongside the Land Charge described above.

The applicant is required, from the certified date, throughout the grant condition period of 10 years, to notify Westmorland and Furness Council of their intention to sell or otherwise dispose of the property. The applicant will need to provide Westmorland and Furness Council with any information reasonably requested by them in connection with such notification.

Westmorland and Furness Council may demand the repayment by the recipient if:

- the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and Westmorland and Furness Council, having considered:
- the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the grant;
- whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of employment;
- whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well-being of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
- whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity, is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment.

7. Who Is Eligible to Apply for a DFG?

7.1 Definition of disabled person

For the purposes of the legislation relating to DFGs, and therefore qualify for a DFG, a person must be defined as being disabled if:

- their sight, hearing, or speech is substantially impaired; or
- they have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind; or
- they are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury, impairment present since birth or otherwise.

A person aged 18 or over is taken to be disabled if:

- they are registered, as a result of any arrangements made under the Care Act or any subsequent act; or
- they are a person for whom welfare arrangements have been made under that section or might be made under it.
- A person aged under 18 is taken to be disabled if:
 - they are registered in a register of disabled children maintained under the Children Act 1989 or any subsequent act; or
 - in the opinion of the social services authority they are a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989.

7.2 Applicant's Criteria

The applicant must have recourse to public funds and be eligible to apply for a DFG. The authority is not allowed to pay a grant where a person who could

have applied for a grant is a “person from abroad” even though the applicant is not “a person from abroad” This is defined in the [Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 \(SI 1996/2890\)](#).

The applicant must be able to prove that they live in the property as their only or main residence and this will be verified with other records, such as council tax, electoral register, benefits agency, or any other appropriate means.

The Council cannot consider an application for a mandatory or discretionary DFG unless it is satisfied that:

- the applicant has or proposes to acquire an owner’s interest in every parcel of land on which the relevant works are to be carried out; or
- the applicant is a tenant of the dwelling where the relevant works are to be carried out.

7.2.1 Certificate required in case of owner's application

An owner’s application for a DFG must be accompanied by an owner’s Certificate which will certify that the applicant has or proposes to acquire an owner’s interest and that they intend that the disabled occupant will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence throughout a period of five years following completion of the works.

7.2.2 Certificate required in case of tenant's applications

A tenant’s application for a DFG must be accompanied by a tenant’s certificate which will certify that the application is a tenant’s application and that the applicant intends that the disabled occupant (whether that is the applicant or someone in the applicant’s household) will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence throughout a period of five years following completion of the works.

A tenant’s application should be accompanied by an owner’s certificate from the person who at the time of the application is the landlord under the tenancy. The Council can waive this where it is not reasonable in the circumstances to request a certificate.

Private tenants must obtain their landlord’s written permission and landlord’s ownership certificate for the subject works before a DFG can be approved. Where a landlord withholds this permission for the works to be undertaken, a grant cannot be approved. Any DFG approved, would not normally include any element of reinstatement.

7.2.3 Occupiers and Consent Certificates (houseboats and park homes)

Occupiers of houseboats and park homes must provide an ‘occupier’s certificate’ certifying the intention of the disabled occupier to occupy the qualifying houseboat or park home as his only or main residence throughout the grant condition period (5 years from the certified date). Any such certificate must also be accompanied by a ‘consent certificate’ from each

person who owns the mooring or land on which the houseboat or park home is stationed or who owns the houseboat or park home.

8. Defining the Purposes of the DFG.

The purposes for which mandatory DFGs may be given are set out in section 23(1) of the Act and have subsequently been revised to by the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008.

It set out the purposes for which a DFG can be approved as follows:

1. Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling, or the building in which the dwelling is situated;
2. Making the dwelling safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with them
3. Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used or usable as the principal family room
4. Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping;
5. Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility.
6. Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility
7. Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant
8. Improving any heating system in the dwelling, to meet the needs of the disabled occupant or, if there is no existing heating system or any such system is unsuitable for use by the disabled occupant, providing a heating system to meet their needs
9. Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control;
10. Facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling, in order to enable them to care for a person who is normally resident there and is in need of such care;
11. Facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant or making access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant.

Only one grant can be applied for within one financial year following a full and robust assessment by an Adult Social Care OT. Should a client experience a significant change of medical need, an additional grant could be considered within the same year subject to Management approval.

The grant must be approved in full prior to any part of the assessment commencing.

Please see the Appendix 2 – page 38 for full information of the works considered.

DFG cannot be awarded in the following circumstances:

1. Where the owner has a statutory duty to carry out the necessary works and it is reasonable in the circumstances for them to do so;
2. Where the residence is not regarded as permanent and the intention to remain there for 5 years does not exist;
3. Where the works to be carried out are covered by insurance and the applicant is able to make a claim;
4. Where the building is not within the footprint of the existing dwelling, e.g. an outbuilding or shed;
5. Where the property is in a poor, or dangerous condition and remedial work is required prior to the DFG works being undertaken, e.g. electrical rewire, failure of damp proof course (DPC), or other significant elements of disrepair, as identified by the Technical Officer, contractor or Surveyor;
6. The property size, type, location or layout are such that it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt, which would be decided by Senior management
7. The property is over occupied and doesn't meet the needs of the family residing there;
8. The disabled person (or their family in the case of a child) does not have the right to remain or access to public funds;
9. The property has been converted, or had other building works carried out, which are not appropriately approved or certified by Planning, Building Control, or another statutory body. NB certain alterations and extensions are exempt from statutory control or could be very minor or of a very long-standing nature. In such instances a reasoned approach will be taken based on the circumstances in each case. 'Converted' can be taken as meaning adapted from non-residential to residential use, with or without associated alterations and upgrading work.
10. Where there is a dispute owner ownership
11. Where the works have been started before a full application has been received and approval of grant has been issued.
12. Deviating from the original approved Schedule of Works which was approved by the OT and the Technical officer, without prior agreement may result in the approval of grant being rescinded and payment refused in full or part of the adaptation. Consent must be from either or both of the officers in writing/email and confirmation received before proceeding.

13. If the applicant ceases to be the owner of the property before works are completed, they must repay the total amount of assistance received.

9. Works within the property curtilage not Considered Eligible for DFG.

A DFG will not be considered eligible in the following circumstances, or for the following provisions:

1. Refitting adaptations previously provided which have been damaged or removed by the applicant or member of their family.
2. Provision of secondary access from the dwelling house, unless there are exceptional circumstances as approved by Senior Management.
3. Formation of patios, decked areas, garden paths, walkways from garages and sheds.
4. Storage areas and charging points for wheelchair/scooters.
5. Creating a safe play area and/or fencing as stated in Appendix 2, page unless there are exceptional circumstances as approved by Senior management.
6. Storage areas, for example children's equipment, medical equipment etc.
7. Parking bays/disabled parking areas outside the curtilage of the property.
8. Dropped kerbs, hard standings and ramps for non-wheelchair users/non-drivers (dropped kerbs, hard standings and ramps will only be considered when a person has been assessed by the Wheelchair Service as meeting the criteria for wheelchair provision), unless there are exceptional circumstances; and has been considered by Senior Management.
9. Automatic door opening systems to main doors to exit their main residence will not be provided unless the disabled person is otherwise unable to open the door, to safely access and egress (leave) the property independently (this would usually only apply to wheelchair users).

The above list is not exhaustive, and other works may be deemed to be non-eligible if the Council does not consider that the service user/s needs meet the criteria/requirements set out in the legislation and policy.

10 Assessed Needs of Applicant for consideration of DFG.

10.1 Reasonable and Necessary

Only works that are 'reasonable and necessary' to meet the needs of the disabled person is identified by an Occupational Therapist (OT), or authorised workers, will be eligible for DFG funding.

In determining “reasonable and necessary”, the OT assessment will give consideration to the potential for using equipment, making minor adjustments to the home and other solutions such as consideration of moving to a more suitable property, before determining that a DFG is the necessary and appropriate solution to meet the disability needs.

The OT assessment will be undertaken and include all impact and factors including home environment. Recommendations by the OT, or authorised assessor will be made under Section 23 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and reviewed and authorised by a designated manager. The assessment may include writing to the GP, hospital consultants and other specialists involved with the applicant, to assist in gaining a baseline position and also for prognosis and the potential longer-term development of the condition or illness. Medical assessment, diagnosis and treatment in some cases maybe the most appropriate course of action prior to adaptations being considered.

Wherever it is possible to do so. All existing rooms within the property must be considered and reconfiguration would be the first option, prior to any consideration of an extension. Reconfiguration of rooms on both the ground floor and upper floors would apply, with change of use from a second family room, or dining room on the ground floor, or changes in bedroom occupancy, or number on the upper floors being made if this makes it possible to meet the needs of the disabled person within the existing footprint of the property

A DFG is for the specific assessed disability needs of the service user. The sizes of the rooms will be determined by the OT through their assessment of needs of the disabled person. It is expected that children will share bedrooms, wherever it is deemed appropriate for them to do so. Where a child has severe behavioural difficulties and the following apply, a DFG can be considered:

Where a child has been assessed and evidenced via a highly collaborative assessment, fully exploring the correct balance between therapeutic interventions and adaptations and is presenting a high risk and threat of harm to the health and safety of either themselves or the sibling/s and is currently sharing a bedroom with a sibling/s when there is no other suitable alternative, (e.g. changing the configuration of which family members sleep in which rooms).

Examples of provision could include dividing existing rooms (in line with the room size guidance), provision of a safe space facility within an existing room or the creation of an alternative bedroom space.

10.2 Appropriate and Practicable

Following the OT assessment and recommendation, the HIA must determine whether it would be “appropriate and practicable” to adapt the property. The considerations made by the Technical Officer as to whether it is “reasonable and practicable” are as follows:

1. The layout, construction, age and condition of the property, e.g. narrow stairs and corridors;

2. The number, ages and needs of the other occupants of the accommodation;
3. The use of the accommodation by the disabled person and any other occupants, including relationships and how they interact;
4. The location of the accommodation, e.g. steep access to the property;
5. Any other options that have been considered less practicable than the proposed work;
6. The cost of the proposed work, compared to the likely cost of any alternatives.
7. Planning and Building Regulation constraints.
8. Successful adaptations carried out in similar types of accommodation.
9. The implications of carrying out the required adaptation with regard to its future use and classification and potential hardship issues, e.g. spare room subsidy.

Once all considerations are assessed the Technical Officer will discuss with their Manager and the OT on the scheme proposed. The OT will confirm that the scheme is suitable for the client's needs and the client will have the Schedule of work explained to them, sign and return the schedule, confirming they have accepted the plans proposed. Should they not accept the plans, the case will be closed down, and the grant will not proceed.

On larger or unusual adaptations, a selection of relevant HIA and ASC professionals will meet to consider all elements of the adaptation proposed and make a decision whether to continue to Offer of Grant.

Once a decision has been reached on the scheme of the adaptation the client will be consulted on the outlined plan. The clients will have three weeks to consider the proposals. The HIA team will be available to answer any queries the client has. The client will confirm acceptance or refusal within three weeks of receiving the offer.

11. How we Offer this Assistance.

The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) offers a full agency approach to qualifying residents within Westmorland and Furness Council to assist in a Grant application and completion of their assessed Grant.

Please note, the receipt of a returned application form does not constitute a guarantee of an approved offer of grant.

11.1 Definition of a Full application for Approval.

A full application which must contain with all necessary documents such as all relevant assessments, (medical, financial as appropriate, etc) agreed schedules of works, OT approval of scheme, survey reports, where necessary, relevant quotes, and a returned acceptance of the Grant Offer, will be required before the application can go for formal approval.

It is the duty of the HIA to:

- Process grant applications according to Westmorland and Furness Councils policy and procedures.
- Inform the client of the expected cost of the adaptation and the relevant implications.
- To inform the client of the progress of the adaptation throughout the process through to completion.
- Verify property ownership through the Land Registry or other proof of ownership agreed by management.
- Get consent from landlords when needed
- Help obtain, or directly obtain, any necessary documents to support the funding application.
- Consult with Occupational therapist involved and other professional stakeholders as needed to get plans, reports, and any necessary permissions for the work.
- Surveying all necessary works
- Create a list of required works and relevant CDM documents and get quotes from approved contractors.
- Submit applications and liaise with statutory bodies e.g. Planning and Building Control, Listed Buildings etc.
- Approve the Grant
- Inform the approved contractors of the grant approval and instruct them to arrange the start of work with the applicant.
- Communicate with the contractors about any building issues that arise during the work.
- After inspecting the completed work and receiving appropriate invoices, make payments for the building work and related fees, including any payments needed during the work, directly to the involved parties.
- Prepare completion paperwork for adaptation, with customer satisfaction questionnaire

The applicant will be offered a choice of contractors to carry out the DFG work; however, the grant will only fund the lowest tender price in most circumstances.

Interim payments can be made direct to the contractor(s) and other relevant professional bodies, as appropriate, for works satisfactorily completed.

Should the adaptation required be part of a larger adaptation, i.e. extension which is not part or fully funded by the DFG, the qualifying part essential for the client, as assessed by the OT, will be funded from the standard specifications our schedule of works for the appropriate adaptation. Two quotes will need to be provided. Should the client wish to enhance the

standard of fitment, this must be approved, in writing, by the OT and Technical Officer.

The works must be completed within 12 months of the approval of the grant. There are special circumstances that the grant can be extended i.e. due to hospitalisation, illness or delays by issues outside the client remit.

12. Children in Joint Residency Arrangements

The statutory DFG will usually be eligible for the main residence of the disabled child which is usually the home of the parent in receipt of Child Benefit. Consideration will be given to the child's other residency, dependant on it being within Westmorland and Furness council area and the child's needs. This will be referred to Senior Management.

13. Party Wall Act.

If the adaptation involves building on, or close to the boundary with an adjoining property as defined in the Act, an agreement should be served on the neighbouring owner/s, stating what work is proposed, when it is to take place and what impact, if any, the work could have on the neighbouring property. For example, excavation for foundations because of the risk of subsidence, damage to boundary fences etc. Only certified party wall surveyors should undertake this on behalf of the property owner/s. The HIA will advise on when a Party Wall Act Agreement is required but will not be able to approach the neighbours on behalf of the applicant.

In the event of a dispute or disagreement, arbitration will be undertaken by the Party Wall Act surveyor, who has been appointed (and paid) by the owner.

A DFG will not be approved until the Party Wall Act Agreement is in place and due notice given to the adjoining owner/s.

Damage to an adjoining property, whether caused by the work in question or not, would be covered via civil proceedings and would not be the responsibility of the HIA.

14. Disrepair - to Property to be Adapted.

Where disrepair is identified at a property, which will have an impact on the recommended adaptation works, full consideration of the necessary works and additional costs must be undertaken prior to the adaptation being approved, in order to determine whether the works should be funded by the applicant.

If disrepair is identified once adaptation works have commenced, full details and costings should be requested from the contractor and discussed with the HIA Technical Officer or Service Manager, for a decision on whether the costs will need to be funded by the applicant, or whether it will be covered as part of the DFG.

Works such as replacement of rotted flooring, or strengthening the floor for a level access shower, electrical repairs, or additional electrical works to enable

the adaptation works to be carried out safely and dealing with low water pressure can be considered as eligible DFG costs.

Replacing defective drainage or undertaking a full rewire would not be considered as part of the DFG. However, any works requiring repair/replacement which constitute building work or a material alteration under the building regulations will require appropriate approval and the service user would be advised of this if it is their intention to undertake these non-grant aided works

If there are other significant areas of disrepair within a property, outside of the areas where DFG is being provided, for example Category 1 hazards, illegal or unsafe conversions of loft spaces, or other works which contravene Building Regulations and Planning policies, no grant will be approved until the issues have been resolved.

The Technical officer must be able to see that whole fabric of the property to make their recommendations. The property must clear of clutter and clean to allow assessments to be made by the Technical Officer and the contractor requested to quote.

15. Asbestos

If a property was built prior to 2000, an Asbestos R&D (Refurbishment and Demolition Survey) will take place in the areas only to be adapted. The report will be conducted by a suitable qualified and experienced asbestos specialist surveyor. This will be paid for under the grant or by the relevant Housing Association. This will take place after the Schedule of Works have been prepared. The contractors will receive a copy of the report showing the result of relevant samples taken, for their information. The client must allow this to proceed, if required, as the grant cannot be approved without it.

If any ACM is identified or suspected following a survey and is in the work area of the adaptation, a suitable remediation plan needs to be in place to remove it or encapsulate it. All asbestos needs to be removed and disposed of in line with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. Where licensed asbestos removal is required, such works should only be carried out by a suitable HSE-licensed asbestos contractor. The costs of removal will depend on the type and level of asbestos found.

16. Electrical

Where proposed adaptations will involve any electrical works, a view must be taken with regards to the condition of the existing electrical installation prior to any works being approved. If the installation is old, or there are any concerns about it being safe and fit for purpose, an electrical inspection will be undertaken by a suitably qualified electrician, on the prescribed documentation from a recognised electrical body e.g. NICEIC, NAPIT or equivalent, prior to the adaptation works commencing. You may be required to pay for this report.

If the electrical report recommends a full or partial rewire of the property, this will usually need to be completed by the owner of the property, prior to a DFG being approved. Upgrading of electrical installations and earth bonding which are legally required and restricted to the area in which the adaptations are being carried out, will be covered by the DFG, e.g. level access shower works to the bathroom.

17. Warranty and Maintenance

Where adaptations have been provided by construction, any faults will be rectified by the original contractor at no cost to the applicant within the defects liability period, which is usually the first 12 months following completion of the works, unless otherwise stated. Altro flooring (non-slip vinyl floor covering used in level access showers have longer warranty's) and shower unit have warranty's that you should validate

Stairlifts, step lifts and through floor lifts are provided with a 5-year warranty, paid by the Council. At the end of the warranty period, the maintenance and repair will become the responsibility of the applicant. In some cases, where it is an RP property, the RP will become responsible for the maintenance and repair and apply a charge in line with the RP adaptations policy.

Wash/dry toilets have a warranty for 5 years paid for under the grant by the council. Following the expiry of the warranty, the maintenance and repair will be the responsibility of the applicant, or in some cases their landlord. The council will not remove a wash/dry toilet if at a future date it is no longer required by the disabled person.

The DFG cannot be used to repair a previously provided adaptation.

18. Overcrowding

Overcrowding is not taken into account when determining the most appropriate adaptation. Provision of additional bedrooms will not be directly linked to an assessed need of a disabled person.

In situations where an adaptation is being provided for a bedroom to meet the assessed needs of a disabled person, but the property will remain overcrowded, a DFG will not usually be approved, as it wouldn't be "reasonable and practicable".

In situations where the property is overcrowded, advice and information will be provided on the options available. Additional support in some cases can be provided to source an alternative property and support the disabled person to move to more suitable accommodation

19. Contractors Undertaking the Adaptation Works.

The Home Improvement Agency will act on behalf of the applicant through the adaptation however, the contract is between the applicant and the contractor. The Council will not be liable for disputes arising between the parties. In the event of any disputes, between the applicant and contractor, the Council will

help to resolve these, but if this is not possible, it may be necessary for the applicant to seek legal advice to remedy any dispute.

The contractors providing the quotes must be officially registered businesses and be able to provide the following:

- Certified trading accounts for the previous 2 years, which evidence that they are financially viable to complete the required works OR copy of self-assessment tax return to HMRC for sole traders who don't have certified trading accounts
- Public liability insurance for at least £5 million
- Evidence their Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) - HMRC tax scheme for contractors and sub-contractors involved in the construction industry status (if applicable)
- VAT registration certificate/evidence (if applicable)
- Health and Safety Policy, including a health and safety method statement/risk assessment and construction phase plan for the proposed works
- Evidence that they are a competent contractor (e.g. by being registered on Construction Line or other certified trader scheme or equivalent) or evidence of their work on similar projects being of a satisfactory standard.

Some adaptation works for disabled people will be VAT free. The disabled person will sign a VAT declaration which will be provided to the contractor. It is the contractor's responsibility to determine which elements of work will be VAT free and which will be at the standard rate.

All contractors have a responsibility under health and safety laws and Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) to ensure that the work they are undertaking is safe and the applicant must comply with all requirements as advised by the contractor and/or council.

All Disabled Facilities Grants and Discretionary Housing Assistance Grants are administered by the Westmorland and Furness Councils Home Improvement Agency (HIA). The aim of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) is to help vulnerable, disabled or older people maintain or regain independence and safety in their own homes. It provides additional support through the grant process and advice regarding other services, support or funding which may be available.

20. Data Protection

All data will be held, managed and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Council may formally verify or investigate any of the information provided in connection with any application for financial assistance.

In order to process an application, it may be necessary to share any information provided with other services or organisations that may be involved with the grant process. These may include:

- a) within the Council - Adult Social Care or Achieving for Children, Revenues and Benefits, Electoral Services, Planning & Building Control;
- b) external agencies – The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), NHS Services or other health care professionals, other Government Agencies.
- c) other - individuals, or family members as specified by the applicant.

The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers and those of other bodies and may use the information provided for the detection and prevention of fraud.

Full details of privacy and data protection can be found on the Council's website at [Data protection and privacy | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

21. Administration

Contact details for HIA Offices:

Voreda House
Portland Place
Penrith
CA11 7BF

better.homes@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

South Lakeland House
Lowther Street
Kendal
LA9 4DQ

housingstandards@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Barrow Town Hall
Duke Street
Barrow-in-Furness
LA14 2LD

dfg@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

22. Empty Homes Grants

This policy supports the [Westmorland and Furness Empty Homes Strategy](#) and in particular with:

Objective 2: Bring empty homes back into use through extra resource, encouragement, advice and assistance.

What is the aim of the assistance?

At Westmorland and Furness, we put tackling empty properties high on our list of priorities. Each dwelling, which is standing empty, is seen as a wasted

resource, not only to the community, but to the owner. Within the Council area we have a growing demand for homes, either for rent or purchase, and we wish to see empty properties brought back into use as quickly as possible. This is because we believe that it is generally cheaper to repair an empty property than to build new homes.

A property left empty and neglected for considerable time can bring problems associated with vandalism, squatters, rodents and nuisance - as well as being unsightly and detrimental to the local environment.

There are also economic advantages to owners in bringing a property back into use. They can benefit from rental revenue and reduced insurance premiums. Maintenance and repair costs can be reduced, and there can be a reduction in VAT costs if an empty property is renovated for occupation.

The Council wants to encourage owners to bring their properties back into use and one of these ways is to offer advice and assistance on the different options that may be available to homeowners, providing details on letting, selling and private leasing schemes.

Subject to the availability of funding, grants may be available to assist empty homeowners to bring their properties back into use.

- Properties must have been empty for longer than 12 months and registered as empty with Westmorland and Furness Council Tax Department
- Grants are limited to properties in council tax bands A, B, C and D.
- Applicant must have an owner's interest.
- The owner must intend to either occupy as their primary residence or let the property as affordable housing
- An Empty Property Grant is not available to facilitate the sale of the property.

The grant would be available to cover the cost of works associated with ensuring the property is free from Category 1 hazards under the Housing Act 2004 and to ensure that it is brought up to a habitable standard and returned to use. The Housing Standards team will agree the works to be covered by the grant.

The available grant funding is limited. To enable the Council to support a number of empty homes, assistance in respect of any one property will be limited to 50% of the cost of eligible works, up to a maximum grant of £15,000. This funding is available to private landlords who agree to let the property at an affordable rent (up to the applicable Local Housing Allowance rate) for a minimum period of two years, or to owner-occupiers who intend to occupy the property as their primary residence.

There will be a land charge applied for up to 10 years.

Landlords who own more than one property will not be eligible to apply for the grant.

The Council reserves the right to increase the grant support dependant upon 'take up' of the grant and the funds available. The total amount of such assistance to be given each year, and the associated conditions, will be determined at least annually by the Council.

22.1 How to apply

Applications can be made by contacting the Housing Standards Team

empty.homes@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

All applications will be subject to a full property inspection, and the schedule of works will be agreed with the Housing Standards Team

23. Warm Homes – Local Grant

The Warm Homes Local Grant (WH:LG) is a government-funded scheme that helps low-income households in England improve energy efficiency and switch to low-carbon heating.

The scheme is managed by Westmorland and Furness Council, delivered in partnership with Cumberland Council, with funding provided by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

The DESNZ guidance can be accessed here:

[Warm Homes: Local Grant – guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK](#)

To see if you may be eligible, wish to express an interest in the scheme, or view the privacy notice visit our website:

[Housing energy efficiency grants and advice | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

Getting in touch with questions

We encourage residents to send questions to:

Email: better.homes@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Telephone: 01768 212348

24. Eligibility

This is a fully government funded grant. This funding has been allocated by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero for the purposes of supporting vulnerable residents genuinely suffering fuel poverty. The Council reserves the right to refuse expressions of interest or withdraw applications that are not aligned with the "spirit of the grant" even if the household meets the eligibility requirements. This may include, but is not limited to, circumstances where the Council reasonably determines, based on information provided by the applicant, that the household is not experiencing financial vulnerability consistent with the aims of the scheme or could reasonably otherwise fund energy improvements undertaken by the scheme.

To maximise the funds available within Cumbria, to benefit residents, the Council may refuse expressions of interest if otherwise accepting them would increase the risk to the Council in that it may not be able to remain within the required financial limits of the programme, including Cost Caps, Administration and Ancillary funding, Value for Money criteria, or if the Council is unable to identify suitable measures which could be identified from a desktop assessment. An initial desktop assessment will typically include available EPC records, mapping data and correspondence with the resident. This includes where potential improvements are unlikely to result in an increase in the property energy rating or if the resulting work is unlikely to deliver long-term energy and carbon savings to the property.

The Council will consider applications and funding decisions using the information available at the time. Expressions of interest and applications may be declined where forecast costs, timescales, technical constraints or policy requirements indicate the application is unlikely to meet programme objectives and programme performance requirements.

If your application is accepted, your details will be passed to the Council's appointed contractor who will arrange a retrofit survey of your property and establish its current energy rating. They will also provide information about whether any improvements for your property can be installed within the limitations of the scheme. The energy rating from this property assessment is used to determine property eligibility.

Where the Council's appointed contractor provides information about potential property improvements available under the scheme, this is not a guarantee those works will be completed. The Council reserves the right to withdraw proposed improvements if new information about the property impacts the feasibility of, or benefits resulting from, such improvements.

The Council will not accept or progress applications where the property is undertaking major works or the property is a second home.

25. Managing Demand

This is a limited programme, constricted by funding and time. Where needed, each Council will be prioritising homes, and types of improvements, as necessary to remain within programme limitations and to maximise the outcomes and impact of the programme. After assessing viability, the Council expects to prioritise applications based on lower energy ratings and household income. Applications will not be considered on a first come first served approach. An accepted application does not guarantee that energy efficiency improvements will be made. To maximise the benefit of funding available within the time available on the programme some applications will be unable to receive installations even if their home has completed the property assessment stage.

26. Funding

Funding allocation is dependent on results of the property assessment, viability of installation and value for money, and is at the discretion of

Westmorland and Furness Council. Value for money may consider all associated costs, expected energy and carbon savings and scheme performance requirements. Properties do not automatically receive a specific funding allocation. Funding allocations will also depend on requirements to remain within the scheme cost limits and performance requirements. Residents can discuss preferred measures with the Council and appointed contractors, but we cannot guarantee that specific measures, necessary works or further assessments or applications will be viable or affordable. Due to funding limitations batteries cannot be installed alongside all solar PV installations. Where possible batteries will be prioritised for homes with high electricity use to maximise the benefit from complementing solar PV.

Owner occupiers are not expected to make any contributions to the cost but can optionally engage the Council's appointed contractor to complete additional works that are not part of the grant-funded measures. Any additional work must be completed at a different time to work undertaken through the scheme, and the responsibility for additional works and any issues occurring from them will be solely between the property owner and the contractor.

Landlords may receive one fully funded property provided they remain within the maximum subsidy threshold of the scheme. If a landlord would like to progress additional homes, they will be required to pay an upfront non-refundable deposit before the property assessment is undertaken. If the landlord agrees with the proposed measures, they will be required to pay the balance of the minimum 50% contribution or all associated costs before the installation of measures.

Use of Administration and Ancillary Funds: Some properties may require remedial enabling works before energy efficiency improvements can be made. The scheme allows for some enabling works to be completed however available funds for this work such as electrical safety upgrades or property defects causing significant damp, are extremely limited. The Council will only consider fully funding enabling works if the household is within the income threshold unless there is a strong reason otherwise.

The Council reserves the right to close the scheme or alter funding decisions where required due to changes in government guidance, funding, or circumstances outside the Council's reasonable control.

27. Installation of Measures

Residents can withdraw from the scheme at any time as long as the works have not yet started. Once works have started, the resident agrees that they will provide access to the property to allow for all necessary work to be completed in accordance with the grant requirements including but not limited to ventilation and post-installation energy assessments. Where the resident does not agree with this work the contractor may be required to remove already installed measures.

Lower carbon heat is a measure which can be installed through the programme. Due to the financial limitations of the programme, the number of

higher cost low carbon heating measures such as air source heat pumps is limited. These measures will be prioritised for properties heated by inefficient heating systems and high carbon fuel sources such as oil/LPG/coal. The scheme may first be required to fund measures to reduce heat loss before low carbon heating can be installed, which may result in insufficient funding being available to also include a heat pump.

If measures offered through the scheme include solar panels the roof must be in a safe and satisfactory condition for solar installations. The installer reserves the right to terminate installation at any point if the roof is deemed unsafe for installation. If a resident prefers to privately re-roof their property prior after Resident Offer and prior to the installation of solar panels this may be acceptable to the Council provided that all private and grant-funded work can still be completed within the time available on the scheme.

All work must be done with the resident's permission and adhere with any local planning, freeholder or conservation restrictions. The Council will include necessary planning application costs where it reasonably considers it necessary as part of the grant-funded work.

28. Stages of the Programme

28.1 Expression of interest and Household Eligibility

If an expression of interest progresses to application you will be required to provide documents to evidence household eligibility – this may include proof of ownership, occupancy and financial circumstances. This supporting evidence will be used to assess the household eligibility. Meeting household eligibility does not guarantee that a property will qualify for funding.

28.2 Property Eligibility

If the application meets the household eligibility criteria, your contact details will be referred to an appointed contractor to arrange a retrofit assessment. This assessment gathers information but cannot advise if measures will be installed through the scheme. Depending on potential work, specific property assessments may be required such as surveys for low carbon heat, airtightness or environmental surveys.

28.3 Funding Review and Resident Offer

If suitable, the Council and contractor will agree an initial package of measures which will be offered to the resident. Residents can discuss the proposed work with the contractor or the Council.

28.4 Funding Confirmation

If the property owner agrees with the Resident Offer they should sign and return the offer letter. The Council will then confirm funding approval with DESNZ. Once confirmed, the installer will arrange an installation date with the resident.

28.5 Installation

If there are any concerns regarding the works, residents should raise them directly with the installer and inform the Council of the dispute. It is the installer's responsibility to resolve any complaints received, in line with their complaints policy.

If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved between the resident and the installer, the Council will attempt to mediate a resolution. Under certain cases, if still no resolution has been achieved, the Council may choose to appoint an independent surveyor to help resolve a dispute if necessary. Payment to the installer may be withheld during this process. The Council will normally rely on the findings of the independent surveyor appointed by The Council when determining the outcome of a dispute.

The timeline between initial application and completion of works depends on the installers schedule and capacity and customer availability, and it is not possible to commit to fixed timings. Common measures such as solar PV and loft insulation are estimated to be typically completed within 4 months. More complex works including specialist surveys, enabling work, or other fabric measures are estimated to take considerably longer.

Guarantees will be provided by the installer for all measure installations. Where applicable, the resident will receive instructions, handover, maintenance information, workmanship and manufacturer warranties, and an MCS certificate for renewables.

28.6 Post Installation

A post-installation EPC (funded by the scheme) is required once all works on a property are completed. This is required as part of assessing the achieved savings from the scheme. This will be undertaken by the scheme, and the household must support access to the property to enable this assessment to be carried out.

As part of the auditing and due diligence requirement for the project, a sample of properties will be visited by the Council or may be independently surveyed by a contractor's accreditation body, or by DESNZ and their appointed agents.

29. Appeals

If a resident believes a decision has been made using inaccurate information, they may request a review by an officer who was not involved in the original decision. Requests should be made within 20 working days of the applicant being notified of a decision.

30. Housing Market Renewal

Housing Market Renewal is an outward looking programme which links to other wider agendas and policy initiatives. improving the housing offer, living standards, and economic sustainability.

30.1 Why do we need to do this?

Poor practice caused by private landlords who are often absent means properties are left to decline and are in disrepair. This can blight an area and be prejudicial to the health and the safety of, not just the residents of the properties, but the general public.

The overarching general principle is that repairs are fundamentally the responsibility of the property owner, and grant assistance should only be given in the following circumstances.

- in cases of hardship where there is an imminent risk to health and safety
- as part of strategic area-based schemes, such as Housing Market Renewal Areas;
- A programme of Public Realm Facelift Schemes and Environmental works within agreed priority areas
- assistance will be restricted to owner occupiers, except where giving grant assistance to landlords will support a wider strategic scheme.
- Assistance can be given to private sector tenants as part of area-based pilots and so long as public subsidy rules are not breached
- assistance will not be given where other forms of assistance are in place (e.g. Warm Homes. In these cases, applicants will be directed to these alternatives before applications are considered.
- To promote the renewal of declining areas to improve living conditions and attract investment
- To ensure renewal efforts do not displace existing residents and to maintain a stock of affordable housing

Successful Housing Market Renewal involves engaging with local communities to gather input on development plans. This can include public consultations, surveys and workshops to ensure that the needs of residents are addressed.

Priority areas will only be determined following consideration of an agreed criteria and following approval by the relevant Strategic Director.

31. Appeals and Complaints

Any correspondence appealing a decision, made by the HIA, should be forwarded as soon as possible to the Senior Manager Housing Standards and Services. This will ensure complaints are properly acknowledged and investigated, and the complainant advised of the process and timescales for responding.

A copy of the complaints policy can be found on the Westmorland and Furness Council website using the following link [Making a complaint](#)

[Westmorland and Furness Council](#) or writing to Westmorland and Furness Council, Voreda House, Portland Place, Penrith, CA11 7BF.

Appendix 1 - Summary of Grant Assistance

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant - Summary

Purpose	To provide financial assistance to enable the Council to meet their statutory duty by providing disabled residents with assistance in undertaking a range of adaptations to their homes. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants will be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Where there is a private or social landlord, they will maintain their duties to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the needs of their tenants. Minor works, up to £1,000 should be undertaken privately or by a social landlord. If these are not available, they can be referred to and maybe supplied by Adult Social Care, following a Care Act assessment.
Maximum Funding	To a maximum amount of £30,000 (subject to assessed need)
Eligibility	As per the general eligibility criteria set out within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
Means Test	Disabled Facilities Grants are subject to a formal means test of the disabled person. In cases where the eligible work is for a person in receipt of a passported benefit (as listed below), is a child under the age of 16 or a young person age 20, in full-time education no formal means test will be required. • Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance • Income Support • Guarantee Pension Credit (excluding Savings Credit) • Housing Benefit • Council Tax Reduction (Local scheme) • Working or Child Tax Credits where the income for tax credits award purposes is below £15,050 • Universal Credit
Eligible Works	The relevant works must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person, following the clinical assessment from Adult Social Care OT, or Trusted Assessor. It must be reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and condition of the property. The purposes for which a grant must be given are to facilitate access in and around the home as well as access to essential amenities such as washing and toileting facilities, cooking facilities, access to the principal family living room and access to a room for sleeping. Full details of eligible work can be found in Section 23 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

	Any agreed associated fees e.g. technical surveys, obtaining proof of title etc. will be included in the Disabled Facilities Grant total.
Grant Conditions	The disabled person must have the intention to remain in the property for a 5-year period following the provision of the grant. If this condition is not met, the grant may need to be repaid in full. A Land Charge will be placed on a property, where the mandatory grant applicant is an owner occupier, and where the Disabled Facilities Grant adaptation exceeds £5,000. The Land Charge will be limited to a maximum of £10,000 (this is a mandatory limit). The Land Charge will be incurred if the property is disposed of (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) within 10 years (subject to the consideration of certain criteria by the council). All monies returned to Westmorland and Furness Council via the Land Charge procedure must be re-allocated back to the Disabled Facilities Grant budget.

Top Up Grant - Discretionary

Purpose	To top up a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants where the cost of the eligible work exceeds the statutory mandatory maximum grant, and the adaptation is based on the medical needs for the client primarily within the existing footprint of the main residence. Also to cover professional fees.
Maximum Funding	Up to a maximum of £30,000
Eligibility	As per the Disabled Facilities Grant criteria, as set out within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
Means Test	Subject to the child's case, the parent/s, carer/s resident in the property on a full-time basis and classed as their main home, will be subject to a full means test and a contribution may be payable. Should the assessed contribution exceed £5,000, the applicant will not be eligible for the Top-up Grant. Should the parent be in receipt of a passporting benefit, the means test will not be required.
Grant Conditions	No more than one Top-up grant will be available per referral, per property, per applicant. Multiple applicants will not be accepted to gain multiple grants. Should multiple family members need adaptations, the grant will be awarded to the applicant with the most medical needs as stated by the ASC employee making the assessment. Land Charge, A maximum of £10,000 would be applied for the Mandatory Grant, and in the case of an owner/occupier, the property would have a local land charge attached to it for the full amount of the Top-up Discretionary Grant received. This would be repaid when the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the property.

	The intention must be for the applicant to remain in the property for a minimum of the next 5 years following the completion of the Grant. If this condition is not met, the grant may need to be repaid in full.
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Adapted Homes Grant - Discretionary

Purpose	Intended to assist disabled person to access grants by reducing procedure and speeding up the process without a Capital or Means Test. The person must have been referred to the HIA after completing a medical assessment through Adult Social Care (ASC) for medical need for the adaptation recommended.
Maximum Funding	£12,500 maximum (subject to revision)
Eligibility	For one grant per referral per person per home within a financial year. Management do have discretion to award an extra grant in exceptional circumstances for significant medical change of need.
Means Test	All aspects of the referred costs of the total adaptation/s assessed needs, received from ASC, will be financially considered and the client informed at the earliest opportunity. This is to determine the potential cost of these adaptations. Example: If the cost of work is estimated at £17,500, the first £12,500 would be awarded as part of the adapted Homes Grant. The additional £5,000 would be means tested in all cases. If the assessed outcome of the means test shows a contribution of £5,000 or over, you would be expected to pay the additional £5,000 from your own resources. If your assessed contribution was less than the £5,000 e.g. £2,000 you would be expected to pay this contribution amount towards the work, and the Grant would fund the additional £3,000. The assessment would provide an estimated contribution. A definitive contribution cost will be provided once the relevant quotes are received. Confirmation would be required, in writing, that funds are available from your own source.
Grant Conditions	A local land charge would be placed on the property to a maximum amount of £10,000. The first £5,000 is ignored. Example, costs of adaptation £7,500, £5,000 ignored and land charge applied £2,500. This would apply for a 10-year prior and would only be repaid when the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the property. The intention must be for the applicant to remain in the property for a minimum of the next 5 years following the completion of the Grant. If this condition is not met, the grant may need to be repaid in full.

Relocation Grant - Discretionary

Purpose	To provide discretionary assistance to enable disabled persons to move to a more suitable property within the Westmorland and Furness Council area, when they are eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant, but it would not be appropriate, reasonable and/or practicable to carry out the eligible work in their current home.
Maximum Funding	Up to £10,000 maximum
Eligibility	A disabled person, who would otherwise qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant, where it is not possible to carry out the works within their existing home. Available to owner/occupiers and tenants to assist in the move to a more suitable home. The 'new' property shall in the opinion of the Westmorland and Furness and Occupational Therapist provide a long-term, sustainable home for the person. So that either an adaptation is not necessary, or the new adaptation is significantly smaller than the original DFG request. The total cost incurred in the eligible relocation expenses at the 'new' property should not be greater than the cost of adapting the applicant's current home or the works cannot be carried out without the permission of a third party and that permission has not been forthcoming.
Means Test	Subject to the disabled person having a contribution of less than £5,000 following the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant means test.
Eligible Works	Assistance with fees and charges associated with moving homes. For example, Stamp Duty, Removal Costs, Legal and Estate Agent Fees and Service Connections. Subject to receipt of valid invoices.
Grant Conditions	Paid retrospective, following completion of the sale, confirmed by the client's solicitor and the supplying of original invoices. The disabled person must have the intention to remain in the "new" property for a minimum period of 5 years following completion of the grant. If this condition is not paid, the Council reserves the right to for the grant to be repaid in full. If the applicant is a private/social tenant and in receipt of Housing Benefit, or the Housing Element of Universal Credit, they must have explored and provided evidence of applications for alternative funding options such as Discretionary Housing Payments prior to making an application for a relocation grant.

Urgent Care Grant - Discretionary

Purpose	To support applicants with life-changing diagnosis, through trauma or illness such as MND and life-changing incidents. Also to assist applicants in receipt of palliative care, advancing dementia and where the ASC colleague has stated immediate assistance is needed and classed as urgent under the ASC guidelines.
Maximum	Up to £15,000 maximum
Eligibility	An applicant would be supported by a referral from an OT within the ASC department, which would be supported by their manager as in clinical need of rapid intervention.
Means test	Not applicable.
Eligible works	Examples of works could be and not limited to stair lifts, modular ramping, door widening, adjustments to the bathroom to aid continued independence or assisting the carer to continue to care.
Grant Conditions	Applicants have received a diagnosis of a possible rapidly degenerative illness and are fully supported to receive this grant by ASC OT Department.

Prevention and Wellbeing Grant (Discretionary) NEW

Purpose	To assist applicants to remain safe and warm within their home. Available to homeowners/occupiers and tenants where the works are not under the duty of the landlord.
Maximum Funding	Maximum of £3,500
Eligibility	An applicant would need to be supported and or referred by a Westmorland and Furness employee of ASC, or Housing Department or has already been accepted under the Gas Safety Scheme. The Grant can only be accessed once a year, per applicant, per property.
Means Testing	The client will be assessed to be in receipt of for passporting benefits or confirmation will be sought that the applicant does not have assets/savings in excess of £15,000. This does not include the value of the property.
Eligible Works	The assistance of heating when the property falls outside the remit of current Housing Retro-fit scheme, to include - costs of fitting for boilers and radiators, (maximum £3,500) (£4,000 if also accessing the Gas Safety Fund if available). - gas fires (maximum £500), including the Gas Safety Fund, - heating for bathrooms (maximum £300). - The replacement of flooring, (for stair carpets, replacing kitchen or bathroom flooring that presents a risk of trips or falls which may result in hospital admission (maximum £300)

Grant Conditions	The intention must be for the applicant to remain in the property for a minimum of the next 5 years following the completion of the Grant. If this condition is not met, the grant may need to be repaid in full. Works will be ordered by the HIA team.
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Empty Homes Grant

Purpose	To help towards the cost of bringing an empty property back into use and is aimed at contributing towards to the Council's ability to increasing the supply of good quality housing within the Council area
Maximum Funding	£15,000 including any fees
Eligibility	Applicants must be the owner of the property. In addition; • The property must have been empty for at least 2 years and • Applicant must have an owner's interest. • The owner must intend to either occupy as a first-time owner currently occupying an affordable/social rented property or let the property at affordable rent (local housing allowance) • An Empty Property Grant is not available to facilitate the sale of the property. • Must be in need of renovation to bring it back to the Council's decent homes standards and, • Any refurbishment must bring the property up to a decent and lettable standard Assistance will not be available unless all owners have consented to the carrying out of the assisted work and associated conditions by signing the application.
Means Test	None - some initial checks and research are taken before offering a grant.
Grant Conditions	• The grant would be made available on a matched funding basis at a ratio of 50% grant 50% contribution from the owner. Evidence of funds will be required. • The terms of the grant would require full-time reoccupation of the property within 12 weeks on completion of the works with the property being occupied for a minimum of 2 years. • Landlords would be required to let the property out within 12 weeks of completion of the works and the rate of rent must be set at the applicable Local Housing allowance Rate for 2 years. • Repayment of the grant will be required if these conditions are contravened. • The grant would be repayable upon sale of the property, if sold within 10 years. • Empty Property Grants will be registered as a Local Land Charge. • Immediate repayment of grant will be required if grant conditions are not met. • The Council may take appropriate steps to recover any grant funding due for repayment, including the use of statutory recovery powers where necessary.'

Appendix 2 - Rationale of the Adaptation Proposed

Adaptations should be undertaken within the existing footprint of the property, wherever it is possible to do so. All existing rooms within the property must be considered and reconfiguration would be the first option, prior to any consideration of an extension. Reconfiguration of rooms on both the ground floor and upper floors would apply, with change of use from a second family room, or dining room on the ground floor, or changes in bedroom occupancy, or number on the upper floors being made if this makes it possible to meet the needs of the disabled person within the existing footprint of the property. A DFG is for the specific assessed disability needs of the service user. The sizes of the rooms will be determined by the OT through their assessment of needs of the disabled person.

Stair Lifts

A stairlift is the first consideration by the OT and if the need is to assist the client to safely and suitably to gain access to the first floor.

Two quotes will be required following the assessment, consideration of others within the household and receipt of the recommendations from the OT. The stair lift is for the client's personal use and designed for their particular needs.

The stairlift will be fitted to cover all steps between floors unless agreed otherwise by the OT.

Should the client be considering replacing the existing carpet, this should be done prior to installation.

The installation of the stair lift may require fixing through carpets, possibly walls, and maybe into relevant floors. This should be discussed with the client by the company representative when they attend to quote.

On completion of the grant, the stair lift is then owned by the client it was installed for. The grant will purchase on behalf of the client a full 5-year warranty for the annual services and any faults or breakdowns of the lift. The client will have responsibility for the maintenance after this 5-year period. Warranties are available to purchase from the installers or third parties to provide further peace of mind.

An electric point will be required to "trickle charge" the stair lift and this will be discussed by the representative.

Modifications may be required to the fabric of the building/staircase to facilitate installation of the stairlift, such as moving radiators and changing the position of the handrail. The contractors will infill these holes but will not decorate.

It is advisable to inform your household insurance company of the installation of the lift.

If your home is rented, your landlord must give permission to have the lift installed in your home. Should you vacate, he may ask for you to remove the stair lift.

Should a step lift be needed assessed by the OT, this will also follow the above criteria for the stair lift.

Through Floor Lifts

Where it is necessary for access to be provided between the ground floor and first floor living accommodation, a through floor lift may be considered. Should a through floor lift be determined by the Occupational Therapist (OT) to be suitable, a discussion between the client, a stair lift company representative, the OT, the Technical Officer (T/O) will discuss, at the property, the most suitable position for siting the lift for the benefit of the client to access the lift at both levels.

If the property is over several floors, it may be necessary to move the client's sleeping arrangements to the first floor. Should the client not wish to facilitate this, it can be discussed with the company of the possibility for the lift to go to further floors. This must be discussed at the first visit and the extended travel, would be to the client's own cost. This will be a direct arrangement with the contractor. The contractor will provide a written quote to the applicant for these works outside the remit of the DFG. The payment must be made directly to the contractor to their terms and conditions.

Two like for like quotes will need to be obtained. The T/O will arrange these.

The relevant turning circles for a wheelchair user must be taken into account for the ground and first floor. This may mean that furniture needs to be moved or removed from the relevant room.

The rooms will need to be cleared as stated by the contractor commissioned to fit the lift prior to installation. Failure could result in the installation being postponed and costs to the client incurred.

Hard wired smoke detectors will be fitted both levels. The company representative will explain how the lift can be used in case of a fire and the local Fire Service will attend the property to give advice.

Decoration and or replacement of carpets/floorcoverings are not covered under this grant.

On completion of the grant the through floor lift is then owned by the client it was installed for. The grant will purchase on behalf of the client a full 5-year warranty for the annual services and any faults or breakdowns of the lift. The client will have responsibility for the maintenance after this 5-year period. Warranties are available to purchase from the installers or third parties to provide further peace of mind.

It is advisable to inform your household insurance company of the installation of the lift.

Ramping and External Access

The Occupational Therapist (OT) will assess the requirements for the ramp or pathway due to the client's mobility issues and discuss with the Technical Officer. Two quotes will be required.

Consideration will be made to the external door the ramp will service. The OT will assess if the door needs to be replaced and aperture widened. If so, the door will need to be widened for access to between 840mm to ideally 900mm. The door must have a level threshold lip with maximum lip of 15mm to allow wheelchair access.

Should the client refuse the recommendation of the OT and T/O to widen the door, consideration will be discussed with the regard to the future proofing of the access should a wheelchair be needed. As public funds are being used it would be inappropriate to expect work to be amended at a later date due to change in need.

A ramp will only be provided if the service user is a permanent wheelchair user or has been assessed by the wheelchair service as being eligible for a wheelchair, but has decided to purchase their own scooter or is the holder of a Blue Badge.

A ramp will not be provided for a person who has chosen to purchase their own scooter, or mobility vehicle, where there is no assessed eligible need.

The grant will not supply charging points or storage for either scooters or mobility vehicles.

A ramp must not impede the pavement, or public highway/right of way. The ramp must remain within the curtilage of the client's property.

If a ramp or garden path gradient cannot be achieved without excessive wrap around, and requires extended lengthening over the external area to get from the house to an exit point onto the public highway or pavement, due to gradient, the ramp or path will be considered to be not reasonable and practicable. This also includes an area where the siting of a pathway is in direct conflict with trees which have a preservation order on them.

Planning permission can be needed if the length is exceeded, in a conservation area or on a listed building or a park home for a ramp.

The ramps/access works would, wherever possible, meet with current Building Regulation guidance. A ramp must be able to achieve a gradient of no steeper than 1 in 12, with level landings at intervals of 5 metres. The change of direction should be 1500mm square for a private dwelling non communal. Should be supplied by means of an "Aco" type drain to remove water from the direct area. The ramp should have an upstand of 100mm to both side and minimum width of 900mm, ideally 1200mm. The landing top and bottom should be a minimum of 1200mm. Handrails should be set to a height of 900mm, the handrails to be between 45 and 50mm. In all cases there should try to be an alternative stepped approach.

Modular and concrete ramps will be considered. The grant will be awarded on the lowest of those 2 quotes gained. The client may wish to request the more expensive quote, and the extra amount would be to the client's own cost. This will be a direct arrangement with the contractor. The payment must be made directly to the contractor to their terms and conditions.

Bathrooms

When a level access shower is being provided, or other works to adapt a bathroom, the following will apply.

Existing toilet and sink will be reused if it is in a functional condition and under 5 years old. Standard white sanitary wear will be used. The w.c. flush and the wash basin tap/s heights and design will be recommended by the Occupational Therapist (OT). Specialist nonslip Altro flooring will be provided for a level access shower room or a shower tray. Shower curtains will be provided for the level access shower areas.

Half height shower screens will be installed with shower curtains when a shower tray is installed. Portable shower screen may also be considered.

When the contractor has been appointed the applicant will have a choice of colour for the shower boarding walls and the specialist nonslip Altro flooring from samples supplied by their chosen contractor. The w.c. can be in situ whilst the works are completed. It will be able to be used after the contractors have left. The toilet will not be available on the day the specialist flooring is laid.

Shower boards will be installed as standard, with 8 meters square being supplied, for the area where the bath or shower has been removed. The cladding may obtain slight surface scratches when being installed. These will be deemed acceptable unless the surface is broken. Clients will be informed about how to look after/clean the cladding and specialist flooring.

The applicant does have the option to request further shower boarding for other areas within the bathroom at their own cost. This will be a direct arrangement with the contractor, if the contractor is willing and able to undertake additional work. If the contractor is able to undertake different/additional works, they will provide a written quote to the applicant for any additional works. The payment must be made directly to the contractor to their terms and conditions. Any additional works must be agreed with the OT and The Technical Officer and be deemed as suitable and unintrusive to the original design. If not agreed funding could be withheld.

The existing bathroom should be of a size to allow for a level access shower area and a turning circle area of 1400 mm turning square, although 1800 mm may be required. This will be determined by the OT's assessment of present and future needs. If this is not possible consideration would be to use part of an adjoining bedroom to expand the floor area of the existing bathroom, subject to structural constraints. Another option would be to open the door outwards or to fit a sliding door. This would provide further useable floor area and should the client fall, would prevent entrapment.

When the OT recommends a wash/dry toilet or Bio-bidet as part of the assessment, the type and style also with heights and positioning relevant to the client will be installed.

To comply with current building regulations and/or any relevant British Standards, relevant extractor fans, lighting and heating will be included within the Grant should the existing items need upgrading or will be fitted. If deemed necessary by the Technical Officer, radiators to the correct BTU to suit the room and can be either a towel rail or standard white radiator.

Where the OT has assessed the need for providing a toilet not in the bathroom, e.g. on the ground floor where the bathroom is upstairs, the existing footprint of the building will be considered. This may mean the area within a dining room or part of a kitchen being sectioned off to provide the facility required. It would be expected for the client to organise the removal of furniture goods to facilitate this need.

Kitchen Adaptations

Full kitchen adaptations will not be undertaken where someone other than the disabled person uses the kitchen. An area for preparing of light meals will be provided for the disabled person with a lowered height/adjustable worktop.

A full adaptation would be considered if the only the disabled person is the main or only user. The OT will assess what is reasonable and necessary on an individual basis such as:

A worksurface altered to the height or position of the sink and/or the style of taps required, electric hob and preparation area.

An Oven housing unit with a height suitable oven with “hide and slide” door with a minimum of worktop space to one side 750mm.

Food storage with direct access, space for a fridge and socket.

Provision of some cupboards and storage units on an essential basis, which have drop down baskets or other appropriate solution for easy access for the disabled person.

Mechanical ventilation in accordance with the current Building Regulations.

Kitchen appliances such as white goods like fridge/freezers and washing machines will NOT be cover under the grant. In exceptional cases, where specialist appliance has been recommended by the OT to meet a need, it would be considered by management.

Kitchen extensions or enlargements to kitchens will only be consider where another room cannot be adapted and suitable space cannot be achieved for turning space for a wheelchair user.

Access to create a driveway or hardstanding, including widening existing drives and dropping kerbs

The site must be suitable to create these facilities and meet any criteria in place within the Highways Service. The land to access the drive must be attached to the property deeds. The adaptation must be supported by an OT assessment for need. The client must be a Blue Badge Holder and have a permanent and substantial disability which inhibits the client or carer to assist the client to gain access to the vehicle, without causing sever distress, pain or detriment to their condition, by which means a wheelchair is required.

Existing Hardstanding not suitable

Where the surface may not be compatible with wheelchair use, impedes the client or carer to move the wheelchair with ease, or a safe drop off area is not available outside the main residence, a DFG can consider facilitating access for the individual from the vehicle drop off point, to the residence, by providing a wider strip of path of solid construction.

No Hardstanding outside the property

Where there is no hardstanding or dropped kerb, the existing vehicle confirmation for transporting the client would be considered in deciding the size of the area required. The Technical Officer would make the final decision after consulting with the client and the OT. Highways would be consulted for approval.

Driveway gates

The consideration for the grant to supply driveway gates to a property will be in exceptional circumstances and fully supported by an OT assessment showing evidence that no other suitable alternatives were available. A child or person with a learning disability, or flight issues would be considered when an extreme highway situation is directly outside the curtilage of the property e.g. a major road, roundabout, a blind bend. These gates would need to be set behind the boundary line to comply with Planning Regulations.

Access to garden/fencing and safe play areas.

Access to a garden can be considered, to enable the disabled person to dry clothes, play, or supervise play or carry out gardening. The specific access would need to be determined by the OT.

Grant assistance will not be given where there is already access to the garden, or part of the garden, suitable for the disabled person to use, unless the access needs to be improved to make it safe for the disabled person to use. A grant will not be provided for the disabled person to access different levels of the garden.

The most cost-effective solution for providing access to both the dwelling and the garden will be provided and wherever possible, one access would be provided to access the dwelling and garden from the rear of the property or from the front door via side access when already in situ.

The grant will be for providing immediate access to the garden and does not include landscaping gardens or fencing to boundaries that should come under ownership maintenance and upkeep etc.

Any major structural or landscaping alterations required by the applicant to enable improved access to the garden must be completed prior to a DFG application being made by the applicant, to enable the HIA to ensure that any further adaptations are safe, reasonable and practicable for the disabled person.

In the case of a child (or in some cases an adult), access to a garden can also include the provision of a safe area to play, if it can be demonstrated that due to their disability, the access created does not make it safe for them. The safe area would be immediately adjacent to the access created and will be no greater than 8 square metres of paved area.

In the case of a child (or in some cases an adult) with a learning disability, fencing will be considered, to this area, if necessary, to maintain the safety of the child (or adult) in the created garden area. An area of 8 square metres would be fenced, if the OT can evidence that it is necessary and appropriate for the child's (or adult's) disability.

Where homes have communal gardens (e.g. blocks of flats served by a single access), grants will not normally be provided for an individual to access the garden unless it can be demonstrated that, because of the disabled person's condition, the travel distance to the garden would be excessive and unreasonable.

A DFG will not be provided to create extensive patio or decked areas, however, the creation of a level flagged area for a wheelchair user would be considered where necessary to meet their needs in accessing the garden. Decking would not be funded under a DFG.

Specialist Equipment

Where the OT has recommended specialist items such as changing tables, specialist baths, padding to a room, specialist windows, and assisted technology, etc. Such items would require approval from Management as they may be so niche that they may require only one quote depending on the disabled person's individual requirements.

Extensions

When it has been determined that the required assessed adaptations cannot be situated within the footprint of the existing building, an extension could be considered. The client is not advised to engage with an architect prior to an assessment by the OT and the T/O. The needs of the disabled person will be the priority, and the funding will only pay for this provision.

The client, OT and T/O will discuss the needs and set a basic plan. These will be to provide the most appropriate and modest design to meet the essential needs of the disabled person.

Costs will be considered at this stage. Consideration to how the adaptation will be funded at this time will need to be agreed. Financial details to access the relevant grants will be required.

The HIA and ASC senior management will be consulted. They would need to approve the basic plan for the adaptation. This does not guarantee that the adaptation would proceed to full approval. A full application would need to be produced and considered. See notes: 11.1

An architect will be involved to oversee the extension. These costs will be included in the Grant but not paid to another architect retrospectively.

Two quotes will be gained from the approved Council list or from the client's own choice. The future proofing of the extension is paramount to the client. All relevant planning and Building Control regulations must be complied with. There is no charge for the plans to be submitted for approval by the chosen architect, from the Planning Department for a DFG adaptation (subsequent plan submitted maybe charged for). Building Control will also not charge for the initial visits.

Should the client make changes to the design without approval in writing from the OT and the T/O, which compromises the adaptation for the disabled person in any way, this could result in the grant being rescinded or withdrawn completely.

Should the client change their mind and wish not to proceed with the Grant at any time after costs have been incurred, the relevant costs, such as architect, fees, structural surveys, drain inspections, incurred by the HIA department would become payable immediately.

The HIA team will work closely with all stakeholders through the process to bring the adaptation to a successful conclusion.

Reviewing Policy

This Policy will be reviewed formally every three years to ensure that it remains responsive to local needs and makes best use of any funding that might become available. However, the Policy is a 'live' document, and it is intended that the mechanisms by which the Council offers assistance will be under development throughout the life of the Policy.

We will monitor and consider the effectiveness of this policy, and it will be subject to reviews as and when appropriate and also to accommodate changes in legislation and as local need and budget dictates.

Minor amendments to the policy may be made following approval by the Director of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder without the need of Cabinet approval or public consultation

Version Control

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0.1	Initial version and amended versions	Revised by Sue Drake	August 2026	Draft