



ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

Key Decision [~~Yes~~/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All

Delivering our Housing Strategy - Discretionary Funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

Report by the Director for Communities

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Adur & Worthing Councils Housing Strategy 'Housing Matters' confirms that we will:

Work with public sector and third sector agencies to identify the risks and drivers that lead to homelessness and develop early help options. This must also include ensuring that we support individuals and families to remain in their homes when health or disability become problematic

- 1.2 This report asks the Joint Strategic Committee to adopt the Interim Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy, which enables the Council to grant discretionary funding and maximise how the Disabled Facility Grant system is used to help people access adaptations to keep them safe, warm, independent and living well in their homes.

- 1.3 Adopting this interim and enabling style policy as part of the wider West Sussex partnership project, will allow the Councils to participate fully in the project and to trial different aspects of grant funding under the auspices of the Better Care Funding allocation. The project will be evaluated at its conclusion to inform any further changes required to the policy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Joint Strategic Committee is recommended to:

- i) approve the draft Interim Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for implementation as part of the wider West Sussex Partnership.
- ii) delegate authority to the Executive Members for Customer Service to approve amendments to the policy and the eligible schemes , following evaluation of the partnership project and the operation of the Interim Policy.

3. Context

- 3.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are governed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. This Act explicitly covers mandatory DFGs which require authorities to offer assistance once the recommendation for an adaptation has fulfilled the criteria of being 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practical'. Applicants have to satisfy a Test of Resources regarding their income and savings, which determines whether they will be required to contribute towards a grant.
- 3.2 In 2002 Central Government introduced the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 ("the RRO"). This was designed to provide freedom and opportunities for local authorities to address housing issues and repealed much of the prescriptive legislation that was in place at that time, and replaced it with a new wide-ranging power to provide assistance for housing renewal.
- 3.3 In 2008-9 the scope of the RRO was extended to include use of the DFG money, enabling local housing authorities to use specific DFG funding for wider purposes.
- 3.4 In order to make use of the RRO, a local authority must comply with the following conditions:
- a. There must be a formally adopted policy in place, which sets out how the authority intends to use its powers;
 - b. There must be notice to the public that a policy is in force;
 - c. They must ensure that a copy of the full policy is available to the public for free at the council offices;
 - d. There must be a summary document available on request (though a small charge to cover costs may be allowed).

- 3.5 In 2014, the Government introduced the Better Care Fund (BCF) which pooled a number of existing funding streams and is administered by Health and Wellbeing Boards. District housing authorities however, retain the statutory duty to provide adaptations to the homes of people who qualify for a mandatory DFGs. In the related 'Policy Framework' upper-tier authorities are compelled to pass on the DFG funding from the pooled budget to enable housing authorities to continue to meet this mandatory duty. Conditions to this effect have been added to the DFG Conditions of Grant Usage (under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003).
- 3.6 The funding available to District councils has increased and will remain at higher levels until 2020. Consequently the Councils are now in a position to offer discretionary grants to enable a wider group of people access to adaptations that will keep them safe, warm and living well in their homes, with the added benefit of reducing the risk of homelessness amongst a vulnerable group.

4. Issues for consideration

- 4.1 In 2016/17, a partnership project between West Sussex County Council and the District and Boroughs 'Supporting people in their own homes' was commenced. As part of this project, District and Borough leads have developed a range of ideas to support the introduction of discretionary DFGs, which are funded by the BCF and will be common across West Sussex.
- 4.2 Although some changes apply to the way in which applications are processed and can be introduced by officers, other options increase the payments that can be made and the eligible works and so require approval by elected members.
- 4.3 Examples of the ways that the proposed interim policy for discretionary DFGs will benefit applicants within Adur & Worthing include:
- a) *Reductions in the number of quotes*
Using one quote for common, simple adaptations such as stairlifts, ramps and flush floor showers. This will reduce waiting time for straight-forward works.
 - b) *Referrals from private occupational therapists (OTs) and direct referrals*
This will allows applicants to either self refer or use private OTs that reduces the impact on WSCC OTs and reduces waiting time.

- c) *Partial waiver of contribution following a mandatory 'test of resources'*
This will allow the authority to cover up to £5000 of any contribution and will benefit families in work but with on very low incomes and perhaps most importantly, reduces the risk of customers not proceeding with an application that could have far reaching benefits.
- d) *Funding in excess of maximum mandatory grant of £30,000*
This will provides a simple, timely and less complicated system of progressing major adaptations which have been identified as essential to meet the disabled person and their family's needs, once all other options (such as moving) have been considered.

- 4.4 In response to potential questions regarding these proposals it is worth noting that the vast majority of applicants for DFGs are in receipt of means-tested benefits and are not subject to the mandatory test of resources and will not have a contribution to make.
- 4.5 Removing obstacles to the uptake of an adaptation, including help with contributions, means that works can be delivered more quickly to make a property safe and suitable for the applicant to remain in their home for longer.
- 4.6 The costs incurred through the delivery of these interventions is more than offset by the savings made in preventing prospective hospital or care home admissions.
- 4.7 The Partnership Project is a dynamic process and changes may need to be made to the Policy as data is analysed and indicate what options are making a tangible difference to the customer and whether other options may need to be introduced. Hence the recommendations made in this report.

5. Engagement and Communication

- 5.1 The proposals were developed as part of the partnership project between West Sussex County Council and the District and Boroughs 'Supporting people in their own homes'. Each member of the Partnership is seeking to have agreement to these measure so that a common set of behaviours applies across West Sussex.
- 5.2 The proposed policy will be published on the Council's website and a hard copy made available for viewing in Council offices as required.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Over the past four years the Councils have allocated and spent the following amounts on DFGs:

Adur District Council

Year	Budget £	Actual Expenditure £	Grant funding Received £
2014/15	402,380	378,399	242,548
2015/16	400,000	413,530	293,283
2016/17	336,470	192,283	511,693
2017/18	437,160	191,123 (To Date)	588,137

Worthing Borough Council:

Year	Budget £	Actual Expenditure £	Grant funding Received £
2014/15	775,000	716,405	450,811
2015/16	725,000	586,213	550,094
2016/17	750,000	572,081	986,915
2017/18	927,920	519,237 (To Date)	1,079,802

6.2 The mandatory DFG and proposed Discretionary DFG will be fully funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF) allocation from WSCC. Offers of discretionary funding grants are dependent upon funding remaining available through the BCF.

6.3 The Repair Grant Assistance and Landlords Repair Grant Assistance will be funded through existing capital allocations contained within the capital programme.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 Mandatory DFGs are available from local authorities under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. DFGs are subject to a means test and are available for essential adaptations to provide disabled people with better freedom of movement into and around their homes, and improved access to essential facilities with the home. Section 24(3) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 provides that

“A local housing authority shall not approve an application for a grant unless they are satisfied—

(a) that the relevant works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, and

(b) that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant works having regard to the age and condition of

(i) the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home, or

(ii) the building”.

7.2 Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 contains a general power that enables Housing Authorities to provide discretionary assistance with regards to repairs, improvements and provision of accommodation and the adaptation of properties.

7.3 The limitation on provision of discretionary assistance is that it any such assistance must be used in accordance with a policy that has been adopted and publicised (Article 4 of the Order).

7.4 Article 3 of the The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 extended the scope of the 2002 order.

7.5 In reaching a decision the authority will consider the following factors for the proposed adaptations or improvements, i.e. whether the works:

- are needed to provide for a care plan to be implemented which will enable the disabled occupant to remain living in their existing home as independently as possible;
- would meet, as far as possible, the assessed needs of the disabled person taking into account both their medical and physical needs; and
- distinguish between what is desirable and possible legitimate aspirations of the disabled person, and what is actually needed and for which grant support is fully justified.

7.6 In all the circumstances to enable the Council to apply discretionary funding, it is necessary in accordance with the 2002 Order to have in place an appropriate policy, which has been formally adopted, publicised and available for inspection.

Background Papers

- Interim Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

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Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

- The delivery of timely adaptations, repairs and improvements reduces the cost incurred by society through hospital or care home admissions or the delivery of care packages

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- The Housing Assistance Policy helps provide repairs, improvements and adaptations to the homes of many of the most vulnerable residents of Adur & Worthing and helps deliver our Housing Strategy and ambitions outline in the Councils three year strategy 'Platforms for Our Places'

2.2 Equality Issues

- The Housing Assistance Policy aids the more vulnerable residents of the Councils, including the elderly and disabled.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- "Matter considered and no issues identified."

2.4 Human Rights Issues

- "Matter considered and no issues identified."

3. Environmental

- "Matter considered and no issues identified."

4. Governance

- The Policy helps deliver our Housing Strategy.
- The policy impacts upon Our Social Economy in respect of the supply of safe homes.



INTERIM PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. Poor quality housing can have an impact on the health of the occupants and on the quality of life in an area. The housing stock is also a national asset and action has to be taken to protect and enhance that asset.

1.2. This policy aims to:

- Enable owner-occupiers, and private sector tenants with repairing obligations, to carry out repairs and improvements to their homes.
- Enable landlords to access funding for repairs or improvement of properties on the proviso that the Councils obtain benefit from such a financial arrangement.
- Enable people, particularly older persons and disabled persons, to remain in their own property.

1.3. The Council's view is that it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own properties and, where owners can afford to undertake repairs and maintenance using their own resources, they should be encouraged to do so. There are, however, good reasons for the Council to assist vulnerable and poorer homeowners with repairs and improvements, especially where this benefits health, protects the property or allows people to remain in their own homes.

2. Assistance to be Provided

2.1. Using the forms of assistance detailed below, the Councils intend to make the best use of the funds they have available to improve the quality of housing, and thereby the quality of life, within their areas.

2.2. The funding of assistance to those in the private sector is discretionary (with the exception of the mandatory element of Disabled Facilities Grants) and is financially limited through an annual budget set by the Councils, which is based upon the Better Care Funding allocated by West Sussex County Council.

2.3 Discretionary schemes will only be considered while there is sufficient funding available within the financial year and may be removed at short notice

3. Categories of Assistance

3.1. In some cases loan finance will not be appropriate, for example where there is insufficient equity in a property against which to raise a secured loan, or where the amount required is too small to justify raising a secured loan. Where loan finance is not available, and subject to conditions, the Council will make the following financial assistance available:

4. Repair Grant Assistance

4.1. Repair Grant Assistance will be available to vulnerable/disadvantaged households in receipt of a means tested benefit i.e.

- Income Support,
- Housing Benefit,
- Council Tax Support,
- Employment and Support Allowance with an income related component,
- Guaranteed Pension Credit,
- Working & Child Tax Credit (with an income of less than £15,050)

In addition

- Applicants must be aged 18 years of over.
- Live in the dwelling as their only residence.
- Be owner/occupiers (holding title) or long-term tenants with a repairing responsibility under their tenancy agreement or occupy the dwelling under a right of exclusive occupation granted for life or for a period of more than 5 years.
- Have occupied the dwelling for a minimum period of 12 months

4.2. Works for which repair grant assistance is available include:

- Works to rectify a dangerous/defective electrical installation
- Repair/replacement of defective/obsolete boilers which provide space heating and/or domestic hot water, if there is no alternative scheme available to fund a new boiler.
- Repair/replacement of a defective electric immersion heater. Where there is no other means of providing domestic hot water.

- Works to make a property wind and watertight.
 - Replacement of defective wall ties.
 - Works to rectify serious rising or penetrating dampness.
 - Works to rectify/improve internal arrangement within a dwelling, which is likely to cause serious harm to the occupants.
 - Replacing front doors to flats for fire safety.
- 4.3. Repair Grant Assistance will be offered up to a maximum of £5,000 and will be organised through the Adur & Worthing Home Improvement Assistance (AWHIA) team.
- 4.4. Typically, within any three-year period, only one application for Repair Grant Assistance will be considered, unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case any such requests will be reported to a Grant Assessment Panel for consideration.
- 4.5. If the property is disposed of within a five year period after completion of the works, a proportion of any grant paid will be required to be repaid, based on a sliding scale. The sliding scale of repayment shall be as follows:-
- Within one year – full repayment of the full grant amount.
- 1-2 years – repayment of 80%
 - 2-3 years – repayment of 60%
 - 3-4 years – repayment of 40%
 - 4-5 years – repayment of 20%
- 4.6. If the property is disposed of after a five year period no proportion of the grant is required to be repaid?.

5. Landlord's Repair Grant Assistance

- 5.1. Landlord's repair grant assistance will be available where the owner of a dwelling is carrying out works to a property with the intention of letting the property.
- 5.2. Access to the landlord's repair grant assistance is dependent upon the landlord either offering the Council nomination rights, or entering into a Private Sector Lease agreement with the Council, for a period of up to four years.
- 5.3. Works for which Landlord's repair grant assistance is available include:

- Works to rectify a dangerous/defective electrical installation
- Repair/replacement of defective/obsolete boilers which provide space heating and/or domestic hot water, if there is no alternative scheme available to fund a new boiler.
- Repair/replacement of a defective electric immersion heater. Where there is no other means of providing domestic hot water.
- Works to make a property wind and watertight.
- Replacement of defective wall ties.
- Works to rectify serious rising or penetrating dampness.
- Works to rectify/improve internal arrangement within a dwelling, which is likely to cause serious harm to the occupants.
- Works to substantially improve the internal decorative repair of the property

5.4. Landlord's repair grant assistance will be offered up to a maximum of £5,000 and will be organised through the Adur & Worthing Home Improvement Assistance (AWHIA) team, subject to agreement with the Private Sector Options Officer.

5.5. The factors affecting the maximum amount of grant that will be made available include the size and location of the dwelling and the number of bedrooms available for legal use.

5.6. If the property is disposed of within a five year period after completion of the works, or any break clause in the lease is activated, a proportion of any grant paid will be required to be repaid, based on a sliding scale. The sliding scale of repayment shall be as follows:-

- Within one year – full repayment of the full grant amount.
- 1-2 years – repayment of 80%
- 2-3 years – repayment of 60%
- 3-4 years – repayment of 40%

4-5 years – repayment of 20% If the property is disposed of after a five year period no proportion of the grant is required to be repaid?.

6. Disabled Facilities Grants

- 6.1. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants will be made available in accordance with the statute.
- 6.2. Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants will be made in accordance with the tables contained in Appendix 1 to this Policy.
- 6.3. Discretionary funding is made subject to the availability of appropriate levels of funding and may be withdrawn or suspended at any time.

7. Operation of Assistance - General

7.1. The following provides advice on the general framework of the financial assistance policy. For issues outside this policy regard will be (given?) had to the legislation and Government guidance.

7.2. Enquiries and Applications for Assistance

7.2.1. The Council's Private Sector Housing team, including the AWHIA, will operate a preliminary enquiry system to advise people of their options.

7.2.2. An application for assistance shall be in a form prescribed by the Council and shall include:-

- Full particulars including, where relevant, plans and specifications of the works for which the assistance is sought.
- Evidence to support the financial assessment or proof of receipt of benefit.
- Estimates from at least two separate contractors of the cost carrying out the works, unless the Council otherwise directs in any particular case.
- Particulars of any professional fees and other charges which relate to the preparation for and the carrying out of the works.
- Proof that the applicant is an owner or a tenant of the dwelling.
- Consent, in writing, from all owners of the dwelling to the carrying out of the works.
- Where appropriate, Certificates of Occupancy.
- A copy of all necessary permissions. e.g. Building Regulation approval, planning permission, party wall agreement.

7.2.3. The information above may be provided as part of the agency service provided by AWHIA.

7.3. Applications after Commencement or Completion of Works

7.3.1. The Council will not normally approve an application for assistance where the works have begun or been completed prior to approval.

7.4. Age Limits

7.4.1. The Council will not consider an application for assistance when the property concerned was built or provided by conversion less than ten years before the date of application, except in the case of a disabled adaptation.

7.4.2. Applicants must be aged 18 years or over on the date of application to be eligible for assistance.

7.5. Owner's Interest

7.5.1. The Council will not consider an application for assistance unless the applicant has an owner's interest in all the land on which the relevant works are to be carried out. An owner's interest means a freehold interest or a leasehold interest where there is at least ten years of the lease left to run. Householders in shared equity schemes will be regarded as having an owner's interest, provided that the scheme involves at the outset the grant of a long lease.

7.6. Assistance to Tenants

7.6.1. Repair Grant Assistance will be available to tenants where they have a relevant repairing obligation.

7.6.2. Tenants will need to provide written permission from the property owner in order to apply for assistance.

7.6.3. Disabled Facilities Grants are available to tenants, as prescribed by statute.

7.7. Certificates and Conditions of Occupation

7.7.1. All applications for assistance must be accompanied by a completed certificate relating to the future occupation of the property, as follows:-

- Owner Occupation Certificate certifies (certifying?) that the applicant has an owner's interest in a dwelling and that they intend to live in the dwelling as their only or main residence from the certified date. The certified date is the date certified by the Council on which eligible works were satisfactorily completed. The conditions relating to the certificate shall be registered as a local land charge in relation to the property and are binding on the owner or successive owners.
- Where there is a change in ownership or occupation compared with that recorded on the Owner Occupation Certificate, the grant will be repayable except where the change is considered to be an exempt disposal.
- Landlord's Certificate of Intended Letting certifies (certifying?) that the applicant has an owner's interest in the dwelling and intends to, or already has, let the dwelling as a residence for a period of at least five years, beginning on the certified date, to someone who is not a member of his family and on a tenancy which is not a long tenancy. These provisions apply equally to situations where a dwelling is already let, and will continue to be let, after the grant works are carried out and to those where letting will only commence or resume after works have been carried out. There may be a number of individual successive lettings during the five-year period.

7.8. Amount of Assistance

7.8.1. The policy specifies the maximum amount that may be paid in respect of an application for assistance.

7.8.2. The Council will take into account the following matters when determining the estimated expense and calculating the grant:-

- Which of the relevant works are eligible for assistance - the "eligible works"; ("Eligible works" means works agreed by the Council. These

would normally include works required to alleviate serious risks to health and safety and to put the property into a reasonable state of repair, or adaptations as specified by the Occupational Therapist.

- The amount of expenses that are properly to be incurred in the execution of the eligible works.
- The costs properly attributable to the preliminary or ancillary services or charges, incurred in relation to the application.
- The amount of assistance that will be paid will be subject to the elements set out above, the means test and criteria applying to specific assistance detailed in the policy.

7.9. Decision and Notification

7.9.1. The Council will notify an applicant for assistance whether the application is approved or refused. The notification will be in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event, not later than six months after the date of the application concerned.

7.9.2. If the application is approved the notification will also specify the works which are eligible for assistance, the value of the assistance and the form that the assistance will take, and any contribution by the applicant.

7.9.3. If the application is refused, the Council will at the same time explain the reasons for the refusal and the procedure for appealing against the decision.

7.9.4. If the Council is satisfied that owing to circumstances beyond the control of the applicant, the cost of the assisted works has increased or decreased, they may re-determine the amount of the assistance and notify the applicant accordingly.

7.10. Supervision of Works

7.10.1. The responsibility for supervision of the works rests with the applicant unless they appoint a professional adviser or agent for that purpose. Although the Council may assist the applicant to secure a contractor, this does not constitute a recommendation.

7.10.2. The Council does not accept any responsibility for supervision of the works.

7.11. Payment of Assistance: Conditions as to Carrying Out of the Works

7.11.1. The assistance will only be paid if -

- The eligible works are completed within twelve months from the date of approval, or such further period as the Council may allow.
- The eligible works are carried out in accordance with such specifications as the Council determines.
- The eligible works are carried out by one of the contractors whose estimates accompanied the application.
- The eligible works are executed to the satisfaction of the Council.
- The Council is provided with an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt for payment for the works and any professional fees and other charges. For this purpose an invoice, demand or receipt is acceptable if it satisfies the Council and is **not** given by the applicant or a member of his family.

7.12. Payment of Assistance

7.12.1. The Council will normally pay the assistance direct to the contractor either in instalments as work proceeds, or in one lump sum following completion of the works. The Council will not normally pay more than three instalment payments and where the grant is paid in instalments, the aggregate amount of grant paid at any point prior to the completion of the eligible works, must not exceed nine-tenths of the amount of the grant.

7.12.2. Where assistance is payable but the eligible works have not been executed to the satisfaction of the applicant, the Council may, at the applicant's request and if they consider it appropriate to do so, withhold payment from the contractor.

7.12.3. In cases where the applicant has a contribution to make, they should make arrangements with the contractor for payment.

7.13. Repayment Where Applicant Not Entitled to Assistance

7.13.1. If an application for assistance is approved but it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant (or, in the case of a joint application, any of the applicants) was not, at the time the application was approved, entitled to assistance of that description, no payment shall be made or, as the case may be, no further instalments shall be paid and the Council may demand that any payments that have already been made be repaid forthwith, together with interest from the date on which they were paid until repayment, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine.

7.14. Conditions for Repayment of Assistance

7.14.1. If an owner of the dwelling to which the application relates ceases to be the owner before the works are completed, they shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of any assistance that has been paid.

7.14.2. Where an Owner Occupation certificate is required, when an owner of the dwelling(s) to which the application relates ceases to be the owner, they shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of assistance that has been paid.

7.14.3. If an owner of the dwelling(s) to which the application relates, having undertaken to let the dwelling(s), ceases to let the dwelling(s) in accordance with his undertaking, within five years from the date the works were completed, they shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of assistance that has been paid. (Is there any scaling or is it full repayment?)

7.14.4. Where assistance has been provided in accordance with Repair Grant Assistance, if an owner of the dwelling to which the application relates ceases to be the owner, they shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of assistance that has been paid. Repayment will not be required when the property is disposed of to provide an annuity income and the person concerned is entitled to continue to occupy the premises as their only, or main, residency, or where the person to whom the disposal is made is the spouse or partner or member of the family, and they have lived in the property for at least three years prior to the disposal.

7.14.5. A disposal of the property is a conveyance of the freehold or the assignment of the lease or the grant of a long lease for a term of more than twenty years, other than at a rack rent.

7.14.6. Where the Council has the right to demand repayment but there are extenuating circumstances, they may determine not to demand repayment or to demand a lesser amount.

7.14.7. Where the Council demands repayment, it will be no more than the amount of assistance paid.

7.14.8. The Council will not demand repayment in respect of mandatory disabled facility grants.

7.15. Requiring Information

7.15.1. In order to satisfy itself as to the manner in which a dwelling is being occupied or in relation to any other conditions of the assistance, the Council can require the owner or occupier to provide, within 21 days, a statement detailing how the property is occupied and/or details of any other information relevant to the application or grant conditions.

7.15.2. It is a condition of the assistance that the owner/occupier complies with this requirement and failure to do so may result in the Council requiring repayment of the grant.

7.16. Additional Conditions

7.16.1. Where the Council is considering an application for assistance they may impose additional conditions with the consent of the applicant, prior to approval.

7.16.2. The additional conditions may include, but are not restricted to:-

- Applicant to make contribution towards the eligible works.
- Right of the Council to nominate tenants to the living accommodation.
- Right of the Council to recover specialised equipment when no longer needed.

- Appointment of managing agents to let the living accommodation.
- Living accommodation to be maintained in good repair after the eligible works have been completed.

7.16.3. Breach of any of these additional conditions shall give the Council the right to demand repayment of the assistance.

7.17. Security for Assistance

7.17.1. Any condition above, which creates a liability to repay the assistance, shall be a local land charge.

7.17.2. The liability to repay any assistance may be discharged at any time by paying to the Council a sum equal to the amount of assistance or such lesser sum as the Council may agreed.

7.18. Applications outside the Policy

7.18.1. Where an application is received by the Council for financial assistance for private sector housing renewal but which falls outside this policy, the application will be considered on its merits by the Private Sector Housing Manager. The Private Sector Housing Manager has the discretion to approve any assistance where there is only a minor deviation from the policy having regard to the particular circumstances of the applicant. All other applications outside of the policy will be referred to the Grant Panel for their consideration.

7.19. Advice

7.19.1. The Council is committed to making advice and information available, either directly or through other partner agencies, in order to assist residents. The advice and information will be impartial and transparent.

7.19.2. Adur and Worthing Council staff will not provide financial advice. Anybody who needs such advice will be guided towards independent financial advisers. It will be made clear to anybody who

may need to raise a loan that they should seek independent financial advice before entering into any commitments.

7.20. Enforcement

7.20.1. In addition to the assistance detailed in this policy, the Council will continue to use its statutory powers to enforce standards in privately owned housing where appropriate.

7.20.2. Enforcement action in respect of individual properties shall be at the discretion of the Private Sector Housing Manager as complaints or other situations arise.

7.20.3. Enforcement action in respect of houses in multiple occupation shall be issued at the discretion of the Private Sector Housing Manager as complaints or other situations arise.

8. Policy Implementation

8.1. This policy will be subject to ongoing monitoring and will be reviewed annually, unless there is some event, consideration or legislation change that necessitates an earlier review.

8.2. This policy was produced in November 2017.



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Appendix A

Discretionary Disabled Facility Grants - options available for use by Adur & Worthing Councils

The aim of these grants is to maximise how the DFG is used within the current mandatory legislation to help people access adaptations to keep safe, warm and living well in their homes, and meet the DFG Project Purpose:

Help me to live in my own home easily and with dignity, with the right adaptation, when I need it.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) priorities for service provision are:

- **Person centred** - designed around the individual and delivered close to home.
- **Proactive and preventative** - helping people stay healthy and remain independent.
- **Responsive and co-ordinated** - provided in a seamless way that minimises admissions to hospital.
- **Supportive** - when someone is admitted to hospital the system will support them to recover and return home as soon as they are ready.
- **Integrated** - with organisations working together in innovative ways to provide health and social care services.

NB the following will be considered for those people who are eligible for the DFG and on the condition that the adaptation has been assessed as being necessary and appropriate, reasonable and practicable and supported by a WSCC Occupational Therapist (OT) or OT Assistant (OTA) under the supervision of a registered OT.

Description	Conditions and narrative	Subject to Means Test	Amount Available	Reasoning & rationale
<p><u>Extended warranties:</u></p> <p>For all adaptations which require electrical installations such as through-floor lifts, step lifts, stair lifts, closomats etc.</p>	<p>To be provided for all such adaptations regardless of tenure.</p> <p>Some Registered Housing Providers (RHP) take on responsibility for servicing and repairs once the standard 1 year warrantee expires and therefore extended warrantees will not be offered in these circumstances.</p> <p>Minimum 5 year warranty with the option of extending at the end of the period.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Within the current maximum DFG £30,000</p>	<p>Gives families peace of mind and timely / stress free assistance if the adaptation should break down.</p> <p>Allows people to live well in their home for as long as possible.</p> <p>Helps to reduce repeat DFG applications for repair or replacement of adaptions.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to how customer can be supported once the warranty expires.</p>
<p><u>Reduction in number of quotes</u></p> <p>Aim to use 1 quote where appropriate for common, simple adaptations such as stairlifts, ramps and lifts.</p>	<p>Two or more quotes to be sought for adaptations where a single contractor is carrying out work or multiple works expected to total over £10,000.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Reduce applicant waiting time for straight forward adaptions which can be completed quicker.</p> <p>Grant officers to use professional judgement and discretion.</p>

<p><u>Referrals from privately practicing Occupational Therapists</u></p>	<p>Mandatory DFG legislation states that District & Boroughs must consult the social services authority</p> <p>Standard letter to be used. District & Boroughs to proceed with DFG if no response from the social services authority within 14 days.</p> <p>Letters to be sent by District and Boroughs to Senior Practitioner OT at locality offices, not to Adult Care Point 2 (ACP2).</p> <p>Applicants must give consent for their personal details and the recommendation to be shared with WSCC as the social services authority.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Up to current maximum DFG £30,000</p>	<p>Customer has choice as to whether to appoint a private OT</p> <p>Timely option for simple adaptations as not subject to social services authority waiting times.</p>
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<p><u>Direct Referrals</u></p> <p>WSSC to make direct referrals to the District or Borough for adaptation via the DFG if identified at initial assessment stage</p>	<p>Currently, ACP2 carry out initial assessments over the telephone with customers or their representatives. If a shower or stairlift is indicated and the person does not have complex medical conditions, the referral will be made directly to the District or Borough to proceed with the DFG.</p> <p>A standard referral form will be used by WSSC using existing IT case management system.</p> <p>The adaptation to be reviewed by a WSSC OT/A once complete and any other needs addressed.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Up to current maximum DFG £30,000</p>	<p>Reduces waiting time for straight forward adaptations.</p> <p>Good relationships exist between WSSC and District and Boroughs which ensure that advice can be sought at any time throughout the process. Similarly, review of adaptation to be carried out once complete by OT/A.</p> <p>Grant officers are generally skilled and experienced in planning for simple shower adaptations. Our contractors can recommend specific stairlifts to meet simple needs.</p>
<p><u>Partial waiver of contribution following means test</u></p>	<p>Eligible for DFG</p> <p>Assists every applicant with a contribution regardless of tenure.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Maximum waiver of first £5,000 of assessed contribution.</p>	<p>Most benefit will be for families in work but on a low income, those who have little to no disposable income or those paying off debt or with a poor credit history.</p> <p>Likelihood that this will help most people with smaller contributions to access necessary adaptations.</p>

<p><u>Help with assessed contribution following means test.</u></p>	<p>Based on WSCC “Financial Statement for Funding Towards Home Adaptations”</p> <p>In cases where there is particular difficulty paying an assessed contribution, applicants will be given the opportunity to complete a financial statement of their income and outgoings which will be considered by the District and Borough Council.</p> <p>Offered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Council Council.</p>	<p>Yes - first £5000 of contribution to be waived</p>	<p>No maximum</p>	<p>Takes outgoings, debt repayments etc. into consideration and offered on a discretionary basis.</p> <p>Reduces risk of customer not proceeding with necessary adaptations because they cannot afford the assessed contribution.</p> <p>Single, timely and less complicated system for customers.</p>
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<p><u>Funding in excess of current maximum mandatory grant of £30,000</u></p> <p>(replaces current Top Up process)</p>	<p>Eligible for the DFG and considered on a case by case basis</p> <p>A charge for the full amount will be placed on owner occupied property for a 10 year period</p> <p>Charges will not apply to Registered Housing Provider (RHP) or privately rented property. (This approach is consistent with the DFG Land Charge powers that were introduced in 2008).</p> <p>Condition that RHPs register the property as being adapted and offer it to other families in need of the adaptations, should the property become vacant.</p> <p>District & Boroughs to seek permission from members to offer further funding, on a case by case basis should total cost of works exceed £60,000</p>	<p>Yes - first £5000 of contribution to be waived</p>	<p>Up to a maximum of £30,000 (total of £60,000)</p>	<p>Single, timely and less complicated system for customers.</p> <p>Major adaptations which have been identified as essential to meet the disabled person and their family's needs & once all other options (such as moving) have been considered.</p> <p>Good collaboration between District and Borough Council and the local authority to ensure money is spent appropriately.</p>
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<p><u>Relocation Grant</u></p> <p>To support people when moving to more suitable accommodation is preferable to adaptations.</p>	<p>Eligible for DFG</p> <p>Available to owner occupiers and private tenants where it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt the property to meet the disabled person's assessed needs.</p> <p>Conditions:</p> <p>The proposed property must be confirmed as suitable by the Private Sector / Housing Standards Teams and be assessed to meet the needs (or more easily adaptable to do so) of the disabled person by the social services authority OT.</p> <p>Owner occupiers to commit to remain in the property for five years (not applicable for private tenants)</p>	<p>Yes - first £5000 of contribution to be waived</p>	<p>Maximum of £10,000 to cover the costs arising from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> estate agents fees (limited to a maximum of 1.5% of the property value) stamp duty (limited to a maximum amount of £7,500) solicitors fees valuation fees mortgage arrangement fees removal costs necessary utility and service set up costs Minor adaptations to enhance the property's suitability. 	<p>Assists disabled and vulnerable people to move to more suitable accommodation particularly where adaptations cannot be carried out or the property is over occupied.</p>
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<p><u>Hospital Discharge Grants</u></p> <p>Support all vulnerable or disabled people being discharged from hospital</p>	<p>Available to all vulnerable or disabled people needing to be discharged home from hospital, regardless of tenure.</p> <p>Conditions:-</p> <p>Referrals accepted from adult social care or hospital OT / physiotherapists , rehabilitation/intermediate care teams, discharge coordinator, or Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)</p> <p>Excludes packages of care funded by NHS continuing healthcare</p> <p>Works to include but not restricted to: property clearance, deep cleaning, urgent home repairs, removal of hazards, repair of heating systems, and provision of emergency heating.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Maximum of £3000 (negotiable on a case by case basis dependent on type of works required)</p>	<p>Reduce delayed transfers of care where home is not suitable for discharge home from hospital.</p> <p>Reduce re-admissions to hospital.</p> <p>Acknowledges that inappropriate housing puts health and wellbeing at risk.</p>
<p><u>DFG Fees Grant</u></p> <p>Available when DFG does not proceed but preparatory work has been carried out</p>	<p>Eligible for DFG.</p> <p>To cover reasonable professional fees and associated charges such as private OT fees where engaged to advise on what works are required and specialist technical e.g. Structural Engineer fees, surveyor fees or similar to determine if a DFG project is feasible.</p>	<p>Yes (including children's cases)</p> <p>First £5000 of contribution to be waived</p>	<p>Maximum of £2,000</p>	<p>Encourages local surveyors / engineers to work with District & Boroughs.</p> <p>Encourages improved schemes to be considered, so better outcome for the disabled person.</p> <p>Does not financially disadvantage the disabled person if works cannot proceed.</p> <p>Single, less complicated system for customers.</p>

<p><u>Safe and warm homes grant.</u></p> <p>Assists disabled & vulnerable people, including those with dementia or a visual impairment to make changes which supports them to live in their own home with reduced risk and for longer.</p> <p>To help low income home owners and private tenants to quickly access financial assistance for a wide range of minor adaptations and repairs to reduce risks of accidents in the home</p>	<p>Eligible for DFG. For all disabled people regardless of tenure.</p> <p>Referrals accepted from WSCC OT/A, adult social care or hospital teams, hospital based OTs, advocates, voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>Excludes care packages</p> <p>Includes:- Repairs to all disabled equipment (excluding equipment provided by the West Sussex Community Equipment Service (CES))</p> <p>Minor equipment and adaptations where CES cannot provide assistance.</p> <p>Repairs to boilers and other heating systems.</p>	<p>Yes - first £5000 of contribution to be waived</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Normally maximum of £5000</p> <p>Negotiable on a case by case basis dependent on type of works required. If works cost over £5000 then means test will be applied but first £5000 contribution will be waived.</p>	<p>Enables necessary works including repairs which have a direct positive impact on a disabled person's health.</p> <p>To help low income home owners and private tenants to quickly access financial assistance for a wide range of minor adaptations and repairs.</p> <p>To reduce risks of accidents in the home.</p>

<p><u>Council Tax Reduction to be considered a DFG passport benefit</u></p>	<p>Eligible for DFG.</p> <p>Treat Council Tax Reduction as a passport benefit under a Discretionary DFG scheme.</p>	<p>No – applicants in receipt of this benefit will not be means tested.</p>	<p>Normally up to a maximum of £30,000</p>	<p>Anticipated to help the small number of people in sole receipt of this benefit to access necessary adaptations.</p>
<p><u>Tech Grant</u></p> <p>Technology enabled care eg life line, fall detectors, key safes – for purchasing equipment and monthly fee to connect with call centre (if required)</p>	<p>Eligible for DFG.</p> <p>Available to all disabled applicants regardless of tenure.</p> <p>For a period up to 5 years</p> <p>This assistance will only be available in cases where there is particular difficulty paying the monthly rental charges, applicants will be given the opportunity to complete a financial statement of their income and outgoings which will be considered by the District and Borough Council.</p> <p>Based on WSCC “Financial Statement for Funding Towards Home Adaptations”</p> <p>Offered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the District or Borough Council.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Maximum of £3000</p>	<p>Supports a technology based approach to keeping people safe and well in their homes.</p>