

Private Sector Housing Team



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

2020

Disabled Facilities Grant

Private Sector Renewal & Disabled Adaptations Policy 2020

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is to assist you or someone living with you who has a substantial disability and is unable to use essential facilities in your home (like the bathroom, stairs or kitchen). The grant may help you with works to adapt your home to make it easier for you to get around and live more independently.

How much Grant is available?

The maximum grant available is £30,000.

The grant is Means Tested - How much you get will depend on the cost of the work and your personal financial circumstances.

What are the Grant conditions?

The following conditions apply:

- All work must be completed within 12 months of your grant being approved.
- Your property needs to be adequately insured during the grant conditions period of 10 years.
- You or a member of your family intends to live in the property as your only or main residence throughout the grant condition period of 10 years.
- A Local Land Charge will be registered against the property for works over £5,000 for 10 years – If the property is sold within this period the Council will demand repayment of the grant between £5,000 & £15,000 for an amount not greater than £10,000.
- If you withdraw from the grant after it has been approved, you may be liable for any fees and costs the Council has incurred.

What works can be covered under the Grant?

A DFG can be used to pay for adaptations such as:

- Stair lift so you can use stairs safely
- Ramps and widening doors to help you get in/out of your home
- Lowering worktops in your kitchen so you can prepare your own meals.
- Level access shower/adapting your bathroom so you can use it safely.

Who can apply for the grant?

Home Owner, Private Tenant or Housing Association Tenant can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant for yourself, on behalf of a disabled person living in your home or as the parent/carer of a disabled child.

If you are a Reading Borough Council tenant please contact your Housing Officer.

How do I apply for the Grant?

- The first step is to contact Adult Social Care or Brighter Futures for Children if the adaptation is to support a disabled person under 18 years.
- Adult Social Care/Brighter Futures for Children will ask you about the difficulties you are experiencing and what you would like to be able to achieve. This initial assessment will help us to understand your situation and offer the most appropriate information, advice and support.
- If this initial assessment suggests that adaptations may be appropriate you will be referred to an Occupational Therapist (OT) who will visit you at home to carry out a more in-depth assessment and advise you on adaptations that are “necessary and appropriate” to meet your care and support needs, that can help you live as independently as possible and/or help others to care for you safely.
- If your Occupational Therapist considers that adaptations are an option, they will refer you to the Private Sector Housing Team to arrange a ‘Preliminary Test of Resources’ or Means Test to find out if you have a contribution to pay towards the cost of the works. Should you have to pay a contribution towards the cost of the works, your OT will check to see if you wish to continue. If you are receiving a qualifying means tested benefit or if the adaptations are for a disabled child, you will not need to be means tested. (*Income Support, Housing Benefit, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit (income limit £16,190), Working Tax Credit (income limit £16,190), Guaranteed Pension Credit, Income Based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Universal Credit and any other benefits deemed as means tested in the future*).
- If the proposed adaptation is a stairlift **only** then no means test will be carried out.
- The Occupational Therapist will refer you to the Private Sector Housing Team outlining the adaptations that are considered “necessary and appropriate” to meet your assessed needs.
- The Private Sector Housing Team will contact you to arrange for the Grant Application forms to be completed as well as a survey to be carried out by the Technical Officer for the suggested adaptations to ensure the works is “reasonable and practical”.
- The Technical Officer will draw up plans and a schedule which will need to be agreed by you and Occupational Therapist before going out to tender to at least three contractors.
- Once tenders have been received, checked and all paperwork has been completed the grant will be put forward for approval.
- **NO** works are to start until you have received written confirmation from Reading Borough Council. Works are not paid for retrospectively.
- Once you have received confirmation that your grant has been approved the Private Sector Housing Team will arrange with the approved Contractor for the works to be carried out under a Building Works Form of Contract, which you will need to enter into with the Contractor. This contract confirms the cost of the work agreed by the contractor and sets out the terms and conditions under which the works are to be carried out.
- The work **MUST** be completed within 12 months of your grant being approved.

Payment of Grant monies

The Council will pay the grant money direct to the contractor once:

- We have inspected the work and they have been completed to a satisfactory standard
- We have received an acceptable invoice (on official headed paper, with full details and costs of the work carried out) from the contractor.
- We have received any certificates or warranties required for the work carried out.
- You have signed a Final Form of Authority confirming you are satisfied with the quality of the work. (*If you inform us there is a problem, we will inspect the work and if we believe it is of a sufficiently good standard we will make payment without your consent.*)



If you withdraw from the process at any stage you will be liable for any fees incurred unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Ongoing maintenance

The ongoing maintenance of the adapted property and equipment is the homeowners' responsibility. For specialist equipment such as stair lifts and hoists, we normally include a 5 year extended warranty as part of the grant.

You may be eligible for a reduction in Council Tax

If your adaptations meet the qualifying criteria you may be eligible for a Disabled Person's Allowance - the Council Tax Team can advise

What happens if there are any unforeseen works once works has commenced?

If any unforeseen works arise once your grant has been approved and the work has started, the Contractor will need to provide a quote for the additional works and obtain the Private Sector Housing Technical Officer's approval before the extra works and the Council may increase the amount of grant awarded to pay for these additional works up to the maximum grant of £30,000.

The Council will **NOT** pay for additional works carried out without prior permission.

Who pays for works if the costs exceed the grant maximum of £30,000?

You are responsible for the cost of any works which exceeds the maximum grant of £30,000.

Our Standard

The funds available for Disabled Facilities Grants are limited. To make sure as many people as possible can get the adaptations they need:

- We always look at all the options available to you (including re-housing) before considering plans to carry out major adaptations to your home.
- We ensure grant money is allocated fairly and efficiently by:
 - looking for the simplest, least disruptive and most cost-effective adaptation that will meet your needs.
 - making sure adaptations fit within the existing structure of your home - we only give grants for extensions if there are no other options.

- If the demand for DFG's outstrips the resources available, applications will be prioritised according to the agreed criteria based on the principles of Fair Access to Services.
- We cannot give grants for work already started or completed.
- The grant you are awarded will depend on the cost of works and can be paid up to a statutory maximum of £30,000.
- Except in very exceptional circumstance you cannot apply for a second grant to pay for a replacement adaptation unless your needs have changed.

If you are unhappy

If you are unhappy with the service we provide or the way you have been treated by a member of the Council's staff please let us know straight away.

As soon as we know there is a problem, we can take action to put things right or least explain why we can't do things differently.

The easiest way to complain is to talk to the staff working with you or their manager. If you prefer, you can contact our Customer Relations Team.

Contact Us

Adult Social Care Wellbeing Hub	0118 937 3747	CSAAdvice.signposting@reading.gov.uk
Brighter Future for Children	0118 937 3641	cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Private Sector Housing Team	0118 937 2562	psra.team@reading.gov.uk
Customer Relations Team	0118 937 2905	socialcare.complaints@reading.gov.uk
Council Tax	0118 937 3727	council.tax@reading.gov.uk

This information can be made available in other languages or alternative formats (such as Braille, audio or large print) on request. Please contact social care services.