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**DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT 2016/17**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Veronica Copeland,  
Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio**

**Responsible Director –  
Suzanne Joyner- Director of Children and Adults Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the capital resources available for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) during 2016/17 and to recommend that these resources are utilised in accordance with Darlington Borough Council Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2014-2017.

**Summary**

2. Disabled Facilities Grants assist people to live independently by helping to fund suitable adaptations to their properties. They are means tested and are available to owner-occupiers, tenants of private rented properties and Housing Association tenants. Disabled Facilities Grants are governed by housing legislation and have set conditions for payment, within these regulations. The Council has commissioned Durham County Council to provide a Home Improvement Agency service to provide guidance and practical assistance to people who are older, disabled or on low incomes to claim a Disabled Facilities Grants to repair, improve or adapt their homes. They also provide support to people until the work is completed and the contractor has been paid.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that the Disabled Facilities Grant for 2016/17 be agreed and the capital funding released.

**Reason**

4. The recommendation is supported to enable the adaptations for those individuals who are eligible to receive a Disabled Facilities Grant for 2016/17 to proceed.

**Suzanne Joyner  
Director of Children and Adults Services**

## Background Papers

- (i) Funding for Better Care Fund 2016-2017- NHS England
- (ii) Darlington Borough Council Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2014-2017
- (iii) Home Adaptations for Disabled People - A detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice- Home Adaptations Consortium
- (iv) Guidance for the Operationalisation of the BCF in 2015-16- NHS England.

Jeanette Crompton: Extension 5855

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Adaptations funded by Disabled Facilities Grants will improve the health and well-being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact	The implementation of the Housing Capital Investment Programme will reduce energy usage and provide higher levels of thermal comfort for dwellings benefitting from these measures thus reducing carbon emissions.
Diversity	The adaptations provided via Disabled Facilities Grants will improve the accessibility of owner occupied, privately rented and social housing.
Wards Affected	All wards within the Borough of Darlington are affected.
Groups Affected	Disabled Facilities Grant applicants living in owner occupied, privately rented and social housing.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any changes to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision. The Grant is received from NHS England for the sole purpose of providing adaptations for individuals.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this is not an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This links to theme 3 'Healthy Darlington' specifically addressing health inequalities to narrow the gaps in health and wellbeing.
Efficiency	Adaptations enable people to remain independent in their homes for longer and therefore reduce the need for larger packages of support or admission to residential care.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. The purpose of DFG's is to fund adaptations to owner-occupiers, tenants of private rented properties and Housing Association tenants to enable people with a disability to remain in their own home and live independently across the Borough.
6. DFG's are national mandatory grants and are available to adults and children with a disability people when works to their home are judged "necessary and appropriate" to meet their assessed needs and when it is "reasonable and practicable" to carry them out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling.
7. Works that are eligible for a DFG include:-
  - (a) facilitating access to and from and around the dwelling
  - (b) access to a family room
  - (c) access to a room for sleeping
  - (d) access to a lavatory
  - (e) access to a bath or shower
  - (f) facilities for the preparation of food
  - (g) improvements to heating systems.
8. The maximum grant payable is £30,000 per application and is subject to a statutory means test to determine if the individual is able to contribute to the cost of the works. (Means tests do not apply to grant applications for disabled children).
9. Durham County Council Home Improvement Agency provides support to individuals applying for a DFG. This service includes the completion of the grant application, the seeking of quotes for the necessary works, selection of a suitable contractor, and oversight of the works up to completion and payment of the grant. The agency will also support individuals to source charitable funding where the cost of works is in excess of £30,000.
10. An aging population, where the numbers of people 65 or over will increase by 20.7% by 2019, growing to 23% by 2025 and the prediction that the number of older people with disabilities will also rise has increased the proportion of people who will need work carried out to their homes to enable them to continue to live independently.
11. Demand for adaptations has also been accelerated by medical advances which have allowed people of all ages with varying levels of disability and complex needs, to lead more independent lives in the community. Similarly more children with disabilities are living longer into adulthood, which means families need to adapt their homes to meet their changing needs.
12. Adaptations to a person's home can also reduce the need for care and support and prevent/delay the admission to residential care. In addition a DFG can support a preventative approach by reducing risks within the home and assisting individuals to live and manage independently in a safe and accessible home environment.

13. From 2015/16 DFG funding allocations were transferred from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the Better Care Fund but were still ring fenced for expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants. Adult Social Care continues to award the DFGs in accordance with the current Disabled Facilities Grant Policy. (The Housing Division also currently fund adaptations to council owned properties up to the mandatory limit of £30,000).
14. Due to the changes in demographics of an ageing population and people choosing to be supported to remain independently at home, the demand for DFG's has increased and has outstripped the grant allocation made to local authorities.
15. In recognition of both the increase in demand for DFG's, which has outstripped the grant allocation made to local authorities and the significant contribution that they make towards supporting individuals to remain in their own homes, there has been an increase in the allocations made to local authorities for 2016/17. For 2016-2017 the allocation made to Darlington Borough Council via the Better Care Fund is £739,776, a significant increase from the £437,000 allocation in 2015-16.
16. Members are required to formally release the monies available to the Council for DFG's for 2016/17 as it is a capital resource. Table 1 below details the DFG capital resources available.

**17. Table 1: DFG Capital Resources 2016-2017**

Disabled Facilities Grants	£000's
2016/17	739,776

**Outcome of Consultation**

18. Whilst no formal consultation has taken place with regard to the request to release the capital funding for the DFG's to be awarded for 2016-2017, consultation did take place in 2013 as part of the development of the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2014-2017. The release of the capital funding will enable DFG's to continue to be made in accordance with the approved policy.