
DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT 2014/15 AND 2015/16

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

Responsible Director – Murray Rose - Director of Commissioning

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 2014/15 and 2015/16 and to recommend that these resources be released and utilised in accordance with Darlington Borough Council's 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.
3. Disabled Facilities Grants are governed by housing legislation and have certain 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

4. It is recommended that the Disabled Facilities Grant for 2014/15 and 2015/16 be agreed and the capital funding released.

Reason

5. The recommendation is supported to enable the adaptations which required a Disabled Facilities Grant for 2014/15 and 2015/16 to proceed.

**Murray Rose
Director of Commissioning**

Background Papers

- (i) The Disabled Facilities Capital Grant Determination 2014/15 (31/2244)
- (ii) Department for Communities and Local Government
- (iii) Darlington Borough Council Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2014-2017
- (iv) Home Adaptations for Disabled People- A detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice- Home Adaptations Consortium

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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 wellbeing of residents.
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 DCLG 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 report promotes a healthy Darlington, specifically addressing health inequalities to narrow the gaps in health, wellbeing and outcomes.
Efficiency	Adaptations enable people to remain independent in their homes for longer and therefore reduce the need for packages of support or admission to residential care.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. 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.
7. DFG's are mandatory grants and are available to disabled 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.
8. 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.
9. The maximum grant payable is £30,000 per application and is subject to a 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).
10. Following a tendering exercise Durham County Council Home Improvement Agency now provide support to individuals applying for a DFG, a service previously commissioned from 4 Housing. This service includes the completion of the grant application, the seeking of quotes for the necessary works, selection of a suitable contractor, oversight of the works up to completion and payment of the grant.
11. Darlington has an aging population, where the numbers of people aged 65 or over will increase by 23% by 2019, growing to 56% of the population by 2013. It is predicted that the number of older people with disabilities will also rise. Taken together, these have increased the proportion of people who will need work carried out to their homes to enable them to continue to live independently.
12. 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 likely to be able to enjoy an adulthood, which means families need to adapt their homes to meet their changing needs.
13. In recognition of this increased demand significant additional revenue resources have been allocated from Adult Social Care since 2011 to ensure that there was no waiting list for DFG's and applications for grants could be progressed without delay.

14. Additional revenue funding for DFG work has again been agreed by Adult Social Care to respond to this area of increased demand and a further £300,000 was transferred from the Adult Social Care Revenue budget to the DFG budget for 2014/15 to support those who had potential to be re-abled by the provision of a works funded by a DFG.
15. Members are required to formally release the monies available to the Council for DFG's for 2014/15 and 2015/16 as they are Capital resources. Table 1 below details the DFG capital resources available.
16. Table 1: DFG Capital Resources 2014- 2016

Disabled Facilities Grants	£000's
2014/15	358
2015/16 (a)	437

From 2015/16 DFG's are contained within the Better Care Fund and ring fenced for expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants.

17. The Housing Division will continue to fund DFGs to council owned properties up to the mandatory limit of £30,000.

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, 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 be made in accordance with the approved policy.