

**CABINET
6 JULY 2021**

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT 2021/22

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Rachel Mills,
Adults Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – James Stroyan,
Group Director of People**

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 2021/22 and to request the release of these resources to enable them to be utilised in accordance with Darlington Borough Council Disabled Facilities Grant and Regulatory Reform Order Policy 2021-2023.

Summary

2. DFG 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. DFG are governed by housing legislation and have set conditions for payment, within these regulations. The Council has a shared service agreement in place with 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 DFG 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 DFG for 2020-21 and 2021-22 be agreed and the capital funding released.

Reason

5. The recommendation is supported to enable the adaptations for those individuals who are eligible to receive a DFG for 2020-21 and 2021-22 to proceed.

**James Stroyan
Group Director of People**

Background Papers

- (i) Funding for Better Care Fund 2016-2017- NHS England
- (ii) Darlington Borough Council Disabled Facilities Grant and regulatory Reform Order Policy 2021-2023
- (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 and Climate Change	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. Note - the SCS is currently under review and is due to be considered further at a meeting of Council on 15 July 2021
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

6. The purpose of DFG 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 are national mandatory grants and are available to adults and children with a disability people. 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).
8. 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, 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.
9. In recognition of the important contribution that DFG make towards supporting individuals to remain in their own homes, there has been an increase in the allocations made to local authorities for 2021-22. For 2021-2022 the allocation made to Darlington Borough Council via the Better Care Fund is £1,063,345, an increase from the £937,154 allocation in 2020-21.
10. In addition to the annual allocation, in December 2020, the Council were notified that it would receive an additional allocation of £126,191. This extra boost in DFG funding was in recognition that following the outbreak of Covid-19, local authorities had displayed innovation and resilience in maintaining the delivery of essential services under very challenging circumstances.
11. Members are required to formally release the monies available to the Council for DFG for 2020-21 and 2021-22 as it is a capital resource. Table 1 below details the DFG capital resources available.
12. **Table 1: DFG Capital Resources 2020-2022 to be released**

Disabled Facilities Grants	£000's
2020-21- additional covid support	126,191
2021-22 – annual allocation	1,063,345
Total	1,189,536

Outcome of Consultation

13. Whilst no formal consultation has taken place with regard to the request to release the capital funding for the DFG to be awarded for 2021-22, consultation did take place in 2020 as part of the development of the Disabled Facilities Grant and Regulatory Reform Order Policy 2020-2023. The release of the capital funding will enable DFG to continue to be made in accordance with the approved policy.