Disabled Facilities Grant
Public Guidance
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Contact Numbers

Adults & Health Telephone: 0113 222 4401—To arrange an initial assessment
Housing Leeds: 0113 378 5858—For general enquiry about the DFG adaptations service
1. Consultation 1st March to 31st August 2018

Leeds City Council has reviewed the options available to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and this review has identified three options that we now wish to consult on. Please note the consultation will only apply to adult applicants.

A six month consultation exercise will start on the 1st April 2018 and along with the three options we also want to consult on this new public guidance. The three options are:

- **Option 1 - Managed Application Process** - this is currently the most popular route whereby Leeds City Council fully manages your application on your behalf.
- **Option 2 - Customer Input into Process** - this is where there is some shared responsibility for the process between Leeds City Council and the applicant.
- **Option 3 - Customer Managed Process** - This option is where the customer requests and is provided with a DFG application form at first point of contact and wishes to complete all elements of the application and supporting information themselves.

After feedback from the six month consultation exercise has been considered, the options for applying for a DFG will be finalised and revised public guidance will be published on or before 1st April 2019.

Throughout this guidance some words are in bold. We know these words may be unfamiliar so they are defined on the last page of the guidance in a glossary.

2. Applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant

**What is a DFG?**

A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a means tested grant to help disabled people who are home owners and private sector tenants pay for adaptations.

Adaptations help disabled people live safely and independently in their homes.

The DFG is available towards eligible works costing between £1,000 and £30,000. The amount of grant you will actually receive depends on the overall
cost of the **eligible works** and your financial circumstances. The criteria and conditions of the grant are determined nationally and administered locally.

This guidance booklet is about major adaptations and the disabled facilities grant (DFG). It will help you understand the options available, how you can apply and the steps involved in the process. This guidance booklet is only for disabled adult applicants who are home owners or private sector tenants aged 18 or older.

If you are considering a **major adaptation for a child** please contact Leeds City Council Social Care (Children’s) Tel: **0113 2224403**.

If you are a **Leeds City Council tenant** applying for a major adaptation for an adult you should contact Leeds City Council Social Care (Adults) Tel: **0113 222 4401**

**What are eligible works?**
Everybody applying for a DFG is assessed by a Leeds City Council Occupational Therapist to determine what adaptations are needed to help that person live safely and independently in their home. The Leeds City Council Occupational Therapist will only prescribe works that are **necessary and appropriate**; these are known as **eligible works**.

**Will there be a cost to me?**
You may have a contribution to make.

If you have a contribution to pay it is calculated on income, savings and investments set against an assessment of basic needs through a range of allowances.

Everybody applying for a DFG will need to complete a full **means test**, which is the financial assessment. The **means test** will calculate if you will have to contribute to the cost of the works and how much. To undertake a **means test** we need to investigate the income and capital of the disabled person and their spouse or partner.

If you do not disclose all the required information you will not be entitled to any financial assistance from a DFG. You should look at the **ready reckoner** included in the application pack. The **ready reckoner** will give you a good idea of whether you are likely to have a contribution to make based on your financial circumstances.
Even if you do not qualify for money from the DFG budget towards the work you need we can still help you adapt your home; we call this nil grant.

**Nil grant**

If you have personal finances that mean you are not eligible for a DFG and must fund all works, you can still make use of Option 1. The Council’s Housing Leeds will manage the process for you; there is a nominal fee of £150.

### 3 The DFG application process

**Between 01/03/2018 and 30/08/2018** we are consulting on the three different options available when applying for a DFG.

No matter which option you choose the Council will ALWAYS need to do the following:

1. A financial assessment known as a **means test** to calculate how much grant you will receive and if you will have a contribution to pay.
2. A Leeds City Council Occupational Therapist assessment of your adaptation needs to identify the works that are **necessary and appropriate**; these are referred to as **eligible works**. 
   
   *If you submit supporting information from a private practice Occupational Therapist, the Council will consider this supplementary information as part of its assessment but it will not replace the Leeds City Council Occupational Therapist assessment.*

3. A **reasonable and practicable** assessment to determine if the adaptations recommended by our Occupational Therapist can be reasonably undertaken in your home having regard to its construction and layout.

**Option 1 - Managed application process** - this is the most popular option. Leeds City Council fully manages your application on your behalf. Housing Leeds will handle everything for you through an agency agreement. This is the easiest and least stressful option for an applicant, particularly for more extensive adaptations, as the Council will organise and manage all the work for you. The Council will:

- Arrange for an Occupational Therapist to undertake an assessment of
your needs to understand what works are necessary and appropriate to help you overcome difficulties your home causes you.

- If works are needed an Occupational Therapist will submit a referral to Housing Leeds specifying the type of adaptations required and your priority.
- Assess your financial circumstances by a statutory means test which will identify if you have a contribution to pay towards the cost of the works.
- Arrange for a surveyor or contractor to visit to discuss how the adaptations can be provided in your home and what building works or alterations are required to provide them.
- Draw up a schedule of works and arrange for our contractor to submit formal plans (for planning permission or building regulations approval) if required.
- Help you fill in and submit your formal application for the DFG.
- Supervise the contractor on site.
- Deal with any unforeseen works and interim payments.
- Arrange final payment to the contractor and collect any certificates and guarantees from them for you.

**Option 2 - Customer Input into Process** - this is where there is some shared responsibility for the process between Leeds City Council and you as the applicant. This option would be suitable if you want to plan or develop a preferred scheme or use your own builder to undertake the adaptations or both.

When making this decision, be aware that Housing Leeds will not manage a contractor to deliver a preferred scheme or manage a contractor you choose.

As with all DFG applications you still require the means test, an assessment by a Leeds City Council Occupational Therapist and formal approval of the proposed works by Housing Leeds. Housing Leeds will help you submit your formal application.

However, once the application has been approved, you are responsible and will supervise your own contractor, organise and manage all the work on site and deal with any issues.

You are responsible for completing the works to the satisfaction of Housing Leeds within twelve months of the decision. We will only release the final payment once
all of the eligible works or the agreed preferred scheme is completed to our satisfaction. Housing Leeds will still assist with unforeseen works and making interim payments to your contractor.

Option 3 - Customer Managed Process - This option is where you wish to complete all elements of the application, supporting information and building management yourself. You can use your own architect or draftsman to plan or develop a preferred scheme. You can use your own builder to deliver your preferred scheme. Check the ready reckoner early to see if you are likely to have a contribution to make based on your financial circumstances.

As with all DFG applications you still require the means test, an assessment by a Leeds City Council Occupational Therapist and formal approval of the preferred scheme by Housing Leeds.

You can request a DFG application pack at your first point of contact. You will still receive this DFG guidance explaining the steps involved and how the application will be processed.

The application pack is available on the Leeds City Council website. The table on page 13 provides a useful checklist of the steps involved.

With option three you are responsible for submitting a completed application pack. If your grant application is approved, you will supervise your own contractor, organise and manage all the work on site, through to satisfactory completion, and deal with any issues that occur.

Following the approval of your grant, you have twelve months to complete the works. We will only release the final payment once all of the eligible works or the agreed preferred scheme is completed to our satisfaction. Housing Leeds will still assist with unforeseen works and making interim payments to your contractor.

Preferred scheme
Applicants sometimes make the decision that they would like to implement the Occupational Therapist’s proposals by including them in a different or more expansive scheme. We call this a preferred scheme. This either expands on the Council’s proposed scheme (eligible works) or is included as part of a much larger development project at the home.
In these circumstances **Housing Leeds** will use the DFG to pay the reasonable costs for the **eligible works** recommended by the Occupational Therapist. This amount will be paid on the satisfactory completion of the applicant’s alternative scheme and the applicant will need to fund the difference. **Housing Leeds** will not manage a contractor to deliver a **preferred scheme**.

### 4. Case Studies

**Brenda**
Brenda is 70 and lives alone. Brenda suffered a fall at home and is now struggling to get in and out of the bath. After contact with Leeds City Council through the Contact Centre, she has been assessed by a Leeds City Council Occupational therapist to require a wet floor shower.

Brenda wants the Council to manage the whole of the DFG process for her and so chooses **Option 1**.

If Brenda was not eligible for a DFG due to her financial circumstances she could still ask the Council to manage the DFG process for her as a **nil grant**. She would pay the contractor but the entire process would be managed for her by Leeds City Council for the nominal fee of £150.

**Darren**
Darren is 40 and, because of a lifelong condition that has worsened recently, cannot access his first floor toilet in time. After contact with Leeds City Council through the Contact Centre, he has been assessed by a Leeds City Council Occupational therapist to require a ground floor toilet.

Darren wishes to use the same builder who has done work in his house before **(Option 2) so told Housing Leeds** at the earliest opportunity, which was the means test visit, that he has a preferred contractor.

On receipt of the LCC schedule of works (the **eligible works**) Darren asked his builder to provide a written quote. After the quote for the **eligible works** was assessed as reasonable against market costs **Housing Leeds** approved the DFG application.

Darren then oversaw all work on site to satisfactory completion and contacted
Leeds City Council to carry out a final inspection and release the funds directly to the contractor.

**Javid**

Javid is recently retired. He and his wife both have mobility problems and are having increasing difficulty using rooms on the first floor of their large, detached home. Javid does some research on the Leeds City Council website and after reading the guidance booklet decides that he wants **Option 3** so he can design and oversee the work himself. He downloads an application pack from the website.

Javid is aware, from the guidance, that the Council will have to undertake their own Occupational Therapist assessment. To ensure that the application goes smoothly, he calls the Contact Centre to register his interest and request an referral to Adults & Health for assessment.

*If Javid did not call the Contact Centre to register his interest and request a referral to Adults & Health for assessment this request would be made at the point he submitted all other parts of the application to Housing Leeds. This would take a further 56 calendar days before the assessment was complete and could then be submitted to complete the application.*

While he is waiting for an assessment, Javid completes all of the other steps as shown in the table on page 13 under **Option 3**. Javid designs a ground floor bedroom and en-suite level access shower room, as he feels this will meet his and his wife's needs both now and as their conditions progress.

After assessment, the LCC Occupational Therapist recommends a through floor lift, wet floor shower and external ramp (this is the **eligible scheme**). Javid submits his application and supporting evidence to the Council with his proposal. Housing Leeds agree the **preferred scheme** is equal or better than the Council's **eligible works**. After the means test, the grant amount is agreed at £18,000 based on the **eligible works**. Javid's **preferred scheme** costs more but his children are happy to pay the additional amount.

Javid contacts his builder and supervises the work on site. Once the build is...
completed he arranges for the Council's surveyor to inspect and sign off the work. The Council then releases the final payment to the contractor.

5. Decision points and appeals for all options

Housing Leeds is the statutory decision maker. They hold the responsibility for judgement on whether or not an application for a DFG has been made properly. To make sure this is done consistently and fairly, Housing Leeds chairs an appeal panel to consider challenges from applicants and exceptional circumstances.

Necessary and Appropriate Assessment - a council Occupational Therapist working for Adults & health will complete the initial review and make written recommendations on the adaptations that are necessary and appropriate. If there is an appeal against the Occupational Therapist’s recommendations an appeal panel, chaired by Housing Leeds, will consider the appeal and make a final decision.

Reasonable and Practicable Assessment - in some cases the Council may assess that whilst the works are necessary and appropriate they are not reasonable and practicable. This might be due to the overall cost of the works or because they just cannot be done to your property due to its size, layout or construction type. In such cases rehousing may be the only practical option. Such a decision would be considered by the appeals panel.

Discretionary top up - The maximum grant award is £30,000. The Council can, in extraordinary circumstances, provide discretionary top up funding. Whether to award discretionary funding is not an appeal, but is a decision taken by the appeals panel so that discretionary funding is allocated fairly. The final decision is always made by Housing Leeds.

Income Assessment - The Council is required to follow a government formula when completing an income assessment (means test) so there is no scope for appeal. The means test will be carried out by Housing Leeds. Applicants choosing Option 3 are advised to look at the ready reckoner early on and find out if they are likely to have a contribution to pay to the cost of the works.

6. Timescales

We want to give you a good service and we know that means doing things in a
reasonable time. While the Council is not bound by law, each of the Leeds city council teams that help deliver adaptations have discretionary targets, those we are not legally required to meet.

For non-urgent, standard schemes carried out by Housing Leeds we aim to meet the following targets:

- After you contact Leeds City Council, we aim to undertake an occupational therapy assessment of an adult within 56 calendar days.
- After completing an occupational therapy assessment we aim to register the Disabled Facilities Grant application and complete the Means Test within 39 calendar days.
- After the Means Test we aim to approve a disabled facilities grant application within 80 days.
- After we approve the Disabled Facilities Grant, and you choose Option 1, we aim to complete works at your home within 63 calendar days. If your works are more extensive, and are likely to take more time, we will make this clear to you.

Mandatory timescales
Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, the work must be completed to the Council’s satisfaction within 12 months of approval being given.

If you choose Option 3, or as part of Option 2 you choose your own contractor, completing the work within twelve months of the award becomes your responsibility. If you do not complete the works to our satisfaction within twelve months of the decision the funding allocated to your project will go back into the DFG budget so we can fund other major adaptations. You will then need to reapply for a DFG.

7. What happens next?

If you think you need a major adaptation:

Decide on your preferred option and call the Council’s Contact Centre on 0113 222 4401 to register your interest in applying for a DFG and request a referral to Adults & Health for an assessment.
The Contact Centre will check or add your contact details and make a referral to Adults & Health. If any of your contact details change during the process, make sure to change them with us through the contact centre.

Expect contact from Adults & Health to arrange an assessment.

(Option 1 - Managed Application Process) we will work with you and manage the application process and the major adaptation works. Within six months of a completed application you will have a decision; within twelve months of the decision the work will be completed. For most standard works it takes much less time.

(Option 2 - Customer Input into Process)

a. You will need to compile some of the paperwork and information for the application pack. This will depend on which parts of the process you want to complete yourself. Keep Housing Leeds informed so they do not duplicate the work you are doing.
b. Within six months of submitting your complete application, with the support of Housing Leeds, you will receive a decision.
c. You will then supervise, organise and manage all the work on site and deal with any issues. The Council will still assist with unforeseen works and making interim payments to your contractor.
d. Within twelve months of the decision your works will need to be completed to the Councils satisfaction so your contractor can receive the final grant payment.

(Option 3 - Customer Managed Process)

a. After registering your interest you can start finding and bringing together the information you will need to complete the application pack.
b. Remember to check the ready reckoner first. You may not qualify for any financial assistance and, if you want to plan and manage all the work yourself, you do not need to apply for a DFG.
c. Submit your application pack to Housing Leeds.
d. Housing Leeds will contact you to arrange both the income assessment (means test) and the reasonable and practicable assessment. Once both of these are complete, along with your application pack and adult social care assessment, you will have submitted a complete application.
e. Within six months of submitting your complete application you will
receive a decision.
f. You will then supervise, organise and manage all the work on site and deal with any issues. The Council will still assist with unforeseen works and making interim payments to your contractor.

Within twelve months of the decision your works will need to be completed to the Council’s satisfaction so your contractor can receive the final grant payment.

8. Supporting information for your application

The table below shows which parts of the supporting information for your application will be completed by the Council and which parts you will be responsible for according to your chosen option.

✓ the Council will do this on your behalf
× you will be responsible for this
✓ means we can discuss with you which parts you would like to do yourself and which you would prefer the Council to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Signed proof of ownership form</td>
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<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land registry check</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission from landlord (if required)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawings (if required)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning approval (if required)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building regulation approval (if required)</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFG application pack</td>
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<td>Obtain contractors quotes</td>
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<td>Any other relevant documentation</td>
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<td>✓ or ✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. The Building Works

Once your full application has been received and approved by the council your contractor can start working on the alterations to your home. Your chosen option will determine the amount of support and help you receive from the Council with this aspect of your grant.

**Option 1:** You will have made use of the Council’s full agency service as such we will deal with all aspects of the scheme including supervision of the works on site through to satisfactory completion.

**Option 2 and Option 3:** Once the application has been approved, if you are using your own contractor, you are responsible and will supervise, organise and manage all the work on site and deal with any issues. You are responsible for completing the works to our satisfaction within twelve months of the decision.

The Council will still assist with unforeseen works and making interim payments to your contractor. The Council will only release the final payment once all of the eligible works or the approved preferred scheme has been completed to the Council’s satisfaction.

10. Glossary

**Eligible works** - work that a Leeds City Council Occupational Therapist has assessed as necessary and appropriate for you to live safely in your home

**Housing Leeds** - department of Leeds City Council that supports major adaptations to all homes in the city, this department controls the DFG budget.

**Ready reckoner** - a quick assessment you can do yourself to get a general idea of whether you will have a contribution to pay

**Major adaptations** - changes to your home that cost more than £1,000 pounds so you, as a disabled person, can live there safely

**Means test** - a way of checking how much money you are eligible for based on benefits, income and assets. This may also be called an income assessment.
Preferred scheme - applicants sometimes make the decision that they would like to implement the Occupational Therapist’s proposals by including them in a different or more expansive scheme. We call this a preferred scheme. This either expands on the Council’s proposed scheme (eligible works) or is included as part of a much larger development project at the home.

Reasonable and practical - the legal term for whether the necessary and appropriate work that you need to live safely in your own home is both possible in your house and affordable.

Completed Application - All the paperwork, searches, permissions and assessments required must be submitted to Housing Leeds so they are able to make a decision, on both whether to award and how much to award, based on evidence. What makes up a completed application will vary on a case by case basis, but is the collection of forms and assessments that demonstrate that a disabled applicant is eligible to apply for a disabled facilities grant, their financial circumstances and that the work can be, both legally and practically, completed on their home.

Contact Details

Adults & Health Telephone: 0113 222 4401—To arrange an initial assessment

Housing Leeds: 0113 378 5858—For general enquiry about the DFG adaptations service