

# Disabled Facility Grants: General Information

## 1. SCOPE and PURPOSE of a GRANT

Southend-on-Sea City Council (the Council) seeks to ensure that as many people as possible receive the adaptations they need to help them stay independent. A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is payable for the provision of facilities or adaptations for disabled persons in dwellings, or in common parts of a building containing flats. However, there is a limit to the money available and therefore the **grant is means tested** (see 4. below). The Council must also ensure that the grant funding is used fairly and efficiently. The Council will always look for the least disruptive and most cost effective adaptation to meet the clinical need. Adaptations will be designed to fit in with the existing structure of your home. A grant for an extension will only be given where no alternative adaptation is possible. Grants will not be given where works have already started or been completed.

## 2. ELIGIBLE WORKS

A Disabled Facilities Grant is mandatory for the following purposes:

- a) Facilitating access to and from a dwelling/building/flat.
- b) Making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with them.
- c) Facilitating access to a room used or useable as the principal family room.
- d) Facilitating access to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or useable for sleeping.
- e) Facilitating access to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, bath, shower or wash hand basin, or facilitating the use of such a facility.
- f) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant.
- g) Improving any heating system in the dwelling to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, or, if there is no existing heating system, or any such system is unsuitable for use, providing a heating system suitable to meet the disabled occupants needs.
- h) Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat, by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source, or by providing additional means of control.
- i) Facilitating access and movement around the dwelling in order to enable the disabled occupant to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of such care.

A Disabled Facilities Grant is discretionary when the relevant works do not fall within the above categories, but are for the purpose of making the dwelling or building suitable for the accommodation, welfare or employment of the disabled occupant.

In the case of any Disabled Facilities Grant application, the relevant works must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, and it must be reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and condition of the premises. Grants are not generally available for personal and domestic equipment and services to the disabled occupier's home, although the Department for People may assist with this provision under their powers under Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled

Persons Act 1970.

Where an adaptation is sought on an unfit dwelling, the Council will need to determine whether renovation to make it fit would be the most satisfactory course of action. This may be part of the process of deciding whether it would be reasonable and practicable to carry out the adaptation work. If renovation of an unfit dwelling is not considered the most satisfactory course, a grant may not be appropriate. Where dwellings are found to be unfit and renovation would be the most satisfactory course of action, further advice may be given on the availability of Housing Assistance by contacting the Private Sector Housing Grants Support Officer.

### 3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

A Disabled Facilities Grant can only be given for eligible works to "disabled persons". "Disabled persons" are defined as:

- a) Persons whose sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired; or
- b) Persons who have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind; or
- c) Persons who are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury, impairment present since birth, or otherwise.
- d) Persons aged 18 or over registered under Section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948, or any other person whose welfare arrangements have or might be made under it.
- e) Persons under 18 registered in a Register of Disabled Children under Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 of the Childrens Act 1989, or in the opinion of Social Services, a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the same Act.

Confirmation of registration under this legislation should be made with the "Welfare Authority" i.e. the Occupational Therapy Team of the Department for People of this Council. In any event, there is a duty on the Housing Authority (Adaptations team within the Council) to consult the Welfare Authority in the case of each application in considering whether the relevant works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the applicant, and it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant works.

Disabled persons who are owner/occupiers or tenants (private or Council) can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant. In the case of disabled works to a common part of a building the tenant must have a power or duty to carry out the relevant works (in practice, this may simply be permission from the landlord in writing).

In theory, a landlord could apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant for a disabled tenant, although in practice this is unlikely as they would have to pay for the balance of the cost of the works.

### 4. TEST OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES (updated July 2021)

NOTE: Applications for Disabled Facilities Grants are generally subject to a Means Test. From July 2021 recommendations for adaptations that cost under £6,000 (or a curved stairlift up to £6,500) will be exempt from the means test enabling a faster process for the resident. NOTE: The cost of the works will be confirmed once the survey has been carried out to support the adaptations requested by the Occupational Therapist.

For both owner/occupiers and tenants, the grant shall be reduced according to Regulations

as to the financial resources of the applicant exceeding the applicable amount (threshold).

For all cases where the works are for the benefit of a disabled child, there is a nil contribution towards grants up to £30,000. In other cases, the greater an applicant's income and capital, the less will be paid as a grant on a sliding scale from 100% to 0% of any eligible cost.

The only exception to this may be in applications where the grant would be in excess of £30,000, in which case the grant becomes discretionary and not mandatory and the Council has to decide whether or not sufficient funds are available to pay for the additional costs by way of a loan.

5. GRANT PAYMENT

A grant payment is made subject to the relevant approved works being carried out by the instructed contractor(s) to the satisfaction of the applicant and the Council following an inspection at the point of completion of works. The Adaptations Team will project manage the adaptation works on your behalf and arrange for payment to be made to the contractor(s). On occasion, under the Test of Resources, applicants may be required to pay a 'client contribution' towards the cost of the works and this must be paid before the Council funds the majority of the adaptation. Although the Council is acting as project manager for the adaptation works on behalf of the grant applicant, the instruction of a contractor, agent, or surveyor to carry out works or surveying services forms a private contract between the applicant and the service provider to which the Council is not a party. This means that any builder or other professional advisor is working for the applicant and not the Council.

6. GRANT CONDITIONS (updated July 2021)

If the person disposes of the property (whether by sale, assignment, transfer, or otherwise) within 10 years of the completion of the works they will be expected to pay a proportion of the cost up to maximum of £10,000. This applies to grants over £5,000 and includes cases where the property has been transferred to a family member or other person, even if no monies are involved in the transaction

A calculation of the reimbursed cost on a will be made once a completion date is received from the Solicitor on behalf of the applicant. The table below illustrates how this will work:

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Repayment Requirement</b>
£30,000	£10,000
£25,000	£10,000
£20,000	£10,000
£15,000	£10,000
£10,000	£5,000
£5,500	£500

The cost of some major adaptations will exceed the maximum grant amount of £30,000. The Council, in some circumstances, will fund the amount in excess of £30,000 not as a grant but as an interest free fully repayable loan. Before the DFG application will be approved, applicants must sign a legal agreement so that a charge on the property can be lodged with

Land Registry. This charge stands until such time as the sale of, or change in title of, the property, at which time it is fully repayable.

The above conditions do not apply to privately rented properties; however, tenants must instead provide proof of intention to remain at the property for at least five further years. The most appropriate evidence of this is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) for a minimum of at least 5 years signed by both landlord and tenant, unless the Council considers it unreasonable in the circumstances to seek such arrangement.

## 7. REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF GRANT AIDED FACILITIES

You should note that any grant or loan given for the provision of any disabled facilities will not cover any ongoing routine repair and maintenance of equipment (with the exception of a five year maintenance contract for stair-lifts). Normally, this expense will be the applicant's responsibility once the installation is complete and the grant or loan has been paid.

## 8. FEES PAYABLE

The Council Adaptations Team provide the service to have an Occupational Therapy assessment to assess the applicant's clinical need, complete a Test of Resources, inspect and tender for the proposed adaptation works and supervise the works until they are finished. The Adaptations Team also instruct and arrange for the payment of the relevant contractors on behalf of the grant applicants. Other work as appropriate, such as assisting the applicant in securing charitable funding, may also take place. For this, a fee is charged which is usually based on the cost of the adaptations works carried out and which is normally fully eligible to be included as part of the grant or loan offered.

## 9. WHO TO CONTACT

If you feel a Disabled Facilities Grant could increase your independence, please call:

**Southend Council Access Team 01702 215008, option 1**

**Email: [council@southend.gov.uk](mailto:council@southend.gov.uk) Web: [www.southend.gov.uk/dfg](http://www.southend.gov.uk/dfg)**

## Large Print Versions

If you are having difficulties reading this document and would like a large print version, please contact the Adaptations Team on 01702 215606 and they will arrange for a large print version in this size (or larger should you specifically request) to be sent to you.