



<b>Meeting</b>	Business and Housing Policy Committee
<b>Date and Time</b>	Tuesday, 29th November, 2022 at 6.30 pm.
<b>Venue</b>	Walton Suite, Winchester Guildhall

**Note:** This meeting is being held in person at the location specified above. Members of the public should note that a live video feed of the meeting will be available from the council's YouTube channel ( [youtube.com/WinchesterCC](https://www.youtube.com/WinchesterCC) ) during the meeting.

A limited number of seats will be made available at the above named location however attendance must be notified to the council at least 3 working days before the meeting (5pm Wednesday, 23 November 2022). Please note that priority will be given to those wishing to attend and address the meeting over those wishing to attend and observe.

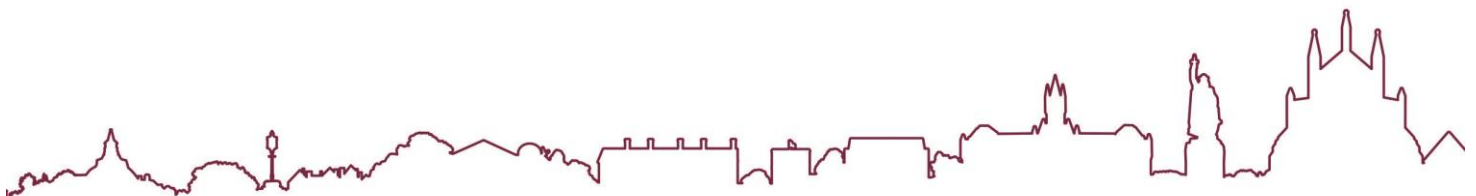
## AGENDA

- 1. Apologies and Deputy Members**  
To note the names of apologies given and deputy members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed members.
- 2. Declarations of Interests**  
To receive any disclosure of interests from Members and Officers in matters to be discussed.

Note: Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare disclosable pecuniary interests, and non disclosable interests in accordance with legislation and the Council's Code of Conduct.

If you require advice, please contact the appropriate Democratic Services Officer, prior to the meeting.

- 3. Chairperson's Announcements**
- 4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 October 2022** (Pages 7 - 12)  
That the minutes of the meeting be signed as a correct record.



5. **Public Participation**

To receive and note questions asked and statements made from members of the public on matters which fall within the remit of the Committee

Members of the public and visiting councillors may speak at the Policy Committee, provided they have registered to speak three working days in advance. Please contact Democratic Services by 5pm on 23 November 2022 via [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk) or (01962) 848 264 to register to speak and for further details.

6. **Emerging Housing Strategy- Scoping Report** (Pages 13 - 26)

(Report Ref: BHP39)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee members note general comments in the body of the report, but to provide particular comment on the proposed and emerging priorities for the Housing Strategy 2023-2028;
  - Access to decent homes for all, across all of the tenures
  - Responding to the housing need of an ageing and growing population
  - Access to a mixed tenure affordable family accommodation
  - Access to affordable energy efficient accommodation
  - Responding to the Social Housing White paper
  - Commitment to supporting persons seeking sanctuary in the district of Winchester

7. **Sustainable Tourism Strategy - Scoping Plan** (Pages 27 - 74)  
(Report Ref: BHP38)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Policy Committee are asked to:

1. Review and comment on the approach outlined which will underpin the process to deliver a Sustainable Tourism Strategy,
2. Note the planned resources to enable development and delivery of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy,
3. Note the timeline for delivery and opportunity for input from the Policy Committee,
4. Note the next steps.

8. **Disabled Facilities Grants** (Pages 75 - 204)  
(Report Ref: BHP36)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee review and provide comment on the updated DFG policy and in particular comment on:
  - a) The proposed introduction of new discretionary grants in the form of:
    - Welfare Grant
    - Heating Grant
    - Relocation Grant
    - Top Up Grant
  - b) That the discretionary grant level is capped at a maximum of £100k.
2. That any Local Land Charge placed on a property will have no expiry date.
3. That the service charge is reduced from 12 % to 10.5 %
4. That the Corporate Head of Housing will have delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community & Housing to make minor changes to the policy.

9. **To note the Work Programme for 2022/23** (Pages 205 - 206)

**Laura Taylor**  
**Chief Executive**

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21 November 2022

Agenda Contact: Matthew Watson, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 01962 848 317 Email: [mwatson@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:mwatson@winchester.gov.uk)

*\*With the exception of exempt items, agendas, reports and previous minutes are available on the Council's Website <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/councillors-committees>*

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Chairperson:** Bronk (Liberal Democrats)

**Vice-Chairperson:** Fern (Liberal Democrats)

**Conservatives**  
Isaacs  
Miller  
Scott

**Liberal Democrats**  
Cramoysan  
Radcliffe  
Small

**Deputy Members**

Brook and Horrill

Batho and Edwards

Quorum = 4 members

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A public question and comment session is available at 6.30pm for a 15 minute period. There are few limitations on the questions you can ask. These relate to current applications, personal cases and confidential matters. Please contact Democratic Services on 01962 848 264 at least three days in advance of the meeting (5pm Wednesday, 23 November 2022) for further details. If there are no members of the public present at 6.30pm who wish to ask questions or make statements, then the meeting will commence.

## **FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION**

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## **DISABLED ACCESS:**

Disabled access is normally available, but please phone Democratic Services on 01962 848 264 or email [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk) to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place.

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

## **BUSINESS AND HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 6 October 2022**

Attendance:

Councillors  
Bronk (Chairperson)

Cramoysan  
Isaacs

Scott

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Fern, Miller, Radcliffe and Small

Deputy Members:

Councillor Batho (as deputy for Councillor Small), Councillor Edwards (as deputy for Councillor Radcliffe) and Councillor Horrill (as deputy for Councillor Miller)

Other members in attendance:

Councillors; Thompson, Wallace, Achwal and Tod

[Audio and video recording of this meeting](#)

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1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above. In addition, Councillor Ferguson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing and the representatives from Tenants and Council Together (TACT) provided apologies for not being present.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Bronk declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest concerning agenda item 5, Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy in that he owned a self-contained annexe within the curtilage of his property that was let.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2022**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 June 2021 should have recorded the attendance of Councillor Wallace as a visiting councillor.

RESOLVED:

1. That noting the above, the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson updated the committee regarding recent discussions with Councillor Ferguson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing), Councillor Horrill and officers, regarding the future work programme for this committee and the newly formed Cabinet: Housing committee and that the revised work programme reflected the current position.

The Chairperson gave an update on items discussed at the previous meeting, which included the following.

1. The Housing Services Compensation Policy.
2. The Empty Homes Strategy.
3. The Green Economic Development Strategy - Draft Action Plan.
4. The Winchester District High Streets Priority Plan - Up-Date and Progress Report.

The Chairperson informed the committee that officers had met with representatives of the University of Winchester to discuss "Global Entrepreneurship Week" and gave an update on progress made.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Wallace addressed the committee regarding both items on the agenda and a summary of the points raised were as follows:

**1. Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy.**

- a. That the UK had the least energy-efficient housing in Europe.
- b. That only 48% of homes in the district achieved an energy efficiency standard of C or above, only 45% of homes had any roof or loft insulation and only 35% had any cavity wall insulation.
- c. That energy costs were set to rise significantly and would especially affect those in homes with poor insulation and that improvements to energy efficiency should be a priority for the council.
- d. That the report in paragraph 2.17 described 17 referrals made under the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) which suggested there was scope for more to be done.
- e. That the action plan could contain more specific measures and targets, for example, a breakdown of the number of homes within each energy efficiency banding and a target of the number of homes to be moved from one band to another.

**2. Re Findings and future plans following the Street Markets Review**

- a. Regarding the Winchester City Council policy on sustainable procurement, had the guidance in this policy flowed down to the street markets, for example, matters relating to fairtrade, food procurement and single-use plastic?
- b. Would the council consider a ban on single-use plastic in its buildings and its street markets?



These points were responded to by officers and the Cabinet Member for Business and Culture accordingly. Following further discussion, the committee resolved several matters relating to these points, these are included in the lists below.

## 6. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY**

The Service Lead, Strategic Housing & Senior Private Sector Housing Officer introduced the report, ref BHP31 which set out proposals for the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, ([available here](#)).

The committee was recommended to:

1. Review and provide comment on the direction and priorities of an early draft of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2022-27.
2. Support the council exploring the possibility of implementing a private sector housing 'Grant Assistance Fund' targeted at providing financial assistance through grants or loans to fund essential repairs for owners and landlords who qualify under agreed criteria.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report and in summary, the following matters were raised.

1. Were landlords supportive of the council's Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing and accreditation scheme and were there sufficient resources within the council to manage the scheme?
2. Could further information and contact details be provided to members regarding the council's "Energy Officer"?
3. Could the source of funding for the proposed 'Grant Assistance Fund' be explained?
4. Had the introduction of the Article 4 in Stanmore and Winnall addressed the issues experienced by residents and how do we minimise the impact of HMOs in the future?
5. Could the section "Working with local partners", paragraph 11, page 27 be expanded to give more detail on what the council was doing?
6. Would tenants in properties that might qualify for energy efficiency measures/funding have recourse if their landlord was not supportive of the works being undertaken and did the council have powers to encourage landlords to make their properties more energy efficient?
7. Could paragraph 2.8, page 22 be expanded to give some detail on how the council would help landlords with a smaller number of properties to keep up with legislation changes?
8. Should the council be undertaking additional or selective licensing of HMOs?
9. Should the paper be referring to both Southampton and Winchester Universities?
10. Regarding the action plan, should priority 2 "Improving housing conditions in the private rented sector" become priority 1?
11. Could further information be provided regarding the links with local healthcare teams and the NHS to support tenants leaving hospital?

12. Several members were not supportive of establishing the Grant Assistance fund at a time when resources were limited, they felt that the primary responsibility was the landlords and that the council's role was to signpost and support access to other funds.
13. Was data available to compare the energy efficiency of the private sector and council properties at either a district or ward level?
14. Was there a trend in landlords selling properties that were previously rented and was there a trend for private rented sector properties moving to an Airbnb-type platform and could the reduction in the number of private sector rented properties be quantified?
15. That some references to Winchester in the document should read Winchester district.

These points were responded to by the Strategic Director, the Service Lead, Strategic Housing & the Senior Private Sector Housing Officer accordingly and were noted.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That officers consider the comments of the committee as part of the next stage of policy formation and in particular review points 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 16 (above) and update members accordingly.
2. That regarding the grant assistance fund, the committee felt that the primary responsibility lay with the landlord or owner to fund essential repairs but that the council should provide support and signposting. That the council's primary responsibility was with its own properties and then if appropriate to private sector properties.

7. **FINDINGS AND FUTURE PLANS FOLLOWING THE STREET MARKETS REVIEW**

Councillor Thompson, Cabinet Member for Business and Culture; and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism introduced the report, ref BHP37 which set out the proposals from the report ([available here](#)).

The committee was recommended as follows.

1. To review and comment on the Winchester district street markets review 2022.
2. To note the findings and recommendations outlined in the review.
3. To support the approach to action the recommendations outlined in the review.

These included:

1. the development of branding, promotional materials and marketing activity,
2. the improvements to market appearance derived from investment in signage and street dressing, branded gazebos, pitch layout/customer flow,
3. the number of market stalls and additional themed markets.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report and in summary, the following matters were raised.

1. Had the council been advised of the level of funding awarded from its bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)?
2. Regarding the Street Markets Review 2022 Executive Summary Report and the section titled "Alresford – future", would this impact the current management of its markets by the Town Trust?
3. Could committee members receive a copy of the Street Markets Review 2022 full report?
4. Regarding paragraph 2.8, could the areas for improvement for the Winchester street market include the safety issues around the loading and unloading environment particularly the interaction with pedestrians and how this could be managed more effectively?
5. Regarding paragraph 2.14, could we understand the re-tendering process more, especially regarding the timescales and approach being taken?
6. Appropriate public WC facilities needed to be available if encouraging the public to visit street markets.
7. The methodology that determined whether a street market enhances or did not damage High Street shops' trade?
8. That on busy market days, the Winchester High Street became congested and for some people was difficult to navigate.
9. How much did recommendation number 3 rely on a successful bid to the UKSPF and if no funding was received what measures could still go ahead?
10. That the report gave some reassurance that shop holders were not negatively affected by a street market.
11. Could an updated report include a paragraph recognising an intention to explore the longer-term desire for a market presence in The Broadway in Winchester?
12. Where did the Winchester Farmers Market sit within the council's thinking and had the council considered an indoor, all-weather facility?
13. Did the council share experiences with the Cathedral regarding their Christmas market?
14. Regarding proposals for trading equipment including stalls, gazebos and tables, who would design it, own it, and where would it be stored?
15. Regarding page 39 and the opportunities to expand the number of market traders, could more information be given on the intention to grow the size of the markets?

These points were responded to by Councillor Thompson, Cabinet Member for Business and Culture and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism.

RESOLVED:

1. That officers consider the comments of the committee as part of the next stage.
2. That further consideration is given to discouraging the use of single-use plastic within the district's Street Markets.
3. That the full "Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022" report be circulated to committee members.
4. That the safety concerns raised be considered as part of any future procurement exercise and separately with market stall holders.
5. That ease of access through the Winchester Street Market was important.
6. That the comments regarding the long-term aim of using The Broadway be considered.

8. **TO NOTE THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23**

RESOLVED:

1. That the workplan was noted.
2. It was requested that the committee undertake a review of the council's policy regarding restrictions on the installation of showers within its housing stock.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.05pm

Chairperson

BHP39  
BUSINESS & HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE

REPORT TITLE: EMERGING HOUSING STRATEGY- SCOPING REPORT

29 NOVEMBER 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Paula Ferguson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing

Contact Officer: Karen Thorburn Tel No: 01962 848076 Email kthorburn@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

## PURPOSE

It is a legal requirement to adopt a housing strategy which sets out the council's primary focus and key priorities for the coming 5 years. The Strategy is closely aligned with the council's plan and the local plan.

The current strategy expires in 2023 and a review is appropriate

The council have commissioned Arc4 consultants to carry out a robust data gathering research document to assist in writing and delivering the strategy.

This paper is to inform the committee that the council is at the very beginning of the process of reviewing the existing strategy in order to draft a new strategy for the period 2023-2028 and the council wishes to obtain members initial thoughts on what should be the overarching priorities in the new strategy

The paper also outlines;

- The proposed methodology to be used, inclusive of consultation
- Proposed timetable for the delivery of the new strategy
- The proposed governance of the new strategy and the delivery plan during its life span
- Review of the priorities set in the current strategy (2017/18-2022/23)- the paper gives some examples of the Housing Service's achievements against the priorities set out in the existing strategy

To be clear, this paper is not the strategy or the agreed priorities for the strategy, it is an initial scoping document to inform members as early as possible about the proposed direction of travel to produce the strategy and to have members input and discussion on what the priorities should be.

The paper outlines a number of priorities and emerging issues that could inform the housing strategy that have been derived from the current evidence base.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee members note general comments in the body of the report, but to provide particular comment on the proposed and emerging priorities for the Housing Strategy 2023-2028;
  - Access to decent homes for all, across all of the tenures
  - Responding to the housing need of an ageing and growing population
  - Access to a mixed tenure affordable family accommodation
  - Access to affordable energy efficient accommodation
  - Responding to the Social Housing White paper
  - Commitment to supporting persons seeking sanctuary in the district of Winchester

## 1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget, Business Plan, current investment plan, General Fund (GF) and various grants that are directly received from central Government are already in place to ensure the key priorities for this Strategy are delivered. New funding streams may become available during the lifespan of this strategy
- 1.2 There are various workforce implications from the provisions of the strategy itself in addition to the impact of existing and the possibility of new legislation for example around homelessness prevention, welfare reform changes, full asylum dispersal, the Housing White paper and other government initiatives which may evolve during the lifespan of this strategy. Any increase in the new build programme will have resource implications for the service and other services such as Legal and Estates. Any changes to funding such the homeless prevention grant, the disabled facilities grant provisions will impact on the teams resources and ability to maximise the opportunities presented.

## 2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### Introduction

- 2.1 The council's Housing Strategy expires in 2023. A new housing strategy and delivery plan is required for 2023-2028.
- 2.2 A housing strategy sets out the strategic objectives to achieve the council's housing vision. The strategy takes its lead from the Council's Plan and compliments other council strategies and policies. The Housing Strategy is particularly closely aligned with the council's Local Plan but the strategy has a specific focus on a narrower range of communities compared to the local plan. The Strategy aims to focus on those who are unable to exercise a reasonable degree of choice regarding their housing circumstances
- 2.3 The objectives that are set out in the 2023-28 housing strategy will be high level and provide an overarching framework for a series of more detailed plans that are formulated or refreshed to deliver the objectives on more specific housing issues. An example of these are the Preventing Homelessness Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Private Sector Renewal Strategy, Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the Empty Homes Strategy.
- 2.4 The Housing Strategy will be implemented through actions and investment of Winchester City Council in conjunction with stakeholders, the voluntary sector and partnerships.
- 2.5 The Housing Strategy will be a short strategic document with an action plan. The plan will be for 5 years. The strategy will be professionally produced in a friendly language for a non-technical audience, the strategy will reach across

tenure and will be for staff, members and residents. The strategy will focus on priorities and can't cover everything the council delivers on housing.

- 2.6 The Housing Strategy for 2023-28 will be produced in partnership with Arc4 .consultants, Arc4 will conduct a full independent review of housing need and support the council with a wide consultation programme with our stakeholders.

### 3 **Background**

- 3.1 It has been a statutory requirement for local authorities to adopt a Housing Strategy since the Local Government Act 2003.

- 3.2 The existing housing strategy expires in 2023 and needs renewing and refreshing to set out the council's key priorities for the period 2023-2028

- 3.3 The council's key housing priorities in the current strategy 2017/2018-2022/23 are outlined below, alongside some of the council's achievements:

a) **To accelerate and maximise the supply of high-quality affordable housing across the District**

- Target 1000 new homes 2021-2030
- Built – 121
- Under construction – 130
- Subject to Tender acceptance – 6

#### **Registered Providers**

2017/18	150
2018/19	193
2019/20	134
2020/21	284
2021/22	250

b) **To improve the housing circumstances of vulnerable and excluded households**

- 385 disabled adaptations in the private sector<sup>54</sup> single individuals placed into accommodation through everyone in initiative, 53 sustained their placement of accommodation.
- Trinity opened a 10 bed space unit for single people who were at risk of or had experienced homelessness
- Formal process implemented for 'Move On' priority for applicants living in supported accommodation in the district.
- Review of Older Person's Housing Strategy
- Provided Units of accommodation for families fleeing Afghanistan & responded to the needs of the Ukrainian Refuges



- Established tenancy sustainment service delivering on outcomes, increased specialist staff resources (Financial Inclusion Officer, Wellbeing & Inclusion Officer), tenancy support for the private sector, assist grant for tenants in crisis, new tenant support screening service, benefit/income maximisation campaigns, cost of living crisis advice, fuel and food voucher scheme, emergency food provision, social activities programme for sheltered housing tenants, hoarding support project, collection with care arrears policy
  - Review of the preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and successful bids for rough sleepers initiative (RSI) funding
  - Administered the DWP's household support fund to assist with residents exceptional housing costs
- c) **Supporting local people accessing high quality and affordable housing which meets their needs**
- Created an open market shared ownership scheme to assist eligible households buy existing homes
  - Effectively communicate housing options to those in housing need through triage, appointments, home visits, website and hubs
  - A member of Hampshire Homechoice, a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme-this provide a fair and effective process for accessing affordable housing.
  - Provided **and assisted 194** residents with direct access to affordable private rented accommodation with the assets of our rent deposit scheme.
- d) **To make best use of housing**
- Reviewed and Implemented Aids and adaptations panel to ensure best use of stock to assist households requiring adaptations
  - HRA Asset Management Strategy approved December 2021, full operating document with supporting processes for asset options appraisal
  - Regular Asset Management Group quarterly meetings reviewing progress against Strategy priorities
  - Downsizing incentive scheme, re-use/recycle white goods and furniture scheme and a revised Lettings Policy
- e) **To engage with residents and create cohesive communities**
- Reduction in rough sleeping- commenced a weekend outreach service
  - Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer post established
  - Proactive engagement with all sheltered housing residents, summer BBQ events and activities programme at sheltered housing schemes
  - Pop up events in relation to ASB hot spots (Winnall, Kingsworthy and Hyde areas), established 2 community engagement officer posts – although not appointed to yet

- Tenant Engagement Strategy approved by Cabinet 20.11.17 Tenant Compact agreement – agreed August 2021

- 3.4 It is important to note since these priorities were agreed in 2017/2018 there have been global events that have made it harder for the council and its partners to achieve the priorities in the agreed timescales. These events have extended the list of challenges that were outlined in the current strategy, these events are, but not exclusive to:
- a) Global pandemic
  - b) Post pandemic recovery
  - c) Fall of Afghanistan
  - d) War in Ukraine
  - e) Emerging cost of living crisis

### **Next Steps**

## **4 Setting the Priorities for the new housing strategy 2023-2028**

- 4.1 The council needs to agree the priorities for the new strategy.
- 4.2 There are emerging issues that need to be incorporated into the new priorities that will affect the new housing strategy, these are:
- a) Post Covid Recovery
  - b) War in Ukraine and Homes for Ukraine Scheme
  - c) Full asylum seekers dispersal
  - d) Access to affordable energy efficient accommodation
  - e) Access to affordable and decent private rented accommodation
  - f) Increased demand for more different size and tenure of properties
  - g) Retrofit
  - h) Cost of living crisis
  - i) Respond to the 'Social Housing White Paper',
- 4.3 The current evidence base confirms a number of priorities for the strategy, they are as follows:
- a) **Priority 1- Access to Decent Homes for All (all sizes and tenures)**
    - (i) There is a need for a need of 664 homes per annum with an overall need across the 20-year plan period for 13,280 homes.
    - (ii) This scale of local housing need would support substantial population growth of 25,500 over the 2019-36 period in the District. In 2020/21 789 homes were built and the council has in excess of a 5-year land supply. There is a continued annual need for 220 rented affordable homes in Winchester District. There is also a need for affordable home ownership housing, identifying a need for 123 low-cost home ownership homes per annum. In In 2020/21, 38% of new homes delivered were

affordable. This is excellent performance and needs to be maintained.

- (iii) There is pressure in the private rented sector from university students, key workers and households facing homelessness. This is against a backdrop of an average national increase in rent charged of 12% in the past year and properties being converted to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) and Air Bed and Breakfasts. Expanding this sector, making better use of the stock and assessing the impact of loss of family accommodation to HMO's and air B & B's will be a feature of the Strategy.
  - (iv) While the problem of access to suitable housing is common across this District, it is vulnerable and disadvantaged households who are most adversely affected. People with disabilities are a significant group within the District's population with some of these households having specific housing requirements, including those relating to mobility. Disability is often linked to age and therefore levels of disability are likely to increase as the population ages. As outlined above, welfare reform has implications for some people with a disability. While supported housing of various forms is provided across the District the lack of move-on accommodation hampers its effective use and means households are unable to access accommodation they need. Furthermore, there needs to be greater co-ordination between agencies groups involved in supported housing provision. The strategy needs to improve the housing circumstances of vulnerable and excluded households and find appropriate new models.
  - (v) The Councils Homelessness strategy clearly sets out the practical ways the Council will achieve its corporate commitment to not use bed and breakfast accommodation and to ensure that no one needs to sleep rough within the Winchester district by 2023. The Housing Strategy needs to consider opportunities to increase temporary and move on accommodation. The Strategy will be prepared during huge financial pressures nationally which is likely to increase services.
- b) **Priority 2- Responding to the Housing needs of an ageing and growing population**
- (i) There is a notable growth in the population of older persons aged 65+ in Winchester District over the period to 2036 – projected to increase by 12,400 people (a 49% increase). The specific projections undertaken show an expected increase of those with dementia by 1,400 persons and with mobility problems by 3,100 persons to 2036. Some older households,

particularly those aged over 75, will require specialist housing provision. It is likely that a proportion of older people will be living with long term conditions, particularly dementia, but also conditions which affect mobility and which will require the availability of more adapted homes and the provision of significant support. It is important that the council explores flexible housing solutions, which allow people to transition from one type of housing to another in later life, as their circumstances require. The Strategy needs to carefully consider the housing offer to support this group.

- (ii) The difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in Winchester is: 5.8 years lower for men 6.4 years lower for women. The impact of a safe, warm and secure home is remarkable to health and wellbeing. It improves general health outcomes and enables people to maintain independence; it is the platform on which people can build their future. It can prevent physical and mental ill health and reduce hospital admissions; it can support us to get better more quickly and enable timely discharge from hospital. Unfortunately, not everyone has the same opportunities for good health. Those who are elderly or young, isolated, without a support network, and adults with disabilities are more likely to be affected. Investing in housing, particularly for vulnerable people, can support better health and reduce costs of other public services. Good health is an asset and the role of the City in promoting good health needs to be reflected in the Strategy

c) **Priority 3- Access to mixed tenure affordable family accommodation**

- (i) There is significant projected growth in family households in Winchester, which are expected to grow by 27% equal to 3,700 households between 2016-36. However, there are clear affordability barriers which are likely to prevent younger family households and younger households in general from buying a home. Options will be required to support younger households in the District in being able to buy a home, particular when help to buy is discontinued and First Homes may not offer affordable solutions in all of your markets. Without option, younger households may move to other areas; this could harm the economy (through affecting the ability of employers to recruit) and may lead to unsustainable longer distance commuting patterns.
- (ii) There is a need for different sizes of homes in the market and affordable sectors and potentially smaller homes for rightsizing for older households. This needs to be carefully set out in your strategy to help maintain choice.

- (iii) Winchester District has three further education establishments which should be considered – The University of Winchester, The University of Southampton (Winchester School of Art) and Sparsholt College (which also offers higher education courses). Whilst HMOs make up a small proportion of the overall housing market and provide an important housing supply for vulnerable households, those on lower incomes, students and young professional sharers. However, some locations such as Stanmore area had over 20% of properties were estimated to be HMOs. The proliferation of HMOs can also create tensions within communities. Whilst an article 4 direction has been introduced, the strategy will need to consider student accommodation and the role of HMOs.
  - (iv) The market rented sector is playing a growing and important role in the market and can also provide affordable housing. A robust policy and evidence base is required and needs to be promoted to developers. This should specify the types of locations which are considered suitable for such development, which we would consider would be in and around Winchester city as well as within the strategic allocations to ensure that there is a diverse range of housing types and tenures.
- d) **Priority 4- Access to affordable energy efficient accommodation**
- (i) The District's housing stock is generally very good, across all sectors. Homes are predominantly of post Second World War construction. Council and other affordable housing has achieved the Decent Home Standard. It is important to ensure that Council homes, and those owned by registered providers are maintained to high standards. There are, however, instances of poor property energy efficiency in some types of housing, for instance those without mains gas in rural areas, and fuel poverty for some low income households. This will need careful consideration in the strategy, particular given the challenges facing the country in terms of the cost of living.
- e) **Priority 5- Responding to the Social Housing White Paper**
- (i) The Housing Strategy will also have to have consideration to the 'The Social Housing White Paper', the *Charter for Social Housing Residents* sets out measures to deliver on the Government's commitment to the Grenfell community and also its 2019 manifesto pledge to empower residents, strengthen regulation and improve the quality of social housing. The Housing service is well placed to respond to these measures, it has a strong track record of effective resident engagement and extensive and well-established performance reporting

measures. A comprehensive review of fire safety has already been completed. Delivering the priorities that arise from the white paper in partnership with residents and partner agencies will be a key objective in the new housing strategy.

- f) **Priority 6- Commitment to supporting persons seeking sanctuary in the district of Winchester**
- (i) Winchester City Council is welcoming refugees who are seeking a safe place due to the ongoing Ukraine crisis, responding to the Afghanistan resettlement Scheme and our commitment to the full asylum dispersal scheme, as our part of our commitment to supporting the principles of the City of Sanctuary Movement
  - (ii) This is likely to further create pressure in the system and access to the private rented sector
  - (iii) One of the major challenges to the successful implementation of the Housing Strategy will be the current financial climate which is likely to have an impact on development and project outcomes across the city and impact on future rents and service charges. A focus of the Strategy will be to work better with existing resources using an 'Invest to Save' model but the city need to carefully consider which priorities it is able to take forward and when
  - (iv) After the evidence base has been collated and the consultation has taken place, the priorities will be agreed to develop the strategy.

## 5 Methodology

5.1 The methodology that will be used to set the priorities in the strategy document will be divided into various elements

### a) Updating evidence

- (i) The evidence base will outline how the Winchester market has been performing and will outline the challenges, opportunities and weaknesses in the market and the findings will act as a baseline for the stagey in terms of opportunities and full details of the evidence base will be an appendix to the final strategy. The evidence base will review the following;

- The strategic context for Winchester
- The current housing offer
- The sales market
- The market rented sector

The affordable housing market  
Affordability  
Demographics and socio-economic indicators  
Older people and vulnerable residents  
Delivery performance and future housing targets  
Challenges and Opportunities

b) Scoping the Strategy

- (i) A review will be taken of the current policy documents, examples of documents are listed below;

The council's corporate plan  
The Local Plan (and any additional documents outside of the local plan)  
Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy  
Asset management Strategy  
Empty Homes Strategy  
Private Sector Renewal Strategy  
Economic Strategies  
Health and well-being strategy  
Allocations policy  
Tenancy Strategy

c) Consultation

- (i) The consultation will have 3 different themes;

Internal discussions with officers  
Internal discussions with key members  
Consultation with Stakeholders in the form of Virtual meetings, workshops and an online survey

- (ii) Internal discussions with officers and members. This will enable a better understanding of priorities and be able to integrate that into the evidence base. Consultation would be undertaken through telephone conversations and virtual meetings. Below are an example of the officers that will be consulted with;

Private Sector Housing Team  
Housing Options Team  
Housing Allocations  
Tenancy Sustainment/supported housing teams  
Landlords and Property services  
New Homes  
Energy efficiency Officers  
Planning Team and those responsible for site allocations/strategic sites  
Speak to key members and senior officers

- (iii) The plan is that these conversations will focus on challenges, priorities, barriers and potential solutions.
- (iv) Consultation with Stakeholders will take place once the potential priorities and solutions have been identified from the internal consultation and the review of the evidence base.
- (v) The proposed method of consultation for stakeholders is;

**Virtual meetings** with those you feel have the most relevance to the Housing Strategy

**Workshops.** We can organise and manage these events over a 2-3 hr period providing presentations and facilitating breakout sessions. Sessions would be written up and form part of the evidence of the housing strategy

**Online survey** The survey is usually themed to the potential priorities and for each theme there is a summarised account of the evidence base.

- d) The outcome of the consultation will be developed into a standalone report to accompany the evidence base of the documents for the housing strategy.

## 5.2 Draft timetable for Delivery of the Housing Strategy

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
October 2022	Assemble the Data Desk top review of documents Review evidence base and identify challenges
November 2022	Lead officer to meet with CHOS and Cabinet member Arrange appointments with internal officers Agree the initial thoughts and priorities with Cabinet member and Housing's management Team Consult with stakeholders through online survey, workshops and interviews. Present initial thoughts and priorities to BHP-29.11.2022
December 2022	Consultation with stakeholders continues
January 2023	1st Draft of the strategy & feedback



	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft of the strategy & feedback Final Draft
February 2023	Develop the delivery plan and finalise document
March 2023	Develop the delivery plan and finalise document

## 6 Proposed Governance for the strategy and delivery plan

6.1 The Strategies' priorities, outcomes and delivery plan will be assessed by;

- a) Standard agenda item on the monthly Housing DMT
- b) Standard item on monthly update between CHOS and Cabinet member
- c) Standard item on 1-1's between Corporate Head of Service and Service Leads
- d) Standard item on 1-1's between Service Leads and Senior Officers
- e) Consider a yearly update to members at Housing Cabinet
- f) Consider a yearly meeting with Stakeholders

## 7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7.1 It is a statutory requirement to have a housing Strategy

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

- CAB 2935 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017
- <https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/olddocuments/CAB2935HSG.pdf?F=CAB2935%28HSG%29.pdf&Mid=602&D=201707061630&A=1&R=0#search=%22CAB2935%22>

#### Other Background Documents:-

- Housing Strategy 2017/18-2022/23
- <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy-2013-14-2018-19#:~:text=The%20five%20priorities%20of%20the,housing%20which%20meet%20their%20needs.>

APPENDICES: None

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REPORT TITLE: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY – SCOPING PLAN

TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Lucille Thompson, Cabinet Member for Economy & Culture

Contact Officer: Andrew Gostelow Tel No: 07980732149 Email agostelow@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

## PURPOSE

The Green Economic Development Strategy (GEDS) identified the potential to develop a more sustainable tourism and visitor economy. The strategy recommended the need to deliver an overarching and coordinated vision to make Winchester district a national leader in this sector, improve connectivity and coordination across the district and support tourist sector businesses to become more sustainable, maximising growth potential.

The development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STS) was an agreed action in the 2022/2024 GEDS Action Plan for the district.

This is a critical time for the council to develop this new strategy that clearly states its intentions to be greener faster and further the transition to a low/zero carbon visitor economy, reflecting the council's climate emergency declaration and its ambition for Winchester district to be carbon neutral by 2030.

This paper introduces the work to date and plan to draft the STS. The strategy will provide insight into the scale of the task needed along with a concise and achievable road map of practical steps and tangible outcomes that are collaboratively driven, aligned, and shared primarily to:

- influence the transition of businesses operating in the visitor economy to adopting more sustainable practices,
- encourage visitors to adopt sustainable leisure choices,
- position Winchester district to consumers and residents as a sustainable visitor destination, ensuring that the district's visitor economy is well placed

alongside its competitors and recognised as a sustainable tourism destination.

It will inform the content of a new Destination Management Plan to replace the expired plan, see other background documents. This will set out the overall direction for the visitor economy across the Winchester district over the next five years.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Policy Committee are asked to:

1. Review and comment on the approach outlined which will underpin the process to deliver a Sustainable Tourism Strategy,
2. Note the planned resources to enable development and delivery of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy,
3. Note the timeline for delivery and opportunity for input from the Policy Committee,
4. Note the next steps.

## 1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

1.1 The strategy will be delivered from a combination of existing staff resources with additional expertise and capacity from external organisations as required. This will be funded from existing budget and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Confirmation of this fund from government remains outstanding. If this funding does not become available a combination of alternative options would need to be considered. These would include:

- securing alternative funding streams/budget,
- reallocation of existing staff resources and priorities,
- reducing the scope of the development of the strategy

1.2 Internally the Service Lead: Economy & Tourism will be responsible for this programme of work, supported by the Tourism Marketing and Development Manager. A review of resource will be undertaken in line with the findings and recommendations of the STS. Delivery of the strategy will require organisation wide support and therefore will be dependent on embedding the findings and recommendations from the strategy in the work programmes across a number of council services including Economic Development, Sustainability, Planning etc. as well as Tourism Marketing and Development.

1.3 The internal resource will be supported via contracting a sustainable tourism specialist to deliver the evidence base section of the strategy and assist in facilitating industry consultation. This will be funded from an allocation of £8,000 from UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022/23. A further £5,000 per year in the remaining two years of the fund has also been allocated to undertake visitor marketing and promotional campaigns to support the positioning of Winchester district as a sustainable tourism destination.

## 2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

2.1 Developing a STS aligns directly with Council Plan priorities including the council's intentions to be 'greener faster' and also 'pride of place', ensuring the special aspects of the district's heritage, open spaces and public realm are cared for and available for everyone to enjoy.

2.2 As the visitor economy across the district continues to recover from the pandemic and it addresses the current challenges around recruitment, increased operating costs and customers with reduced disposable income resulting from increased cost of living, it is anticipated the sector will recover and continue to grow. Negative impacts caused because of tourism will therefore also grow, indicating the need for these to be carefully managed and mitigated through sustainable tourism practices.

- 2.3 Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organisation as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”
- 2.4 The emerging STS will be considered as a “live” document being adapted to reflect the findings which become apparent through the development process.
- 2.5 The purpose of scoping the approach to the development of a STS is to encourage input from members and stakeholders in order to ensure the correct framework is developed to bring about a comprehensive, fully informed, dynamic strategy that is owned and delivered by all stakeholders in the visitor economy operating across the Winchester district and beyond.

### **Scope of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy**

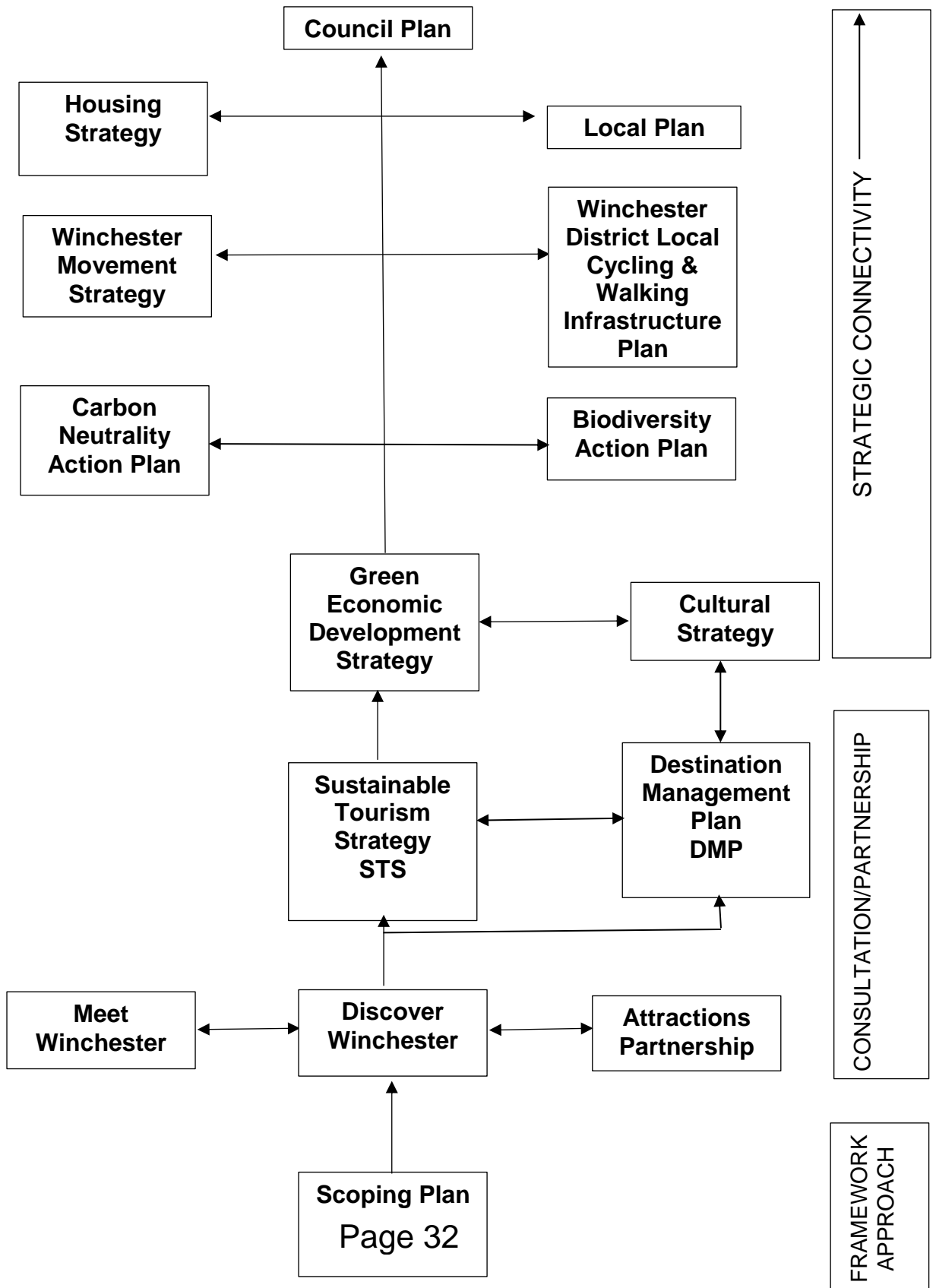
- 2.6 The STS will seek to:
- Mitigate the negative impacts to the Winchester district, including economic leakage, damage to the natural environment, and honey pot locations, through marketing and promotional activity creating reasons to visit across the whole district and all year around. In doing so, this will spread the economic benefits whilst limiting the environmental impacts in specific locations,
  - Leverage the positive impacts to the Winchester district including job retention and creation, cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, wildlife preservation, landscape restoration etc.
- 2.7 The STS will be underpinned by:
- the case for a sustainable visitor economy,
  - collaboratively driven development of a vision, strategic aims and objectives and deliverable actions,
  - a set of realistic indicators to measure and monitor progress,
  - the collaborative development and delivery of a Destination Management Plan (DMP) incorporating the actions outlined in the STS.
- 2.8 The purpose of the strategy will:
- adopt sustainability in a social, economic and environmental context,
  - build on what is already a well-established and recognised visitor economy, delivering for both visitors and residents,
  - act as a lever to attract investment,

- encourage existing businesses operating within the visitor economy to adopt more sustainable business practices,
- attract new sustainable businesses who are seeking to be part of the story to set up operation within the district's visitor economy,
- to encourage further development and adoption of local sustainable produce,
- influence the nature of the district's infrastructure, particularly around the provision of public transport to facilitate visitors in making sustainable travel options, reducing dependency upon the car when visiting the area,
- address training and skills solutions to better enable the adoption of sustainable tourism practices across the visitor economy,
- position Winchester district to consumers and residents as a sustainable visitor destination and in doing so differentiate itself from others to improve its competitive advantage whilst positively influencing seasonal fluctuations and overall influencing the volume and value of the visitor economy across the district.

2.9 An evidence base will be produced initially which will inform the roadmap and examples include:

- the current profile of the visitor economy,
- an overview of available sustainable tourism product and infrastructure,
- best practice from destinations and tourism products who are leaders in the field,
- detailed gap and investment analyses with associated overview of challenges, barriers and interventions including investment needs.

2.10 The diagram below illustrates the connectivity between with STS and other council strategies and its flow of production from scoping via consultation groups to delivery.





- 2.11 To date a review of a range of Sustainable Tourism Strategies developed by leading destinations in this field has been undertaken, contributing to the scoping plan for the development of the STS. Examples include South Downs National Park, Cumbria Tourism Strategy, Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Brecon Beacons Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Peak District Sustainable Tourism Strategy and key competitor cities including Oxford, Bath and Canterbury.
- 2.12 The STS scoping plan has been tested in principle and has been positively received by stakeholders across the district's visitor economy. This has been undertaken via established industry groups and forums, facilitated by the city council, including the Attractions Forum, Discover Winchester Stakeholder Group as well as industry-wide communications via the regular tourism e-news and economy business bulletins. In addition, feedback from Marwell Zoo, local leaders in sustainability, and Hampshire Fare, champions for local produce have been undertaken.

Focussed engagement with these key groups, along with the reforming Meet Winchester consortium, Festivals Group, Cultural Network, market towns, local Chambers of Trade, amongst others, supported by dedicated dialogue in industry newsletters, will ensure that the development of the STS is supported and owned by the visitor economy across the district.

- 2.13 The STS and developing Cultural Strategy are both closely connected and embrace the wider retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. Each will establish links and dependencies between each other. An example of this is the findings of the Festivals Review, undertaken this year and funded from the Welcome Back/Return to the High Street fund.

The purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of the economic impact of festivals in the Winchester district and their potential for future development. Response rates within the review were limited but it clearly established the growth of the festivals and events programme in the past twelve years, going from six to more than thirty festivals across the district. Despite this growth challenges around funding and financial sustainability, sourcing and retention of suitable volunteers were highlighted along with the risk of an over-crowded calendar, the latter to be resolved through the development and adoption of a Festivals Programming Policy. The research showed that, in general, businesses recognised the benefit that festivals and events offer but equally reported a limited financial impact and very few engaged in any focussed marketing or promotions to capitalise on planned festivals and events. See full report in Other Background Documents below.

2.14 The STS will be developed and delivered in four distinct stages:

<p><b>Workstream one: The case for a Sustainable Tourism Economy Winter/Spring 2022/23</b></p>
<p>Evidence base, examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Current Performance of the visitor economy</li> <li>2. Visitor profile</li> <li>3. Audit of tourism product</li> <li>4. Local issues assessment</li> <li>5. Trends</li> <li>6. Competitor analysis</li> <li>7. Gap and demand analysis</li> </ol>
<p><b>Workstream two: Establishing strategy and direction – consultation/partnership led Spring 2023</b></p>
<p>WCC in partnership with established industry groups will consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The case for sustainable tourism</li> <li>2. Brainstorming: SWOT/PEST/USPs/Sustainable Tourism – Winchester district’s definition/challenges and barriers</li> <li>3. Identifying the principles and aims of the district’s sustainable visitor economy</li> <li>4. Shaping the strategic direction and priorities</li> <li>5. Alignment and mapping to existing strategies and policies</li> </ol>
<p><b>Workstream three: Vision &amp; Strategy development – consultation/partnership led Spring/Summer 2023</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing the vision statement</li> <li>2. Identifying strategic objectives and targets</li> <li>3. Establishing the actions and prioritisation</li> <li>4. Roles &amp; Responsibilities</li> <li>5. Draft STS to be considered at June 2023 meeting of the Business &amp; Housing Policy Committee</li> </ol>
<p><b>Workstream four: Measuring Progress &amp; Maintaining Direction Consultation/partnership led Summer 2023 onwards</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Embed the findings and recommendations of the STS in the development and delivery of a Destination Management Plan created in partnership with stakeholders across the visitor economy</li> <li>2. Deliver STS actions through existing groups and forums and develop new ones as required</li> <li>3. Set indicators and undertake monitoring</li> </ol>

### 3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3.1 The following options were considered:

- 3.2 Do nothing: The production of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy, whilst an action in the Green Economic Development Strategy, is a discretionary function and the council could adopt not to publish a new strategy or replace the previous Destination Management Plan. This option has been rejected given:
- a) the need to continue the transition to a green sustainable economy in which the visitor economy plays a significant part,
  - b) the risk the lack of a strategy might have in retaining and developing the volume and value the visitor economy represents as part of the wider district's economy,
  - c) the risk that the lack of a strategy might have in corralling the visitor economy to work together in delivering a co-ordinated compelling offer to the visitor.
- 3.3 Develop a short-term visitor economy management and recovery plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and current economic conditions including the cost of living crisis: This option was rejected. The recovery from the pandemic and the challenges emerging from the current economic conditions need to be embedded in a longer term strategy which will bring about a more effective transition to a green sustainable visitor economy.
- 3.4 Contract the complete development of the strategy out to a consultant: This option was rejected. The city council currently has robust relationships with stakeholders and businesses operating in the visitor economy locally and it also works in partnership with regional and national tourism bodies already. The Tourism Marketing and Development team are well positioned to carry out this work and in doing so use it as a platform to further strengthen existing and increase relationships in the visitor economy.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

##### Previous Committee Reports:-

None

##### Other Background Documents:-

Festivals Review

Visit Winchester Destination Management Plan 2015 - 2020

#### APPENDICES:

None

# **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

# Winchester Festivals Economic Impact Research

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Study purpose and objectives**

This research has been commissioned by Winchester City Council and funded through the Government's Welcome Back European Regional Development Fund programme – aimed at promoting safe public environments; supporting local business; encouraging people to return to the high streets and supporting local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of CV-19 including trialling new ideas particularly where these relate to the High Street.

The purpose of this study was to provide Winchester City Council with a better understanding of the economic impact of festivals in the Winchester district and their potential for future development. The data provided will be used to develop plans, post Covid, to trial new ideas and help inform future decision making.

Festivals in Winchester have grown over the past twelve years, going from six major festivals to over thirty festivals in the city and rural areas of the district. This growth, pre-Covid, was at risk of duplication of some themes and an overcrowded calendar. Post Covid, festival organisers appear to be suffering from a lack of funds. The research will aim to gather information that will establish to what degree these theories hold true.

## **1.2 Research methodology**

Initially, the research aim was to evaluate economic data from festivals for the last full year that they were held prior to the pandemic (2019). This data would be analysed using the model known as PRIME – Project Impact Evaluation, a model intended as a standard approach to appraising the anticipated economic impacts associated with tourism and leisure events.

It was hoped that festival and event organisers would be able to provide hard data on the number of participants, spectators and vendors in a 'typical year'. These organisers would also be asked to supply contact details for vendors, to enable us to gain further economic data, and the postcodes from participants.

In addition, online surveys were to be sent to businesses in the area that may be affected by festivals. These businesses included accommodation providers, restaurants, pubs, etc and desktop research was conducted to establish a list.

Finally, online research was conducted to ascertain the current offer of festivals and events at similar cultural destinations across the country.

## **1.3 Challenges faced**

A list of previous festivals held in Winchester were provided and repeated online surveys were sent to those contacts that had email addresses. In total, five returns were received using this methodology. A desk top search was then conducted to obtain further contact details for the festivals. This proved extremely difficult as a number of festivals are run by volunteers or the only way to contact is via email, which had already proved unsuccessful as a means of communication. A telephone survey was then undertaken of the thirteen festivals that we had found details for. Up to three attempts were made to each, achieving an extremely limited response, only one successful interview was conducted.

The most common reasons given for not providing data were that they did not want to share financial or any other information, the person that could help was never available, a change of hands since the festival was last held so unable to help or the festival was no longer being run and therefore unwilling to help.



This low number of responses (and not all of those providing the full amount of data) has made it impossible to conduct a PRIME evaluation. Instead, the data will be analysed separately and, where possible, average figures will be provided with commentary to explain.

The e-mail business survey also proved to be difficult to conduct, as email addresses were not accessible. Websites tended to provide 'contact forms' that are not able to be linked with the SNAP survey software. It was decided that the most effective method of obtaining any data would be a telephone survey instead. Cross referencing with previous databases that we hold and online searches provided us with over 300 telephone numbers.

#### **1.4 Presentation of findings**

Key findings are presented under the following headings:

- Economic impacts
- Business survey results
- Additional commentary

Results are presented in table or graph format when applicable with additional commentary highlighting key points. The appendices contain a list of festivals for 2022, map of the district and a link to a map of festival locations, copies of questionnaires used and a list of festivals in other cultural cities.

## 2 ECONOMIC IMPACTS

### 2.1 District economic data

Using the Cambridge Model results for 2018 and 2019 we can see that, on average, 5.05 million trips were made to Winchester per year, split by 0.34 million overnight visitors and 4.71 million day visitors. The average spend by these visitors over a year was £268.95 million (£22.41 million a month). This shows that there is a vast number of people visiting each year and they are spending a significant amount of money, which all should help the viability of festivals and events.

**Table 1: Cambridge Model headlines**

	Average	2018	2019
Total trips	5.05 million	5.05 million	5.04 million
Overnight trips	0.34 million	0.35 million	0.33 million
Day trips	4.71 million	4.70 million	4.71 million
Total spend by visitors	£268.95 million	£263.4 million	£274.5 million

### 2.2 Festival income

Of the six surveys completed, one was from a large festival with an estimated income of over £1 million, one festival was unwilling to provide costs and the other four were from smaller festivals with the income ranging from £2,500 to £42,600 (average £22,150). The sources of income were predominantly from sponsorship and ticket sales.

**Table 2: Sources of income**

Type	Count
Sponsorship	5
Ticket sales	3
Fundraising/Grants	2
Public sector contribution	1
Covid-related support/Grant funding	0
Other	3

Other sources of income mentioned were stall holder fees, parking charges, bar income and programme advertising.

Two out of the six festivals said they made a surplus. This ranged between 5 and 10%.

Future income was estimated to be similar to current income – ranging from £3,000 to £42,500 (excluding the one large festival).

### 2.3 Festival costs

Excluding the one large event whose running costs exceed £1 million, the five other events running costs were estimated to be between £1,500 and £38,000 (average £16,637).

On average, venue costs were the lowest taking 13% of overall spend. The cost of acts was the highest on average at 25% of overall spend. However, if you exclude the event that did not have any staffing costs the average would be 26% of spend. Full details can be seen in Table 3, overleaf.

**Table 3: Breakdown of costs**

Type	Low	High	Average
Marketing	7%	50%	19%
Staffing	0%	50%	22%
Venue	0%	50%	13%
Acts	5%	60%	25%
Other	5%	47%	21%

## **2.4 Event delivery**

The number of people involved in event delivery varied. Two festivals said it took 4-10 people, two festivals took 11-20 people and the other two festivals it was 21+ people.

From inception to delivery one organiser had no paid staff. Of the other five there were 44 paid staff in total averaging 8.8 paid staff per festival. The total number of hours paid staff worked within the period ranged from 120 hours to 440 hours giving an average of 300 hours (three festivals responded).

The number of volunteers for festivals was unsurprisingly high – ranging from 8 to 300, providing an average of 91 people. The total number of hours worked by volunteers during the period ranged from 10 hours to 1,200 hours giving an average of 440 hours (four festivals responded).

## **2.5 Attendance**

Four events provided attendance figures, these ranged from 300 to 17,000 people in the last full year that they were held.

Two festivals said that all of their visitors came from within an hour's drive of the event. Three other festivals provided data and on average 64% were from within an hour's drive, 22% between one and two hours drive and 14% coming from more than two hours drive away.

Overwhelmingly it was felt that the majority were domestic visitors at 98%, leaving only 2% from overseas. Three events did not think that they had any overseas visitors attend.

Half of all visitors (51%) to the events that responded were thought to be day visitors to the area. Just over a third (37%) were residents and a further 12% were staying visitors.

Half of the events sold tickets and half did not. Those that sold tickets the costs for a day were £8.50, £15.00 and £65.00.

## **2.6 About the event**

The events that responded ran from 1 day to 14 days with an average of 5.5 days. Three were held in spring, one in summer and two in autumn. There were no respondents that held a festival in winter.

The festivals that responded were mainly a mix of family-friendly, music and arts and culture festivals, appealing to a range of visitors.

**Table 4: Type of festival**

Type	Count
Family-friendly	5
Music	5
Comedy	2
Arts and culture	5
Literature	2
Heritage	1
Fashion and design	0
National multi-destination festival	0

The festivals that responded felt that they appealed equally to students, young couples, families and seniors.

Organisers were asked if they collected postcodes from attendees. The aim was to provide maps of catchment areas for festivals. Two collected this data but said that they were unwilling to supply it.

## **2.7 Additional commentary**

Three of the events had collected follow-up feedback from attendees in the past. The outcomes of this feedback appear to be mainly positive with a few comments about sustainability issues and surprise that more people were not involved in the events.

Plans for the future on whole are to remain the same. One event is removing any tactile features and one is moving to a larger venue.

The main perceived barriers were:

- Covid worries and mixed messaging regarding social distancing
- Volunteers are harder to get
- Community events are costly and hard to find sponsorship

Considering the festival programme across the district and, in order to remain competitive, three events felt that more local authority support would help, and one event suggested there were more historic themed events being held.

### 3 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

#### 3.1 Research methodology

The survey involved conducting a short telephone interview with businesses likely to be impacted by festivals in the district. The list was established using the council's NNDR property spreadsheet (January 2022) which is on their website and was updated with telephone numbers using internet searches (although these weren't always able to be found). Up to three attempts were made to contact each business on the spreadsheet. The survey was conducted using CATI (computer aided telephone interview) using SNAP software. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 3.

#### 3.2 Sample achieved

In the time available, 317 telephone numbers were found for businesses across the district. In all, 153 businesses were actually interviewed (48%). In addition to those interviewed, 3 refused to be interviewed, 12 were numbers not recognised and 13 proved to be no longer in business. In total 464 calls were attempted.

#### 3.3 Location and type of businesses

A third of businesses (31%) that responded were based in Winchester city and two thirds (69%) were located across the rest of the district.

**Table 5: Type of business by location**

	Total	Winchester City	Rest of district
<b>Base:</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>49 (32%)</b>	<b>104 (68%)</b>
Restaurants	6%	10%	4%
Pubs	46%	53%	43%
Cafes/Takeaways	12%	12%	12%
Other shops	12%	14%	12%
Petrol stations	1%	-	1%
Hotels/Motels	5%	4%	6%
B&Bs/Guesthouses	1%	-	1%
Self catering	10%	6%	12%
Caravan and camping	2%	-	3%
Other	5%	-	8%

For reporting purposes, businesses have been grouped together to provide more meaningful analysis. See Table 6, below for this breakdown.

**Table 6: Amalgamated type of business by location**

	Total	Winchester City	Rest of district
<b>Base:</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>49 (32%)</b>	<b>104 (68%)</b>
Food/drink establishment	64%	76%	59%
Accommodation provider	18%	10%	21%
Other	18%	14%	20%

#### 3.4 Festivals aware of

All businesses were asked to name any festival or event that is held in Winchester city and district. Overall, 21 festivals or events were mentioned 194 times in total by 107 different businesses. Forty-six (30%) businesses could name a festival or event in the district.

The most commonly mentioned festival was the Hat Fair (34% of all businesses were aware of it). A quarter of all businesses mentioned the Christmas Market and 19% had heard of Boomtown. A full list can be seen below but it is interesting that one business had heard of Hares of Hampshire, which is a new event happening later this year.

**Table 7: Named festivals**

	Total	Winchester City	Rest of district
<b>Base:</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>49 (32%)</b>	<b>104 (68%)</b>
Hat Fayre	52 (34%)	30 (61%)	22 (21%)
Christmas Market	38 (25%)	18 (37%)	20 (19%)
Boomtown	29 (19%)	10 (20%)	19 (18%)
Matterley events	10 (7%)	3 (6%)	7 (7%)
Wine/Beer Festivals	10 (7%)	5 (10%)	5 (5%)
Food/Farmers Markets	7 (5%)	2 (4%)	5(5%)
Festival of Light	6 (4%)	4 (8%)	2 (2%)
Wickham Festival	6 (4%)	0 (0%)	6 (6%)
Chilli and Cheese Festival	6 (4%)	5 (10%)	1 (1%)
Bonfire Night	6 (4%)	3 (6%)	3 (3%)
Gin/Prosecco Festival	5 (3%)	3 (6%)	2 (2%)
Cycling events	3 (2%)	2 (4%)	1 (1%)
Fashion Week	3 (2%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)
Chamber Music Festival	2 (1%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
Running events	2 (1%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)
Winchestival	2 (1%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)
Poetry Festival	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
Arts events (in general)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
Events at the Theatre	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Cathedral events	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Hares of Hampshire	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Not aware of any	46 (30%)	3 (6%)	43 (41%)

### 3.5 Staffing levels during festivals

Overall, 5% of all businesses always increase staffing levels during festivals, and a further 11% sometimes do. 84% did not increase their staffing levels at these times. However, when split by location, those in the city were more likely to increase their number of staff during festivals than those in the wider district. The need for staff increases was mainly felt by food and drink businesses.

**Table 8: Staffing levels during festivals**

	Total	Winchester City	Rest of district
<b>Base:</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>49 (32%)</b>	<b>102 (68%)</b>
Yes – all the time	5%	14%	1%
Yes – some of the time	11%	18%	7%
No	84%	67%	92%
Unsure	1%	2%	0%

### 3.6 Marketing and promotions

Asked if they undertook any special marketing or promotions during festivals to increase trading opportunities, only 7% overall did. This was higher in the city itself with 8% doing this some of the time and 4% all of the time, compared with 4% and 1% respectively in the wider district. This was mainly undertaken by food and drink establishments.

This means that, overall, 91% of businesses are missing the opportunity during festivals and events to increase trade.

**Table 9: Whether undertake special marketing during festivals**

	Total	Winchester City	Rest of district
<b>Base:</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>48 (32%)</b>	<b>104 (68%)</b>
Yes – all the time	2%	4%	1%
Yes – some of the time	5%	8%	4%
No	91%	88%	93%
Unsure	1%	0%	2%

### 3.7 Turnover during festivals

Businesses were asked if they noticed an increase or decrease in their turnover during festivals, to what extent they felt the festival was responsible for this rise or fall in turnover.

Overall, 30% felt that festivals were responsible to some degree for an increase in turnover at that time, ranging from 9% that said a great extent, 17% to some extent and 4% a little extent. These proportions were higher in the city 58% felt they were in some way responsible for an increase, compared to 17% in the rest of the district.

When split by business type, 32% of food and drink businesses and 35% of accommodation businesses felt some form of increase in turnover, compared with 15% of other types of business.

**Table 10: Increase in turnover**

	Total	Winchester City	Rest of district
<b>Base:</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>48 (32%)</b>	<b>103 (68%)</b>
A great extent	9%	21%	3%
Some extent	17%	31%	11%
A little extent	4%	6%	3%
Not as a result of festival	70%	42%	83%

When it came to whether there was a decrease in turnover during festivals, only 7% of businesses overall felt some form of negative impact. This was mainly felt by food and drink businesses where 7% said that they felt a negative impact.

**Table 11: Decrease in turnover**

	Total	Winchester City	Rest of district
<b>Base:</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>34 (29%)</b>	<b>85 (71%)</b>
A great extent	3%	6%	2%
Some extent	2%	3%	1%
A little extent	2%	0%	2%
Not as a result of festival	93%	91%	94%

### **3.8 Overall perception of festivals**

Businesses were asked what their overall perception of festivals and events were in terms of their impact on Winchester and the district as a whole. In total, 106 businesses passed comment on this (40 in Winchester city and 66 from the wider district).

On the positive side, of those that passed a comment, 28 said that there was an increase in business when festivals or events were occurring (14 from Winchester city and 14 from elsewhere in the district). Eight businesses felt it put Winchester on the map and was good for Winchester. Twelve food and drink businesses said that they had an increase in passing trade due to festivals and events. Four businesses felt that they increase tourists and two said that they were good for local people. Two businesses felt that cycling and sports events definitely had a positive impact.

On the negative side, 14 businesses (11 of which were outside the city) said that they had no impact from festivals and a further 24 said that they felt too far away to be impacted. Seven businesses within the city felt that the impact would only be felt if you were on or near the High Street. Three food and drink businesses outside the city commented that Boomtown had a negative impact on them. One food and drink business in the city said that beer tents had a major impact on their trade.

A number of businesses suggested that more or earlier advertising and signposting be done to promote any festivals or events. Six accommodation businesses in the wider district said that they actively promote Winchester festivals and events either at their location or on their websites.

There were seven businesses that asked to be contacted for information on how they could do more advertising for festivals and events in the area. The contact details will be provided separately to this report.



## **4 ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY**

### **4.1 Festivals and events in other cultural cities**

Desktop research was conducted to establish what major festivals and events are held in 'competitor' cultural cities across the country. It is hoped that by understanding what is on offer in other similar destinations, Winchester can further develop or modify the festivals that they currently hold and, perhaps, gain some useful ideas on new festivals that could fill gaps in the current offering.

The cities that were researched were: Bath, York, Lincoln, Edinburgh and Oxford. The number of major festivals or events ranged from 7 in Lincoln to 25 in Oxford. The majority of these events are based within the city centres, however, as with Winchester, a number are held in the greater district.

A number of festivals are similar to those held in Winchester such as the Christmas Market, Bonfire and Firework events and running or cycling events. Others are focused around food and drink or the arts. A number of festivals appear to be linked to important people or events linked to the city or area, something that Winchester could potentially capitalise on with King Alfred or Jane Austen and others.

A full list of these festivals and further details about them can be seen in Appendix 5.

### **4.2 Supplementary research**

As Tourism South East organises one of the biggest travel trade exhibitions in the country, a number of surveys have been conducted during the past two years amongst group travel organisers (GTO's) and community/social groups regarding their feelings about attending large events (not just static exhibitions).

The most recent survey (December 2021) showed that on a scale of 0 to 10 their confidence in going on an organised trip to an event was at point 8 for 22% of GTO's and 17% of groups.

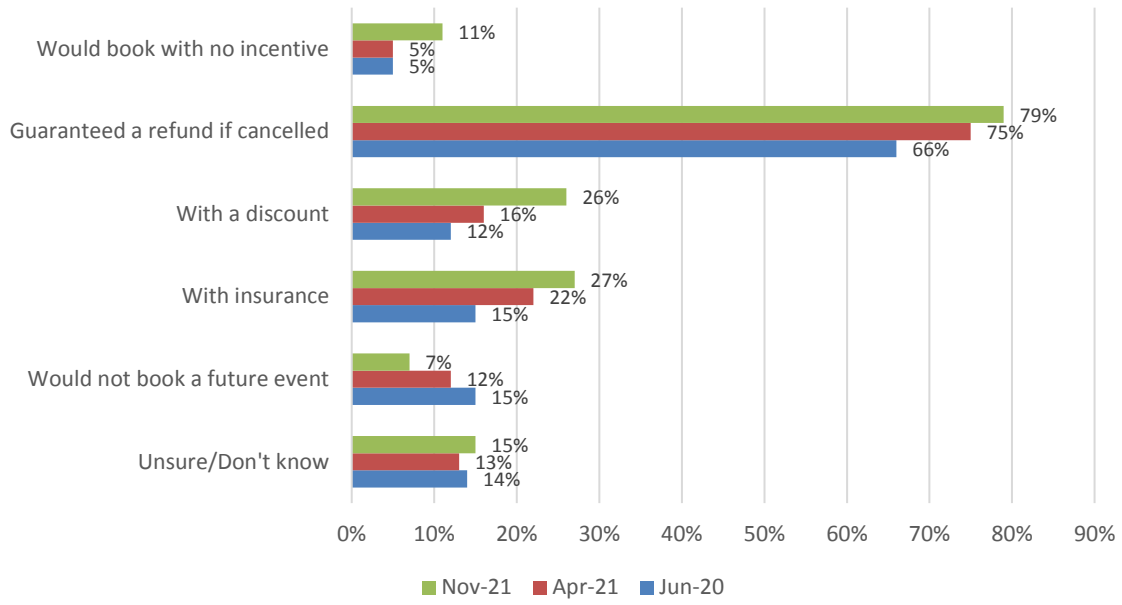
Nearly half (48%) of all respondents were expecting to take groups of between 26 and 50 people to any events they attend and 57% were planning on going to 5 or more events this year.

Also, since the start of the pandemic, Tourism South East has conducted three online 'Visitor Sentiment' surveys in order to gauge the opinions of potential visitors to the South East on a variety of questions regarding day and overnight trips. These surveys have been completed by between 1,500 and 2,500 people.

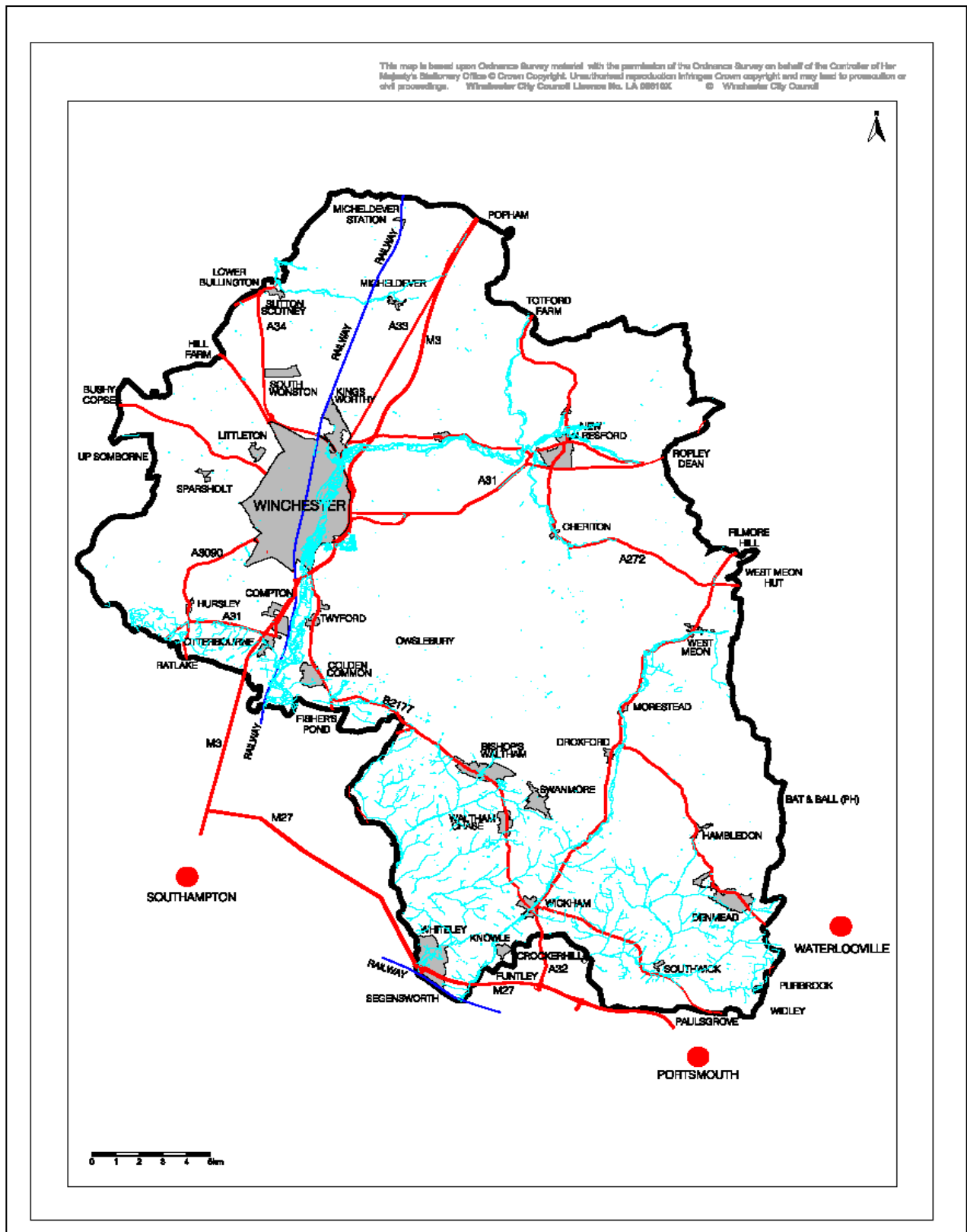
One of the questions asked is the confidence felt for booking future events. This is in light of a number of events having been cancelled and members of the public losing money as a result. As can be seen in Figure 1, overleaf, earlier in the pandemic only 5% would book with no incentive, compared with 11% most recently. The number that would book if a refund was guaranteed has increased from 66% in June 2020, to 75% in April 2021 and now 79% in November 2021.

The proportion that would not book for a future event has decreased from 15% at the start of the pandemic to 7% in the latest survey.

**Figure 1: Confidence in booking future events**



APPENDIX 1: Map of Winchester District



**APPENDIX 2: Copy of Festival organiser questionnaire**

**Winchester Festival Impact Survey**

Please complete the following questions as thoroughly as you can based on when you delivered the festival in 2019 (or the last time you delivered the festival). If you do not know the exact answer, please provide a best estimate if possible.

Please state the year this data relates to: \_\_\_\_\_

What was the overall income of the festival? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your overall costs for this event? \_\_\_\_\_

How many people are involved in the delivery of your event?

- 1 - 3 people
- 4 - 10 people
- 11 - 20 people
- 21+ people

Considering the whole festival from inception to post delivery - how many paid staff do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_

Of the paid staff, what is the total amount of hours they work within this period?

\_\_\_\_\_

Considering the whole festival from inception to post delivery - how many volunteers do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_

Of the volunteer staff, what is the total amount of hours they work within this period?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us the number of people attending the festival over the last five operating years:

Year 1 (most recent) \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Year 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Year 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Year 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Could you estimate split between residents, day visitors and overnight visitors attending your festival?

Day visitors % \_\_\_\_\_

Residents % \_\_\_\_\_

Staying visitors % \_\_\_\_\_

Do you sell tickets for this event?

- Yes
- No

How many days does your festival run for? \_\_\_\_\_

Please outline your plans for the future of your festival?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please outline any perceived barriers to the success/growth of your festival?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

### APPENDIX 3: List of Festivals for 2022

Children of Winchester Festival	19 <sup>th</sup> February
Wickham Beer Festival	8 <sup>th</sup> April – 10 <sup>th</sup> April
Winchester Chamber Music Festival	28 <sup>th</sup> April – 1 <sup>st</sup> May
Hampshire Pride	30 <sup>th</sup> April
Winchester Fashion Week	4 <sup>th</sup> April – 9 <sup>th</sup> April
Winchester Mayfest	21 <sup>st</sup> May
Winchester Ukulele Festival	11 <sup>th</sup> June
The Grange Festival	9 <sup>th</sup> June – 14 <sup>th</sup> July
Alresford Watercress Festival	15 <sup>th</sup> May
Winchester Prosecco Festival	20 <sup>th</sup> May – 21 <sup>st</sup> May
Winchester Cocktail Week	6 <sup>th</sup> June – 12 <sup>th</sup> June
Hares of Hampshire	16 <sup>th</sup> June – 25 <sup>th</sup> August
Cheese and Chilli Festival	18 <sup>th</sup> June – 19 <sup>th</sup> June
Hat Fair	1 <sup>st</sup> July – 3 <sup>rd</sup> July
Hampshire Food Festival	1 <sup>st</sup> July – 31 <sup>st</sup> July
Winchester Foodies Festival	15 <sup>th</sup> July – 17 <sup>th</sup> July
Wickham Festival	4 <sup>th</sup> August – 7 <sup>th</sup> August
Boomtown 2022 (Chapter 12 New Beginning)	10 <sup>th</sup> August – 14 <sup>th</sup> August
Winchester Heritage Open Days	9 <sup>th</sup> September – 18 <sup>th</sup> September
Taste of Wickham	11 <sup>th</sup> September
Winchester Jazz Festival	22 <sup>nd</sup> September – 25 <sup>th</sup> September
Winchester Comedy Festival	September/October (Dates TBC)
Winchester Bonfire and Fireworks	5 <sup>th</sup> November
Christmas Lights Switch On	17 <sup>th</sup> November
Christmas Lantern Parade	18 <sup>th</sup> November
Winchester Christmas Market	18 <sup>th</sup> November – 22 <sup>nd</sup> December

#### **APPENDIX 4: Map of Festival Locations**

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/viewer?mid=1JwipYhbFFp3\\_9QXInWCzVhyRXILoLpz&ll=51.01289702543649%2C-1.2389660499999922&z=11](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/viewer?mid=1JwipYhbFFp3_9QXInWCzVhyRXILoLpz&ll=51.01289702543649%2C-1.2389660499999922&z=11)

## APPENDIX 5: Copy of surrounding businesses questionnaire

Location of business:

- Winchester  Elsewhere in the district

Type of business:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants     | <input type="checkbox"/> Petrol station   | <input type="checkbox"/> Caravan and camping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pubs            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels/Motels    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other non-serviced  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cafes/Takeaways | <input type="checkbox"/> B&Bs/Guesthouses | <input type="checkbox"/> Other               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other shops     | <input type="checkbox"/> Self catering    |  |

Specific festivals/events aware of:

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Whether increase staffing levels during festivals?

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - all the time     | <input type="checkbox"/> No     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - some of the time | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |

Whether undertake any special marketing or promotions during festivals to increase trading opportunities?

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - all the time     | <input type="checkbox"/> No     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - some of the time | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |

If you notice an increase in turnover during festivals, to what extent do you feel festival is responsible for this increase?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A great extent | <input type="checkbox"/> A little extent                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some extent    | <input type="checkbox"/> Not a result of the festival (due to other reasons) |

If you notice a decrease in turnover during festivals, to what extent do you feel festival is responsible for this decrease?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A great extent | <input type="checkbox"/> A little extent                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some extent    | <input type="checkbox"/> Not a result of the festival (due to other reasons) |

What is your overall perception of festivals and events in terms of their impact on Winchester and the district as a whole? eg. does it help put Winchester on the map; increase tourism; bring extra income to businesses; cause noise/congestion; etc.

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## APPENDIX 6: Festivals and events in other cultural cities

Bath		
Bath on Ice	With music to set the wintery scene, a cosy bar area and seasonal drinks you will be transported to a dreamy winter wonderland. Spanning 1,000 square metres. totalguidetobath.com, welcometobath.co.uk, stayinbath.org	12 November 2021 - 3 January
Bath Bachfest	Three day annual Bath Bachfest, is a delightful fixture in the Georgian city's annual calendar, celebrating the music of J S Bach and his contemporaries. Over 3,000 visitors. <a href="https://bathfestivals.org.uk">https://bathfestivals.org.uk</a> <a href="https://visitbath.co.uk/whats-on/festivals">https://visitbath.co.uk/whats-on/festivals</a> <a href="https://www.totalguidetobath.com/entertainment/festivals-in-bath/">https://www.totalguidetobath.com/entertainment/festivals-in-bath/</a>	17 - 19 February
Bath Mozartfest	This annual festival presents great music, with a special emphasis on the works of Mozart, in performances of the highest quality, amidst the splendid surroundings of Bath and its historic buildings. At locations across Bath, Bath Mozartfest was created in 1991 thanks to a generous bequest by Mrs Mary Purnell, in memory of her late son Mark who adored the music of Mozart and the City of Bath. <a href="http://bathmozartfest.org.uk">bathmozartfest.org.uk</a>	17 - 19 February
Bath Comedy Festival	Bath Comedy Festival features both famous household names and the stars of tomorrow in a fantastic mix of comedy including stand-up, sketch comedy, cabaret, kids' shows, music, magic & mystery tours - 20 days. Curated and produced by Bath Comedy. <a href="http://bathcomedy.com">bathcomedy.com</a> , <a href="http://totalguidetobath.com">totalguidetobath.com</a> , <a href="http://fodors.com">fodors.com</a> , <a href="http://visitsomerset.co.uk">visitsomerset.co.uk</a>	1 - 20 April
The Bath Festival	The Bath Festival 2022 will be a celebration of music and books with a diverse programme over ten days from 13 – 22 May 2022. Over 130 events, over 2,000 visitors with over 2,000 performers. <a href="http://bathfestivals.org">bathfestivals.org</a> , <a href="http://totalguidetobath.com">totalguidetobath.com</a> , <a href="http://visitbath.co.uk">visitbath.co.uk</a>	13 - 22 May
Pub in the Park	Pub in the Park will be heading to beautiful Bath from 18th - 20th June 2022. Don't miss this glorious three day culinary and musical feast. <a href="http://pubintheparkuk.com">pubintheparkuk.com</a> , <a href="http://totalguidetobath.com">totalguidetobath.com</a>	18 - 20 June
The Gin and Rum Festival at The Pavilion	The UK's largest Gin & Rum Festival tour. 120+ different craft gins and spirits, adults only. <a href="http://thegintomytonic.com">thegintomytonic.com</a> , <a href="http://totalguidetobath.com">totalguidetobath.com</a> , <a href="http://eatdrinkseek.co.uk">eatdrinkseek.co.uk</a>	19 - 20 August
The Jane Austen Festival	Jane Austen Festival for an immersive Regency experience. Walk alongside 500 costumed Jane Austen fans in the spectacular, opening Grand Regency Costumed Promenade. The highlight of the festival for many, this record-breaking event beings at the Holburne Museum and continues across Pulteney Bridge, past many landmarks in central Bath. Over 3,500 people taking part. <a href="http://janeaustenfestivalbath.co.uk">janeaustenfestivalbath.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://visitbath.co.uk">visitbath.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://totalguidetobath.com">totalguidetobath.com</a>	9 - 18 September
Bathscape Walking Festival	The annual Bathscape Walking Festival takes place from 10th to 25th September 2022, showcasing Bath as a fantastic walking destination and landscape city. <a href="http://bathscapewalkingfestival.co.uk">bathscapewalkingfestival.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://bathscape.co.uk">bathscape.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://welcometobath.co.uk">welcometobath.co.uk</a>	10 - 25 September



The Great Bath Feast	The Great Bath Feast, in association with The Bertinet Kitchen, celebrates the best food and drink in the South West, as well as taste-sensations from further afield, appealing to culinary connoisseurs everywhere. The festival kicks off with a buzzing market on Milsom Street in Bath with chef demos, pop-ups and a Food & Drink trail for all to enjoy. Attracts visitors from more than 50km away. <a href="http://greatbathfeast.co.uk">greatbathfeast.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://thebathguide.com">thebathguide.com</a> , <a href="http://welcometobath.co.uk">welcometobath.co.uk</a>	23 - 25 September
Bath Children's Literature Festival	Europe's largest dedicated children's literature festival which brings a host of writers and illustrators to the city for live, interactive events for young people of all ages. <a href="http://bathfestivals.org">bathfestivals.org</a> , <a href="http://totalguidetobath.com">totalguidetobath.com</a>	23 September - 2 October
Bath Carnival	Bath Carnival 2022 will transform the streets of Bath with a free Carnival throughout the city centre. You will experience fantastic sound systems, hundreds of drummers and professional carnival dancers, schools and community groups. Attracts 30,000 visitors. <a href="http://bathcarnival.co.uk">bathcarnival.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://totalguidetobath.com">totalguidetobath.com</a> , <a href="http://greatwestway.co.uk">greatwestway.co.uk</a>	TBC
<b>York</b>		
York Resident's Festival	The event is organised as a way of saying thank you to residents for the warm welcome they give to York's 6.9 million visitors each year, with attractions opening up their doors free of charge for the weekend. 6.9 million visitors each year. <a href="http://visityork.org">visityork.org</a> , <a href="http://yorkmix.com">yorkmix.com</a> , <a href="http://bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk">bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk</a>	January
York's Ice Festival	Forty magnificent ice sculptures transforming York's city centre. 31,000 visitors in 2020. <a href="http://visityork.org">visityork.org</a> , <a href="http://yorkmix.com">yorkmix.com</a> , <a href="http://bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk">bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://york360.co.uk">york360.co.uk</a>	5 - 6 February
Jorvik Viking Festival	Storytelling to 'Have-a-Go' Sword Combat and Archery. Attracts more than 40,000 visitors. <a href="http://jorvikvikingfestival.co.uk">jorvikvikingfestival.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk">jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk">bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk</a>	19 - 27 February
York Literature Festival	This has been a staple in York's cultural scene since 2007. Events include talks, performances, workshops, poetry, theatre, cinema and reading groups across a 16-day period. 1,000-5,000 visitors, 100-500 exhibitors. <a href="http://yorkliteraturefestival.co.uk">yorkliteraturefestival.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://yorkmix.com">yorkmix.com</a> , <a href="http://york360.co.uk">york360.co.uk</a>	19 - 28 March
York Chocolate Festival	The festival including the markets and demos are FREE entry. Specific events are at various prices (which can be found on the website programme). The festival market, bars, food factory and demonstrations are located on Parliament Street and St Sampson's Square. Events such as wine tastings, dinners, trails etc are city wide. <a href="http://yorkfoodfestival.com">yorkfoodfestival.com</a> , <a href="http://yorknaburnlock.com">yorknaburnlock.com</a> , <a href="http://yorkchocolatefestival.co.uk">yorkchocolatefestival.co.uk</a>	14 - 18 April
Bloom York	Jam-packed programme of events, pop-up gardens, installations and more, for each and every one of you to enjoy next summer at BLOOM. <a href="http://creativetourist.com">creativetourist.com</a> , <a href="http://yorkracecourse.co.uk">yorkracecourse.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://yorkpress.co.uk">yorkpress.co.uk</a>	June
York Food & Drink Taster Festival	There will be a food market in the city centre and food tastings.	10 - 12 June
York Balloon Fiesta	50 hot air balloons taking to the skies above York, a live music stage featuring some of the UK's best tribute acts, arena stunt show and falconry display and so much more will help make York's biggest family-friendly weekend at the end of August. Approximately 40,000 visitors, 3 day festival. <a href="http://yorkshireballoonfiesta.co.uk">yorkshireballoonfiesta.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://yorkshire.com">yorkshire.com</a>	August
York Food & Drink Festival	There is a large market on Parliament Street as well as marquees for food demonstrations and tastings. There are also events throughout the city like wine or port tasting, a gin fair and different food offerings. <a href="http://yorkfoodfestival.com">yorkfoodfestival.com</a> , <a href="http://yorkshire.com">yorkshire.com</a> , <a href="http://york360.co.uk">york360.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://visityork.org">visityork.org</a>	September

Yorktoberfest	York is set to enjoy beer, bratwurst and all things Bavarian when a brand-new event – Yorktoberfest – comes to York Racecourse this October. <a href="http://yorktoberfest.co.uk">yorktoberfest.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk">bestthingstodoinyork.co.uk</a>	October
York Christmas Festival	The charming alpine chalets will once again line the streets from 18 November to 23 December, with local businesses selling everything from handmade gifts to delicious treats. 5.5k to 6.5k visitors per day, visitor profile: 80% female, over 35's. <a href="http://visityork.org">visityork.org</a> , <a href="http://yorkshirefoodguide.co.uk">yorkshirefoodguide.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://yorkshirewonders.co.uk">yorkshirewonders.co.uk</a>	18 November - 23 December
York Festival of Christmas – St Nicholas' Festival Christmas in Narnia	35 day Christmas market, more than 2 million people through the market. <a href="http://visityork.org">visityork.org</a> , <a href="http://yorkshire.com">yorkshire.com</a>  Join us for an enchanting time to see the lavishly decorated interiors of Castle Howard transformed. Enjoy breath-taking dramatic installations, lighting and soundscapes evoking everything we love about this special time of year. <a href="http://yorkshire.com">yorkshire.com</a> , <a href="http://yorkshirewonders.co.uk">yorkshirewonders.co.uk</a>	December
<b>Lincoln</b>		
Lincoln Grand Prix	Covering 13 laps and 102 miles around the historic parts of Lincoln, the Lincoln Grand Prix has been voted as the country's favourite one day cycle race both by the riders and the public. <a href="http://lincolngrandprix.com">lincolngrandprix.com</a> , <a href="http://visitlincoln.com">visitlincoln.com</a>	May
The Lincolnshire Show	A celebration of all things Lincolnshire including agriculture, heritage, food, drink, and aviation. Around 60,000 visitors per year, 600 trade stands. <a href="http://lincolnshireshow.co.uk">lincolnshireshow.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://lincolnshireshowground.co.uk">lincolnshireshowground.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://visitlincoln.com">visitlincoln.com</a>	22 - 23 June
The Lost Village Festival	Lost Village is a surreal festival experience that takes place in a secluded woodland near the village of Norton Disney, Lincolnshire. Festival-goers are invited to explore an abandoned world that encompasses dilapidated buildings, old junkyards, hidden gardens and a disused airbase. <a href="http://lostvillagefestival.com">lostvillagefestival.com</a>	25 - 28 August
Asylum steampunk festival	A weekend of imagination and creativity and at the Castle – where the Victorian and Edwardian past meets a future that never was - thousands of splendidly dressed participants will enjoy shows, demonstrations, music, and much more. Attracts around 100,000 visitors. <a href="http://asylumsteampunk.co.uk">asylumsteampunk.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://visitlincoln.com">visitlincoln.com</a> , <a href="http://lincolnshire.gov.uk">lincolnshire.gov.uk</a>	26 - 29 August
Lincoln Christmas Market	Every year, stalls, performers, and festive cheer take over Lincoln's Cathedral Quarter for four days of festive entertainment, shopping, and food and drink. 150 stalls, around 276,000 visitors. <a href="http://lincoln-christmasmarket.co.uk">lincoln-christmasmarket.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://visitlincoln.com">visitlincoln.com</a>	2 - 5 December
Lincoln Castle Illuminated	Lincoln Castle Illuminated will offer families and friends some much needed festive sparkle with the return of this beautiful and special Christmas experience. <a href="http://lincolncastle.com">lincolncastle.com</a> , <a href="http://lincolnshire.gov.uk">lincolnshire.gov.uk</a> , <a href="http://lincoln-rocks.co.uk">lincoln-rocks.co.uk</a>	11 - 23 December
Lincoln Mystery Plays	Every 4 years, 42 plays. <a href="http://lincolnmysteries.co.uk">lincolnmysteries.co.uk</a>	TBC
<b>Edinburgh</b>		
Edinburgh International Science Festival	120 speakers both online and in 30 venues across Edinburgh for a diverse programme of over 200 events, including outdoor exhibitions, tours and trails, workshops, discussions and family shows. Free and ticketed events across 29 Edinburgh venues, over 179,000 people involved in events. <a href="http://sciencefestival.co.uk">sciencefestival.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a> , <a href="http://scotland.org">scotland.org</a>	9 - 24 April

Edinburgh International Children's Festival	The Edinburgh International Children's Festival is a 9-day festival dedicated to offering family-friendly entertainment in the form of theatre and dance. The Festival celebrates the best of children's theatre and dance from around the world. Over 10,000 visitors. <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a> , <a href="http://edinburgh.org">edinburgh.org</a> , <a href="http://scotland.org">scotland.org</a>	7 - 15 May
Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival	Edinburgh Jazz Festival was set up in 1978 by banjo-player and guitarist, Mike Hart. Mike's initial focus was on traditional jazz and a host of events taking place for free admission in pubs. By the mid-80's the Festival had added ticketed events, and had broadened its musical policy to encompass swing and mainstream jazz and occasionally some more modern groups. 950 local, Scottish and international performers in 16 venues and 13 wards. <a href="http://edinburghjazzfestival.com">edinburghjazzfestival.com</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a> , <a href="http://whatsoninedinburgh.com">whatsoninedinburgh.com</a>	15 - 24 July
The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo	The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is an annual series of military tattoos performed by British Armed Forces, Commonwealth and international military bands, and artistic performance teams on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. Over 8,000 spectators. <a href="http://edintattoo.co.uk">edintattoo.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a> , <a href="http://edinburghcastle.scot">edinburghcastle.scot</a>	5 - 27 August
Edinburgh Fringe Festival	The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the world's largest arts festival, which in 2018 spanned 25 days and featured more than 55,000 performances of 3,548 different shows in 317 venues. Collaboration with 32 Edinburgh Community organisations, over 850,000 tickets sold in 2019, 157 countries represented. <a href="http://efringe.com">efringe.com</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a>	5 - 29 August
Edinburgh International Festival	A world class cultural event to bring together audiences and artists from around the world, and over 70 years has gone from strength to strength. For three weeks in August, Scotland's capital becomes an unparalleled celebration of the performing arts and an annual meeting point for people of all nations. Approximately 2,800 artists and 430,000 attendees. <a href="http://www.eif.co.uk">www.eif.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a>	6 - 28 August
Edinburgh International Book Festival	It is a distinctive international showcase celebrating the written word, literature and ideas. It brings leading and emerging international, British and Scottish authors and thinkers together to inspire each other and audiences in an extensive programme of public events. Over 900 events and around 250,000 visitors. <a href="http://edbookfest.co.uk">edbookfest.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a> , <a href="http://edinburgh.org">edinburgh.org</a>	13 - 29 August
Edinburgh Art Festival	Edinburgh Art Festival is the platform for the visual arts at the heart of Edinburgh's August festivals, bringing together the capital's leading galleries, museums, production facilities and artist-run spaces in a city-wide celebration of the very best in visual art. Over 50 exhibitions and 140 plus events across over 40 venues. 80% of the festival is free to attend, 32 day programme. <a href="http://edinburghartfestival.com">edinburghartfestival.com</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcamping.com">edinburghfestivalcamping.com</a>	August
Edinburgh International Film Festival	Provides a platform for the best in world cinema. Around 500 filmmakers attend. <a href="http://edfilmfest.org.uk">edfilmfest.org.uk</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a>	August
Scottish International Storytelling Festival	The Festival takes place in October each year, as the seasons change with long nights drawing families and friends around the hearth, inspired by the Scottish ceilidh tradition and its sense of togetherness – a community gathering full of tales, anecdotes, music, songs and ballads. Approximately 110 performers. <a href="http://sisf.org.uk">sisf.org.uk</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a> , <a href="http://tracscotland.org">tracscotland.org</a>	14 - 30 October

Edinburgh's Hogmanay	The big events include a torchlight procession and other entertainment on December 30th, a massive outdoor street party, concerts, and fireworks on December 31st, and then the Loony Dook (a morning dunk in a river) and smaller public entertainment options on January 1st. 71% of visitors interviewed in 2019, said this festival was the only or main reason to visit Edinburgh. Over 180,000 visitors. <a href="http://edinburghshogmanay.com">edinburghshogmanay.com</a> , <a href="http://edinburghfestivalcity.com">edinburghfestivalcity.com</a>	30 December - 1 January
<b>Oxford</b>		
Oxford International Women's Festival	The Oxford International Women's Festival exists to celebrate women's achievements and solidarity and to highlight local, national and international issues. It is organised by local women to reflect a wide range of backgrounds and experiences – and has played a significant part in the community for over a quarter of a century. <a href="http://oiwf.org">oiwf.org</a>	February, March
Dancin' Oxford Festival	Dancin' Oxford involves successful and well co-ordinated partnership working between key organisations in the area. Festival partners are Pegasus Theatre, Oxford Playhouse, North Wall Arts Centre, The Mill Arts Centre (Banbury), Cornerstone Arts Centre (Didcot), Oxford City Council, Westgate Shopping Centre and Oxford Dance Forum. In 2016, they had 211 artists, 586 participants and over 6,500 audience members. <a href="http://dancinoxford.co.uk">dancinoxford.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://oxford.gov.uk">oxford.gov.uk</a>	March, July, October
Folk Festival Weekend	Unique opportunities to see top quality performers in intimate and beautiful settings around Oxford city centre. <a href="http://folkweekendoxford.co.uk">folkweekendoxford.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://carnifest.com">carnifest.com</a>	April
Town & Gown	Oxford Town and Gown is the oldest run in the series. It started in 1982 by local runners as a fun run to raise funds for muscular dystrophy and still to this day all profits from the race go to Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK). Shortlisted for the best UK running series at the 2019 running awards. <a href="http://townandgown10k.com">townandgown10k.com</a> , <a href="http://theoxfordmagazine.com">theoxfordmagazine.com</a>	May
Bike Oxford	Bike Oxford offers cyclists of all abilities the opportunity to ride signposted routes of either 80, 50 or 20 miles. <a href="http://bikeoxford.co.uk">bikeoxford.co.uk</a>	May
Jewish Cultural Fair	The fair features a selection of Jewish folk music as well as Israeli food stands, Jewish books, art and historic exhibitions. <a href="http://oxfordchabad.org">oxfordchabad.org</a>	May
Oxford Pride	Oxford Pride is a celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer life in Oxfordshire. <a href="http://oxford-pride.org.uk">oxford-pride.org.uk</a>	June
Oxford Green Week	Oxfordshire Great Big Green Week is 8 days of events helping and encouraging people and organisations to act to help tackle the climate crisis, and to protect and improve our environment. There are over 80 events planned across the county. <a href="http://greenweekoxon.co.uk">greenweekoxon.co.uk</a> , <a href="http://greatbiggreenweek.com">greatbiggreenweek.com</a>	June
Florence Park Festival	Flo/GloFest is a purely volunteer run, non profit festival. Any money raised gets put back into making the following year even better. Run entirely by volunteers, approximately 100 local performers. <a href="http://flofest.uk">flofest.uk</a>	June
Headington Festival	Features a host of free entertainment and family fun. <a href="http://headingtonfestival.org.uk">headingtonfestival.org.uk</a>	June
Thai Festival	Oxford Thai Festival celebrated food, traditions and culture from Thailand with a range of performances. Over 2,000 visitors. <a href="http://oxford.gov.uk">oxford.gov.uk</a> , <a href="http://barpubmeta.com">barpubmeta.com</a>	June
Oxford Festival of Arts	Oxford Festival of the Arts is a two-week multidisciplinary celebration that takes place around Oxford and online with something for everyone. Attracts 25,000 visitors and reaches over 250,000 people online. <a href="http://artsfestivaloxford.gov">artsfestivaloxford.gov</a> , <a href="http://mcsoxford.org">mcsoxford.org</a>	June, July

Alice's Day	Alice's Day is a festival held every year to celebrate all things Alice in Wonderland. A wide variety of family-friendly and accessible events will be held across the city. storymuseum.org.uk, oxford.gov.uk, oxme.info, theoxfordmagazine.com	July
Cowley Road Carnival	Iconic street carnival in Oxford, UK which traditionally takes place on the first Sunday in July. The event began in 2001, supported by regeneration funding for the area, and is now one of Oxford's biggest free community events. Attended by around 50,000 visitors. cowleyroadworks.org	July
Cancer Research Race for July	Race organised to raise funds for cancer research.	July
Blackbird Leys Festival	Wide variety of stalls and activities – ranging from Zorb football, penalty shoot-outs, cricket, rugby, martial arts, bouncy castles and a climbing wall, to craft stalls, DIY face painting, meditation and yoga. Around 4,000 visitors. leysfestival.weebly.com, oxford.gov.uk, theoxfordmagazine.com	July
Cowley Classic Car Show	Car show each year to raise much needed funds for local and international charities. 1,000-5,000 visitors, 200 exhibitors. cowleyclassicarshow.org.uk, rotary-ribi.org	July
Foodies Festival	With over 200 exhibitors and award-winning local artisan producers, a Street Food Village, the Cake & Bake Theatre, a Kids Cookery School, Live Music Stage, Chef's Theatre and Food and Drink Masterclasses, Foodies Festival has all the key ingredients of a great day out for families and for friends. 5,000-20,000 visitors and 100-500 exhibitors. foodiesfestival.com, theoxfordmagazine.com	August, September
St Giles Fair	The fair is normally held on the Monday and Tuesday following the first Sunday after St Giles' Day (1 September). The fair dates back to 1625 when it was a parish festival to celebrate the feast of the patron saint, St Giles. In the 18th century it was a toy fair, then in the early 19th century it was a general children's fair. The funfair grew during mid and late Victorian times. Dates back to 1625. oxford.gov.uk, theoxfordmagazine.com	September
Oxford Art & Craft Market	The Oxford Arts Market takes place on 2 and 3 October in the beautiful and iconic setting of Broad Street Oxford, in the shadow of many of the City's famous landmarks. 150 artists from over 30 countries. theoxfordmagazine.com, oxford.gov.uk, oxonarts.info	October
IF Oxford Science & Ideas Festival	The Festival brought together makeup artists and computer scientists working on AI to test the limits of facial recognition technology with a live demonstration. IF Oxford 2019 reached 16,000 people through 105 events in 35 venues over 11 days. if-oxford.com	October
Oxford Round Table Fireworks Display	Oxfordshire's biggest firework display. Visitors can enjoy a food village, funfair and licenced bar. oxfordfireworks.co.uk, theoxfordmagazine.com	November
Christmas Light Festival	Victorian Christmas market, light trail, Oxford Castle, Headington Winter Lights and Light Garden. Around 100,000 visitors, 100 chalets home to hand-picked exhibitors. oxlightfest.com, theoxfordmagazine.com	November
Oxford Christmas Market	Christmas market with approximately 53 stalls. oxfordchristmasmarket.co.uk, theoxfordmagazine.com, europeanbestdestinations.com	December
Helen & Douglas House Charity Run	Walk, jog or run and raise money for our children's hospice. helenanddouglas.org.uk	TBC

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# DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

2015 – 2020



VISIT  
**WINCHESTER**  
AND THE HEART  
OF HAMPSHIRE



# CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT, MEASURABLE SUCCESS

Working with the tourism team at Winchester City Council over the last two years, I have been continually impressed both by the level of business engagement and the results that this activity delivers.

Attending conferences, networking events and sector partnership meetings I regularly witness an energy in the room that comes from a group of people who know that they have something in common. The people in this industry want to make a difference and, based on the performance of the sector over the last six years, they know they can.

This is not achieved without significant public sector support. Winchester City Council invests over £350,000 in tourism every year, providing a team of committed and qualified marketing and business professionals working at the centre of the Partnership.

If you are either looking to set up a tourism business or are already working in the sector I urge you to engage with the Visit Winchester and Heart of Hampshire Destination Management Partnership.

If you are already a member – thank you for being a part of the future.

## **CLLR ROB HUMBY**

Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder  
for Business Partnerships, Winchester City Council



The South Downs National Park is Britain's newest National Park, recognised as a nationally important and diverse area with outstanding natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. With 43 million individual visits every year, the South Downs is one of the South East's most popular tourist destinations.

The beautiful countryside stretches from Winchester to Beachy Head near Eastbourne. Historic houses, works of art and archaeological monuments plentiful, as are wildlife beauty spots.

We want to help people enjoy the South Downs while at the same time protecting and conserving the natural landscape. National Parks are known as 'Britain's Breathing Spaces'.

Underpinning this are the principles of sustainable tourism, responsible car use, observing the Countryside Code and supporting local businesses during your stay.

Together we can conserve and enhance the South Downs for future generations to enjoy.

## **MARGARET PAREN, OBE**

Chair of South Downs National Park Authority

**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK**



## The Visit Winchester and the Heart of Hampshire Destination Management Partnership was originally founded because local businesses and stakeholders in the tourism sector had strong opinions about what was needed to protect and further the interests of the industry in central Hampshire.

An eight month consultation period with 72 local tourism professionals helped us clarify the forward direction for tourism, namely:

- to join up more behind the scenes in order to make the local tourism infrastructure more coherent;
- to work on a broader destination footprint that made more of the links between rural and city product;
- to deal with recognisable destinations rather than creating new brands with little resonance for consumers.

In August 2011 Winchester City Council launched a destination management partnership with Tourism South East and the South Downs National Park Authority. The income derived from the modest subscription paid by our 65 members and 111 advertisers is reinvested directly into promoting Winchester and the Hampshire area of the South Downs National Park, nationally and internationally.

This way of working has seen the economic impact of tourism in Winchester grow from £292m at the outset of 2010 to £358m by the end of 2015. The number of visitors has also outstripped expectations, rising from 4.3m to 5.6m over the last five years. In East Hampshire tourism saw 7% growth in the first year of the partnership and by 2015 tourism was contributing £198m to the area's economy. In addition to benefits associated with the increased exposure the destinations receive, membership of the partnership offers businesses access to expert advice, discounted training and advertising and significant savings via a raft of high-value bonus packages.

Our challenge is to sustain the growth in tourism whilst ensuring that the infrastructure around the visitor experience is developed in keeping with consumer expectations and demands. We also need to protecting the core appeal of the area – its landscape and historic environment – and factor in the needs of residents. This document looks to recognise this challenge and address it positively.

### **ELLEN SIMPSON**

Head of Communications and Marketing  
Winchester City Council



# FACTS AND FIGURES

Visit Winchester –  
economic impact of tourism:



Number of DMP  
members winning  
Beautiful South  
Awards since  
the DMP was  
established: 28

Value of column inches netted  
in national publications by PR  
campaigns for Winchester since  
August 2011: £7.8m

South Downs  
National Park –  
estimated no. of  
day trips in 2011:  
43m

Visit Winchester –  
number of day trips:

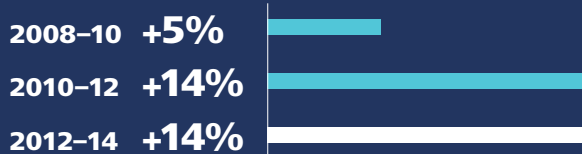


Value of column  
inches netted  
by 'double  
destination' Jane  
Austen Pride &  
Prejudice 200  
campaign in first  
six months  
of 2012: £613k

Average monthly visitors to  
www.visitwinchester.co.uk:

550,799 sessions  
427,651 users

Visit Winchester –  
number of day trips  
pace of growth:



Number of visitors  
to Winchester  
Tourist Information  
Centre:

April 2014 – March 2017  
371,997

# STRATEGIC CONTENT



- VisitEngland encourages and supports the development of Destination Management Plans throughout England as an essential tool in the delivery of a successful visitor economy. National Government policy encourages destination organisations to become focussed and efficient bodies that are increasingly led by the private sector. Destination Management Plans are one mechanism to achieve this.
- A Destination Management Plan is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take and the apportionment of resources.
- In these definitions, 'manage' and 'management' are taken in their widest sense. Crucially, destination management includes the planning, development and marketing of a destination as well as how it is managed physically, financially, operationally and in other ways.
- Broadly, a Destination Management Plan is equivalent to a Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in a destination.
- This Destination Management Plan relates to the Economic Prosperity strand of Winchester City Council's Community Strategy 2010–20; and East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority's Partnership Management Plan.
- The following organisations formed the **Visit Winchester and the Heart of Hampshire Destination Management Partnership** to support tourism in Winchester and the Hampshire area of the South Downs:

# OUR VISION

To increase the contribution visitors make to the prosperity and social and environmental wellbeing of Winchester and the Hampshire area of the South Downs National Park.



## OVERALL OUTCOMES

- To articulate and realise a vision, goals and objectives for Winchester and the Hampshire Area of the South Downs National Park's visitor economy in partnership with stakeholders in the private and public sectors.
- To increase the economic impact of tourism in the Winchester and East Hampshire Districts by 10% over five years.
- To raise the national and international profiles of Winchester and the Hampshire area of the South Downs National Park as destinations e.g. via the work of two PR consortia.
- To increase duration of stay for visitors through meaningful product development in both destinations by:
  - targeting new markets with developed product itineraries for the Winchester District and the South Downs National Park;
  - encouraging staying visitors who will contribute to the local economy in Winchester and the Hampshire area of the South Downs National Park in line with Winchester City Council's Community Strategy and East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park's Partnership Management Plan.
- To continue to sensitively develop and enhance the visitor experience, making both destinations more competitive and ensuring their sustainability.
- To continue to build on our partnerships with the private and public sector in order to maintain dynamism within the Destination Management Partnership.



# AIM 1

We will further the interests of the tourism industry locally by developing the destination through a commitment to:

- Consult with and influence key tourism stakeholders in the public and private sectors to commit to a shared vision and implement an agreed action plan for tourism that delivers significant positive impacts locally;
- Raise the profile of Winchester and the Hampshire area of the South Downs National Park amongst potential tourism markets;
- Improve impacts on local businesses via improved referral rates and measurable campaign results;
- Attract more private sector partners to the growing DMP, thus increasing investment and long term sustainability of the destinations.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**For the 27 months before the Destination Management Partnership (DMP) was established, the value of column inches netted by the Discover Winchester consortium in the national media averaged £59k per calendar month – this increased to £103k per month for the same number of months after the establishment of the DMP. The consortium is co-ordinated by Winchester City Council and a PR agency is commissioned by a group of businesses who are passionate about raising Winchester’s profile. Flagship Consulting in London acted for the group from 2009 until 2017 and a new agency - PR Media Co - has been appointed for 2018.**

# AIM 2

We will drive results from our marketing and PR activities and:

- Continue to evolve and build:
  1. the Visit Winchester brand;
  2. the South Downs National Park visual identity
- Work with private and public sector partners across Hampshire to promote Winchester and the surrounding area more effectively and efficiently to a broader audience using joined up campaigns for improved efficiency; and specifically:
  1. Promote the offers of both destinations more dynamically and to new audiences using social media, online PR and an improved website presence via solus destination and shared footprint campaigns implemented by Winchester City Council, East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park;
  2. Raise the profile of the cultural/events scene across the Winchester district using online and customer-facing channels;
  3. Measure the results of the DMP investments via a regular survey that reviews the economic impact of tourism.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

**The award-winning 'King Alf' social media presence tweets and Facebook posts about events, local news and tourism attractions to an audience of 9,000 residents, visitors and journalists. King Alf was the first travel social media presence to be featured in the leading travel journal, Frommer's Guide.**



# AIM 3

We are committed to enhancing quality, service and visitor experience so we will:

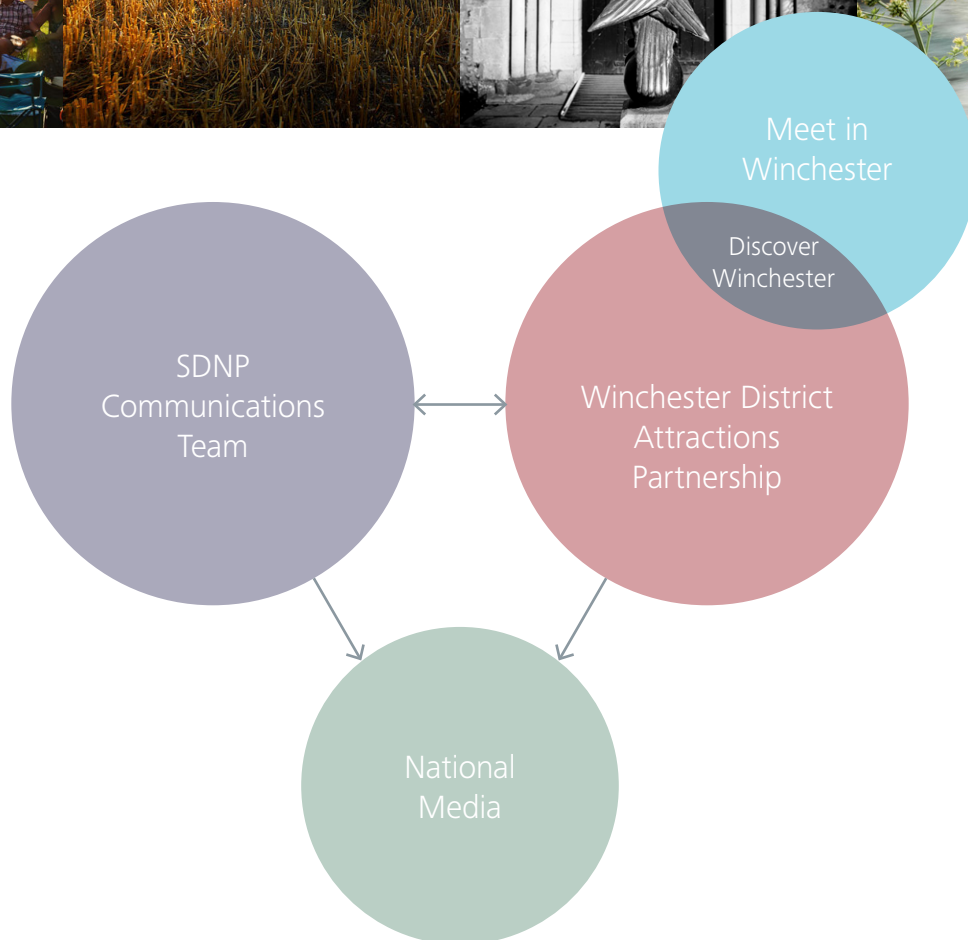
- Improve the range and quality of the product offer and visitor services to maintain and where possible increase high levels of visitor satisfaction;
- Maintain a consultative, adaptable approach to quality and accreditation schemes and continually review systems – balancing industry and visitor needs.
- Lobby for improvements to the visitor gateway and connectivity for visitors travelling to and around Winchester and East Hampshire including; air, road, rail and public transport;
- Serve and engage local communities, including them in tourism related consultations and informing them of new developments;
- Retain the nationally recognised expertise at Winchester Tourist Information Centre as a key service provider in terms of dealing with residents, visitors, partners and businesses;
- Offer an informed opinion on tourism related pre-planning and full planning applications; and specifically...
  1. Ensure that the tourism potential in Winchester arising from both the Central Winchester Regeneration and Station Approach developments are fully explored and realised; and the 'gateway to the South Downs' initiatives in Winchester are supported;
  2. Maintain our commitment to embracing, promoting and rewarding low carbon business practice;
  3. Continue to monitor and explore the realistic potential for hotel investment locally;
  4. Support and advise events organisers ensuring that visitors experience safe, memorable and well organised events;
  5. Encourage partners and members to commit to making the destination accessible for all.
  6. Showcase local food & drink and support businesses who make efforts to source local ingredients for their menus; and also promote Winchester as a 'Fairtrade City', by engaging further businesses.





# PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

There are currently 65 businesses who are members of the DMP across the Winchester district. Members work together with the three founding partners attending: Tourism South East networking and training events; Attractions Partnership; Meet in Winchester and Discover Winchester meetings in Winchester.



Non-members (advertisers, award winners, events organisers) engage via the advertising, quality and awards initiatives developed by the DMP. Income from advertising and accreditation schemes is directed back into the DMP.





# PARTNERS HAVE THEIR SAY

In February 2014 we canvassed the opinion of stakeholders and members regarding the content of this plan in relation to developing tourism in the area.

A reduction in support for the arts was voted as the greatest threat to tourism by 55% of businesses responding to one poll.

“ ‘More links between venues, local attractions and hotels.’

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Our partners said the two most pressing priorities for the DMP were:

- 1 To work harder to *encourage start up* businesses in tourism;
- 2 To improve the online presence of destinations.

To encourage more businesses to engage with the destination we should link up with big players across the county.

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When asked how to improve the general visitor experience locally:

- 1 More hotel rooms;
- 2 More *world class* attractions;
- 3 Improve signage and parking.

“ ‘You are dynamic and forward thinking. Having worked with similar bodies you are way ahead of the game.’

---

Top four opportunities/attractions that the Destination Management Partnership should exploit:

- 1 Jane Austen;
- 2 Silver Hill/Station Approach in Winchester and Petersfield Station/Lavant Street in East Hampshire;
- 3 Christmas in Winchester;
- 4 South Downs countryside.

“ ‘Improve parking and access to Winchester city centre... Better signposting... More frequent public transport to rural areas and the South Downs National Park.’

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When asked about USPs for Winchester, they ranked:

- 1 History and heritage;
- 2 Compact city centre;
- 3 Independent shops and restaurants.



REPORT TITLE: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

29 NOVEMBER 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Paula Ferguson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

That the Policy Committee review and provide comment on the draft Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2022-25 which addresses the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and replaces the previous DFG Policy and Procedures v.11 of 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

The DFG is a mandatory grant, provided under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, towards the cost of eligible works necessary to support people of all ages and most tenures to live independently and safely in their own homes.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty and powers to provide DFGs to applicants who qualify.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee review and provide comment on the updated DFG policy and in particular comment on:
  - a) The proposed introduction of new discretionary grants in the form of:
    - Welfare Grant
    - Heating Grant
    - Relocation Grant
    - Top Up Grant
  - b) That the discretionary grant level is capped at a maximum of £100k.

2. That any Local Land Charge placed on a property will have no expiry date.
3. That the service charge is reduced from 12 % to 10.5 %
4. That the Corporate Head of Housing will have delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community & Housing to make minor changes to the policy.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.1 An additional DFG Case Officer was recruited in January 2022 to assist with waiting lists and if current demand stays stable, no further resources will be needed.
- 1.2 The council provides an end-to-end service, acting as agent for the applicant and charges a fee of 12% plus VAT of the grant provided towards the cost of works. This fee forms part of the grant funding allocated.
- 1.3 If the council continues to charge a fee of 12% during financial year 2023-24 and achieves 100% of activity and spend, it will generate a surplus over costs of £14k. If the council however achieve 100% of activity and spend but reduce the service fee to 10.5% this will still generate sufficient income to cover the cost of running the service at current staffing levels.
- 1.4 Guidance published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) – DFG Delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England – states in respect of fees and charges:

*“Clearly only reasonable and necessary fees and charges should be eligible for assistance. Authorities should seek to keep the cost of eligible fees and charges to a minimum but without compromising the quality of service provided to the customer”*

## **2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

### Background

- 2.1 CAB3051 (HSG) was brought to the Cabinet (Housing) Committee on 04 July 2018 and introduced the Disabled Facilities Grants Policy and Procedures which subject to a number of amendments, has been in place since then.
- 2.2 The main purpose of the DFG is to enable aids and adaptations to be installed in the homes of older people and those with a disability. In law, the works to adapt a home must be considered both ‘necessary and appropriate’ to meet the needs of the individual and it should also be ‘reasonable and practicable’ to undertake the adaptations which should enable a person to live independently and safely in their home. This prevents the need for people to have to move into a care home or possibly be admitted to hospital reducing the burden on the social care system and NHS. DFGs are generally subject to a financial test of resources which means that the applicant’s income and savings have to be assessed.
- 2.3 DFGs are generally exclusive to home owners and private rental and social housing sector tenants. In respect of the council it has a separate budget for funding adaptations for tenants where required to its own housing stock.

- 2.4 An internal audit report undertaken by Southern Internal Audit Partnership in December 2021 made 3 main recommendations to the DFG service:
- To update and review the current DFG policy and procedures
  - To update the list of approved contractors
  - To increase performance monitoring
- 2.5. This paper introduces a new Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Policy and is the last of the recommendations to be completed.
- 2.6 Following consultation with Foundations [the National Body for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)] it was advised any procedural element was not required and should be stripped out. The new draft DFG policy is therefore now more streamlined and solely a policy document without a procedural section. Foundations is funded by The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and act as a centre of expertise and provide support to local authorities in respect of the delivery of DFG home adaptations.
- 2.7 The policy links with the Council Plan 2020 -2025 and contributes towards the Council Plan priority of 'Living Well', as it assists residents with continuing to live well in their homes by supporting independent living for longer.
- 2.8 The policy additionally links in with the Housing Strategy 2017/18 – 2022/23 Priority 2 – *To improve the housing circumstances of vulnerable and excluded households*, by assisting in the promotion of independent living and the support and creation of accessible homes, particularly for those with disabilities.

### **Legislative Background**

- 2.9 Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 Winchester City Council (the council) in its capacity as a housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide DFGs to applicants who qualify.
- 2.10 Funding for DFGs comes from central Government as part of the Department of Health and Social Care's Better Care Fund. It is distributed to the council and the other Hampshire local authorities in May of each year via Hampshire County Council under a formula determined by NHS England.
- 2.11 For the financial year 2022/23 the council was allocated £1,231,035 which was the same as the previous financial year. It has been reported that the DFG grant allocation to local authorities will likely not increase and will remain the same up until and including financial year 2024/25.

- 2.12 Despite the pandemic in 2020/21 the DFG service (which sits within the Strategic Housing Service) awarded £938k of its annual allocation. Since January 2022 the DFG Service now has two full time case officers and a Housing Occupational Therapist (OT). It is anticipated this year that based upon our current and committed spend to date, and a projection of likely referrals and inflation that the DFG award for 2022/23 will be fully allocated. Spend and committed spend as at 17/11/2022 was £763k.
- 2.13 The Adult Social Care White Paper, People at the Heart of Care published in December 2021 announced that £573 million is being made available for DFGs in each year from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The White Paper included a commitment to consult in 2022 on some key DFG reforms. These included reforming the financial means test, reviewing the allocation methodology and increasing the upper limit for the mandatory grant. As yet, no decisions have been announced by government of any changes in respect of these three points.
- 2.14 There is both a mandatory and discretionary element to DFGs. All local authorities must operate the mandatory scheme but Winchester is the only local authority in Hampshire to have such a generous discretionary 'Top Up' scheme above £30k. Under the new proposed policy the maximum discretionary grant is capped at £100k inclusive of the £30k mandatory entitlement.

#### **Types of grant:**

- 2.15 **Mandatory** – to fund any DFG works judged 'necessary and appropriate' to meet the client's needs and when it is 'reasonable and practicable' to carry them out having regard to the age, condition or internal layout etc. of the dwelling. The majority of mandatory DFG works undertaken are for showers, wet rooms, ramping and stair lifts. Maximum funding level up to £30,000 for children's DFGs and those on pass-porting benefits e.g. Universal Credit / Guaranteed Pension Credit / Housing Benefit etc.
- 2.16 **Discretionary** - the council under its current DFG policy is able to offer discretionary grants. These have been provided for funding schemes which exceed the mandatory limit of £30k and any grant under £15k.
- 2.17 The policy sets out both the mandatory legal framework and the discretionary element proposed by the council for DFGs and how the council will use its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) to provide discretionary grant assistance in order to promote independent living and well-being for residents in the Winchester district.
- 2.18 In order for the council to use its discretionary powers under the RRO it must have a policy. The new draft DFG policy sets out the intentions and obligations of the council to deliver DFGs including, but not restricted to, the introduction of a new discretionary DFG Welfare, Heating, Top Up and

Relocation grant. It also proposes that the discretionary grant funding level is capped at a maximum of £100,000.

- 2.19 The rationale for setting a maximum cap on discretionary grants is in order to ensure that should inflation remain high over the next two to three years and with no anticipated increase to funding above current levels, it will help ensure that the budget can be more evenly spread. This will help meet local demand and assist in the council being able to offer the maximum possible number of DFGs, so that more adaptations reach those who need them the most.
- 2.20 Using its powers under the RRO the council will provide the first £15,000 for works under any grant application regardless of the assessed contribution of the applicant. Those applicants assessed as needing to contribute to the cost of works will only be required to contribute when the costs exceed this £15,000 threshold.
- 2.21 The DFG can be applied for and is intended to fund adaptations for both home owners, private tenants or the tenants of registered social landlords (RSLs).

### **Main Changes from Previous Policy**

- 2.22 The council wishes to use its full discretion by introducing in the spirit of the Better Care Fund new discretionary DFG grants. These are consistent with the broader aims set down in the DFG Guidance and will enable people to remain living with greater independence at home in safe, warm and suitable housing, or enable the discharge of patients in hospital back into their homes to prevent bed blocking.
- 2.23 It is proposed that four new specific discretionary DFG grants are introduced which are:
- **Welfare Grant** – to fund small scale works which are critical to a client's welfare which have been identified by a social worker or other professional. Type of works will include deep cleans and declutters. Maximum grant funding level up to £2,000
  - **Heating Grant** – to restore use of heating and / or hot water for vulnerable owner occupiers who have a clear medical need and would be eligible for disability registration. Referrals for this grant need to come directly from specific organisations such as Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP), Hampshire County Council's Hitting the Cold Spots or The Environment Centre (tEC) etc. This will ensure that the appropriate screening has been applied to the client's circumstances i.e. they will be on pass-porting benefits and disabled. For clients in the community who are **not** on any income assessed benefits who come into contact with the council's DFG service and are in need can be assisted if they can prove they do not have savings in excess of



£6,000. This is in line with Universal Credit savings limits. Maximum grant funding level up to £4,000

- **Relocation Grant** – to assist clients to relocate if adaptations to their current home through a DFG are determined not to be feasible or reasonable and they are considering relocation to a property that is more appropriate in meeting their needs that they intend to purchase or rent. As moving costs vary across different types of tenure the relocation grant will be up to a maximum of £2.5k for RSL tenants and up to a maximum of £8k for owner occupiers.
- **Top Up Grant** – to facilitate more complex and expensive adaptations for eligible clients who are owner occupiers or social housing tenants of Registered Social Landlords (RPs). Maximum funding level up to £100,000 inclusive of all work costs and fees associated with the works including but not limited to a contingency fee; architect, agent and planning fees and the council's DFG service charge etc.

2.24 Allocation of any mandatory or discretionary grant will be funded from the same overall budget. It will therefore be especially important to ensure that any discretionary grant awarded is considered alongside the council having regard to the available DFG allocation.

### **Local Land Charge and Client Contributions**

2.25 The previous policy had a formula in order to determine a client's contribution towards discretionary works that exceed £30,000. This would usually total a few thousand pounds which a client would pay on completion of the works. The rest of the cost of the works would be placed on the property as a Local Land Charge. This charge would expire in 10 years from the works completion date.

2.26 The revised policy no longer requires clients to make a contribution upon completion of the works, however, the Local Land Charge that will be placed on the property will have no expiry date. This removes the need to use the formula for client contributions which is difficult for clients to understand and takes up valuable time in the process of getting works agreed. A legal charge that doesn't expire means that the council is guaranteed to have the money returned, even at a much later date. The council still has the ability to waive this charge if the client would suffer financial hardship but this would be considered on a case by case basis. Should a client wish to contribute to the works in order to lessen or avoid a legal charge that would still be acceptable. To date the council hasn't waived a charge due to financial hardship.

### **Upper Limit on 'Top up Grant' for grants over £30,000**

2.27 The funding limit for this type of grant is proposed to be capped at £100,000 inclusive of all work costs and fees associated with the works. These will include but are not limited to a contingency fee, architect and planning fees and Winchester City Council's service charge etc.

- 2.28 For clients entitled to up to £30,000 mandatory funding this translates into a £30,000 mandatory grant and £70,000 top up discretionary grant. For clients not entitled to mandatory funding this translates to a £15,000 discretionary grant and a £85,000 top up discretionary grant.
- 2.29 Previously there was no upper limit on top up grants but the cost of living crisis has caused a significant cost increase in the delivery of projects such as extensions. The DFG budget we are allocated from central government is likely to remain static until 2025 and will not be raised in line with inflation. This essentially means a cut to our budget over the next few years. The budget needs to be available to cover the needs of everyone in the district who is referred into our service. A limit on projects allows an element of control and is a clear benchmark for the client which ensures funding will only address what clients essentially require in their home as determined by an Occupational Therapist.

#### **Previous grant allocation approvals:**

- 2.30 In the year 2021/22 the council approved 97 DFG applications with a total value of approximately £1.1m. The average value of each DFG grant awarded was £11,518. Of these:
- 6 grants with an average cost of £17,951 were approved under the mandatory part of the Disabled Facilities Grant and were means tested which means that some people may have had to pay a contribution towards their grant.
  - 86 grants were discretionary grants of under £15,000, awarded to applicants that would not have qualified for assistance under the mandatory part of the Disabled Facilities Grant. The discretionary element of the grant funding ensures housing need is met and reduces the need for residential care and hospitalisation.
  - 5 grants were discretionary grants in excess of £30k specifically targeted to prevent hospital admission or care breakdown.

The top three adaptations provided in 2021/ 22 were:

Type of adaptation	Number of adaptations	Average Cost
Level access showers	37	£6-7k
Curved Stair Lifts	22	£4.5-5k
Straight Track Star Lifts	17	£2.2-2.5k

2.31 The number of grants awarded across all tenures were:

Tenure	Number
Owner occupiers	70
Private tenants	4
RSL tenants ( not WCC tenants)	23

2.32 Comparable approvals in preceding years:

Financial Year	Approved DFG Cases	Grant Funding Approved	Average DFG Awarded
2017/18	80	£636,760	£8,179
2018/19	73	£1,121,615	£15,577
2019/20	70	£687,584	£9,822
2020/21	78	£945,014	£11,973
2021/22	97	£1,094,279	£11,518

2.33 Census 2021 Data

Data from the 2021 census details that the Winchester population increased at a faster rate between 2011 and 2021 than it did between 2001 and 2011. In 2021 the total combined male and female population for Winchester was 127,500. Woman formed the highest (51.3%) of the population and men formed (48.7%) of the population. In the ten year period from 2011 up until 2021 the biggest population increase in Winchester has been 11.8% in the 65+ age group. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates the proportion of people aged 65 years and over in England as a whole, is projected to increase from 18.2% to 20.7% of the total population between mid-2018 and mid-2028. The proportion is also projected to increase for all regions and local authorities. It is therefore predicted that there will be an increasing demand on the DFG service.

2.34 The DFG process is initiated by an assessment being carried out by an Occupational Therapist (OT) who will establish the needs of the applicant and then submit a referral to the council making recommendations as to the type of adaptation(s) required. The most common adaptations needed are stair lifts, ramping and level access showers.

2.35 Council officers will process the referral to determine if the works required are both 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practicable' in accordance with legislation. Where required, a financial means test

assessment will also be undertaken to establish the applicant's eligibility for a grant. The discretionary grants policy allows recommended eligible works of a value up to £15,000 to be completed without the need for a financial assessment being completed.

- 2.36 Where the required conditions are met, council officers will identify a contractor from a pre-determined list of contractors. The contractors were selected following a tendering procurement process undertaken in consultation with Hampshire County Council in July 2022. Once a suitable contractor has been appointed council officers or agents of the council (in respect of more complicated and costly DFGs) will oversee the works through to completion. Upon satisfactory completion of the works, the council will pay the grant funding directly to the contractor(s).
- 2.37 In some instances an applicant may wish to use their own contractor but this is not normally the case, as the bulk of the DFG applications received by the council are from elderly and / or vulnerable individuals who do not have the desire or inclination to take on the responsibility of finding contractors and prefer to let the council lead on this.
- 2.38 The council however is not responsible for the work of the contractor and the contractual relationship is solely between the client and the contractor.

### **Examples of How DFGs can Change Lives**

- 2.39 The DFG team currently have a mini extension/existing conservatory conversion underway for a client with very significant Parkinson's disease. The conversion will enable the individual to live downstairs at home with access to a bed and a shower. Without the DFG, the gentleman would likely have had to go into a care home.
- 2.40 The DFG team have also recently just closed a case which was completing a deep clean for a client in hospital. Adult Services contacted the council as the person couldn't be discharged home unless it was completed. The council quickly got it approved and prevented a bed being taken up in the hospital. The cost of the works were under £2k and included:
- Deep Clean Property to bring it back to a hygienic and liveable standard.
  - Clean heavily soiled bathroom, downstairs cloakroom and kitchen areas.
  - Implement Mice Bait Boxes under kitchen sink cupboards.

- Remove carpet from stairs and grippers and dispose of.
- Tape down living room carpet edges.
- Remove and dispose of all items of rubbish.
- Test Smoke Alarms and lights and Hoover.

### 3 **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 3.1 In order to maximise the DFG grant budget a reduction to the service fee was investigated with a proposal to change it from the current 12% to an across the board flat fee of £500 per grant. However, based on a projection of fees likely to be received this financial year, it would have resulted in a reduction of income from roughly £92k to £44k. This option was therefore rejected.
- 3.2 The option to do nothing and not have an up-to-date policy in place would result in the delivery of the DFG service not being properly supported. Not to renew the DFG policy is therefore not an option and is rejected.

### 4 **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-**

#### 4.1 **Previous Committee Reports:-**

- CAB3051 (HSG)
- Disabled Facility Grants / 04 July 2018 / Cabinet (Housing) Committee

#### 5 **Other Background Documents:-**

- Disabled Facility Grants Policy & Procedures version 06/8/2019:
- <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/private-housing-and-empty-properties/disabled-facilities-grant>
- Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England: (attached)

### 6 **APPENDICES:**

- Appendix A. Draft Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2022 - 2025





# Winchester

City Council

## Disabled Facilities Grant Policy

### 2022 -2025

Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996  
The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002

Document created:	
Agreed by Committee:	
Author:	
Review Date:	

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## 1.0 Introduction

- Adaptations are needed by many disabled people so that they can remain safe and independent in their own home. They can be needed by people of all ages, but as our population ages and life expectancy increases, the number of people needing assistance to adapt their homes is expected to grow. Winchester City Council (the council) is committed to helping these residents achieve a home which meets their needs.
- Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the Act), Winchester City Council, in its capacity as a housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to applicants who qualify. DFGs are mandatory grants available to disabled people when works to adapt their home are judged necessary and appropriate to meet their needs and when it is reasonable and practicable to carry them out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building. DFGs are available to fund adaptations to the homes of elderly, vulnerable or disabled residents to enable them to live independently at home or be cared for at home.
- In order for the council to use its discretionary powers under the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) it must have a policy. This policy sets out the mandatory legal framework for DFGs, and how the council intends to use its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) to provide discretionary DFG assistance to promote independent living and well-being, it sets out the flexibilities the council has adopted in respect of DFGs.
- This policy replaces the former Disabled Facility Grants Policy and Procedure 2018 and supersedes any other policy relating to Disabled Facilities Grants.
- The policy links with the Council Plan 2020-2025 and contributes towards the Council Plan priority of 'Living Well' as it assists residents with continuing to live well within their homes by supporting independent living for longer.

## 2.0 Aims of the Policy

- To improve the lives of people with disabilities by enabling access and movement around their own home with the use of adaptations
- To allow more effective use of the Better Care Fund, cutting out bureaucracy and contributing to the aims of the fund, in particular, reducing hospital admissions and allowing early hospital discharges.
- To reduce the need for domiciliary and residential care by allowing people with disabilities to live more independently in their own homes.
- To provide advice, information and support regarding the adaptation of properties to meet accessibility needs, and provide a framework of assistance to vulnerable groups
- To treat individuals fairly regardless of age, sex, gender, disability and sexual orientation and to protect their rights under Data Protection and human rights legislation.

## 3.0 Regulatory Framework

There are a number of legal provisions governing DFGs and the application. The administration of DFGs primarily comes under the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996 (the Act) and subsequent associated legislation including:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (“The Act”) (as amended)
- Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) order 1996 • The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to Approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (“The Order”)
- The Housing Renewals Grants (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2008
- The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes)(England) Order 2008
- Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People – A good practice guide (June 2006)
- The Equalities Act 2010
- Disabled Facilities Grant Delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England 2022

## 4.0 Definition of a Disabled Person

For the purposes of the legislation relating to DFG's a person is defined as being disabled if:

- Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired;
- They have a mental disorder to impairment of any kind; or
- They are physically disabled by illness or impairment present since birth or otherwise

A person aged 18 or over is considered disabled if:

- They are registered as a result of arrangements made under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948; or
- They are a person for whom welfare arrangements have been made under that section or might be made under it.

A person aged under 18 is considered disabled if:

- They are registered as a disabled child maintained under the Children Act 1989; or
- In the opinion of Hampshire County Council's Children's Services they are a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989.

## 5.0 Mandatory DFG Eligibility Criteria

### 5.1 The Works

Eligibility criteria for DFGs are laid out in Section 23 of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration (As Amended) Act 1996 and primarily relate to accessing principal rooms within the home and accessing and using essential facilities including access to gardens and outside areas of a property.

Grants are dependent on:

- The works being necessary and appropriate.
- The works being reasonable and practicable; and
- A financial assessment where appropriate, to establish the applicant's eligibility for a grant.

**Facilitating Access** - For works to remove or help overcome any obstacles that prevent the applicant from moving freely into and around the dwelling. This may include access to the garden or yard (front, side, or rear) which means immediate access from the dwelling, it does not include landscaping.

**Making a Dwelling or Building Safe** - Adaptations to the dwelling or building to make it safe for the applicant and other persons living with them.

**Access to a Family Room** – Works to ensure the applicant has access to a room used for or usable as the principal family room.

**Access to a Room usable for Sleeping** - The provision of a room usable for sleeping where the adaptation of an existing room in the dwelling (upstairs or downstairs) or the access to that room is unsuitable in the particular circumstances.

**Access to a Bathroom** - The provision of, or access to, a WC, washing, bathing and/or showering facilities.

**Facilitating Preparation of and Cooking of Food** - The rearrangement or enlargement of a kitchen to improve the access for a wheelchair and to provide specially modified or designed storage units, work top area etc. Where most of the cooking and preparation of meals is done by another household member, it would not normally be appropriate to carry out full adaptations to the kitchen.

**Heating, Light and Power** - To provide or improve the existing heating system in the dwelling to meet the applicant's needs. A grant will not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms which are not normally used by the applicant.

## 5.2 The Applicant

DFGs are available to homeowners, owners of qualifying houseboats, owners of qualifying park homes, tenants of private landlords and tenants of Housing Associations. Grants are also available for adaptations to the common parts of buildings containing one or more flats. Winchester City Council tenants can apply for a grant however in line with recommended legislation it is normal practise for housing authorities with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to fund these adaptations. The Property Services Team have their own policy for processing tenant's applications.

The council cannot, by law, refuse to process a properly made DFG application that it receives from an owner-occupier or tenant. If the eligibility criteria and proper process are satisfied, the council must approve the appropriate grant providing funds are available.

Application for a Disabled Facilities grant is dependent firstly on the applicant having been assessed by either a Hampshire County Council OT, or the council's in-house Private Sector Housing OT. Assessments undertaken by the HCC OT will be forwarded to Winchester City Council. Alternatively, people can apply on-line via the council's web site after which they will be assessed to determine their eligibility: <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/private-housing-and-empty-properties/disabled-facilities-gran>

Further information and guidance regarding DFGs can be found in the Disabled Facilities (DFG) delivery Guidance for Local Authorities in England published March 2022: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1065574/DFG\\_Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1065574/DFG_Guidance.pdf)

The following is a summary of the main legal provisions that apply to mandatory DFGs:

- A customer, who defined by the Act as a person with a disability, is eligible for assistance.
- DFGs are mandatory grants which are available to people with disabilities for works which are 'necessary and appropriate' to meet their needs, and when it is considered 'reasonable and practicable' to carry out the works when having regard to the age or condition of the dwelling or building. A financial assessment where appropriate may also be required, to establish the applicant's eligibility for a grant.
- The council reserves the right to refuse grant assistance where the works are not necessary, appropriate, reasonable, practicable, are excessively expensive and/or where the property is not suitable for adaptation. If appropriate the council may offer a discretionary DFG, in the form of a relocation grant to help the applicant move to a more suitable dwelling.
- DFGs are means-tested, except if the application is on behalf of a child or young person aged 19 or below. Therefore, the applicant's income and savings are required to be assessed to determine if the applicant has a contribution to make or even pay the whole cost. Applicants who receive certain specified "passport" benefits are exempt for the means-test, however the means-test is set by law and the Council does not have any discretion when applying it. See **Appendix 3** for list of Pass-ported benefits.
- If an applicant is eligible then the council has a maximum of six months to 'determine' the application, which means approve or otherwise, however the determination should be carried out as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- The maximum mandatory DFG in England is currently £30,000, and this amount would be reduced by any contribution determined as payable under the means-test.

- The duty to provide DFGs is 'tenure blind', and therefore applications from home owners or those renting in the private or social sector are treated equally depending on their needs. Applications received from tenants living in private rented housing must be accompanied by a tenant's certificate signed by the landlord to demonstrate that they will remain living in their home for the grant condition period (usually 5 years) or for such a shorter period as their health and other relevant circumstances permit.
- An applicant must be 18 years of age or older.
- Parents or guardians are able to apply on behalf of children.
- Landlords are able to apply on behalf of their tenants;
- The property to be adapted must be a legal residence, and this can include dwellings, houseboats, caravans and mobile homes as well as buildings which contain dwellings.
- Both Owner Occupiers and Tenants must have the intention to live in the adapted property for five years. Landlords and/or the property owners must certify they intend to allow the person to remain in the property for not less than five years.
- There is no restriction on an applicant making multiple grant applications for funding.
- Persons from abroad with no recourse to public funds are not eligible to apply for a DFG.

## **6.0 Discretionary Grants**

Discretionary grants have the same application process as mandatory grants and the same criteria. However Winchester City Council's DFG policy allows £15,000 total costs to be funded before a means test is required. Below is a summary of each Discretionary Grant eligibility criteria:

## **6.1 Welfare Grant**

**Primary Aim:** To fund small scale works which are critical to a client's welfare which have been identified by a social worker or other professional. The client should have a clear medical need/ be eligible for disability registration. The works should be to improve and enhance the client's quality of life at home and support the continuation of them staying in their own home/prevent possible admission to care or hospital and to enable discharge home from hospital or care.

### **Eligible works:**

- **Deep Cleans / Declutters of essential parts of the home up to a maximum of £2000.00** (i.e. the kitchen/living room/ hallway/bathroom/extra bedrooms if carers need stay overnight). **Only clients awaiting a discharge from hospital or care placement are eligible.**
- **Minor Essential Repairs and Improvements up to a maximum of £2000.00** the purpose of which is to remove a hazard which is an immediate cause for concern. Examples include repair to flooring to make safe, Restoring security to a property by repairing a door or boarding a broken window, fixing toilet or sink to restore use (e.g. blocked loo or leaking loo), replacing faulty light bulbs/fittings in essential rooms, repairs to showers/washing facilities to restore use if under certain value and straight forward, clearance of access pathway to property
- **Stair lifts** – Curved and Straight stair lifts can be applied for by referring professional if this assist discharge / prevents admission (if not for discharge/admission risk purposes this can be applied for through a standard DFG application). **The £2000.00 cap does not apply to stair lifts.**

## **6.2 Heating Grant**

**Primary Aim:** To restore use of heating and hot water for vulnerable owner occupiers who have a clear medical need / are eligible for disability registration. The referrals for this grant need to come directly through a professional body such as:

- LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) who can be contacted at <https://applyforleap.org.uk/energy-support/>
- Hitting the Cold Spots which is a Hampshire County Council based service which provides advice on heating and energy matters for Hampshire residents and can be contacted at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/coldspots>,
- The Environment Centre (tEC) who are a charity based in Southampton providing advice on sustainability and other matters including fuel poverty and who can be contacted at <https://environmentcentre.com>

Receipt of referrals from the above or other similar organisations ensures that appropriate screening has been applied to the client's circumstance (clients must be on pass porting benefits and disabled). For clients in the community who are **not** on any income assessed benefits who come into contact with our service and are in need we can assist with funding if they can prove they do not have savings in excess of £6,000.00. In exceptional circumstances a legal land charge could be considered in order to cover the value of the works (if they exceed £4000.00).

#### **Eligible Works:**

- Replacement of boiler, replacement of broken radiators or repairs to boilers and radiators in order for them to safely function.
- Essential electrical works in order to restore electric heating systems.
- Essential oil based heating repairs or replacement.

**Works can be funded up the value of £4000.00.** If the necessary works exceed this amount the home owner will need to contribute the difference. The reasoning for limiting the cost of this grant is to enable the funding to be used as fairly as possible across the whole district and in anticipation of many referrals in the winter season of 2022/2023.

#### **6.3 Relocation Grant**

**Primary Aim:** To assist clients who are either owner/occupiers, private or registered social landlord (RSL) tenants to relocate if adaptations to their current home through the DFG are determined not to be reasonable or practicable and they are considering relocation to another property they intend to purchase or rent as their home. Such assistance supports best value by ensuring that DFG grant funding is focused on properties where adaptations can be delivered and enabling people to move where that is not the case.



**Eligibility:**

- Applicants must be 18 or over on the date of application is made and, in the case of a disabled child, the parent(s) would make the application. Any application must be supported by a recommendation from the Hampshire County Council OT service or WCC in house OT.
- The Authority and the OT must be satisfied that the proposed property already meets the needs of the disabled person without further adaptation or are satisfied that it can be adapted at a reasonable cost under the mandatory grant limit of £30,000.
- This grant may be made available towards specific relocation expenses, which could include but not limited to legal and estate agent fees, deposits, rent in advance and removal costs.

Due to the differing level of removal costs and fees associated with the various types of housing tenure the maximum grant awarded will be banded into the following categories:

- RSL tenants - £2,500.00 – to assist with deposit
- Private tenants - £4,000.00 – to assist with deposit / rent in advance
- Owner/occupiers - £8,000.00 – to assist with conveyancing fees / stamp duty etc.

**6.4 Adaptations Costing Under £15,000**

**Primary Aim:** To enable clients with disabilities to remain in their own home for longer. To also enable clients to live independently and safely for longer. Disregarding the means test for works under this limit allows more clients in the community to access adaptations to meet this aim in a timely manner.

**Eligible Works:**

- Those works identified in *The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996* as recommended by an Occupational Therapist with a formal referral with full recommendations. Typically this includes level access showers, stair lifts and ramped access.

**Policy:** Using the powers provided by the above mentioned legislation, the council will provide the first £15,000 for works under any grant application regardless of the assessed contribution of the applicant. Any applicant assessed as needing to contribute to the cost of works will only be required to contribute when the cost of works exceeds this £15,000 threshold.

### **6.5 Top Up Grant - For works that exceed Mandatory Funding Level**

**Primary Aim:** The council recognise that extensive adaptations and rising costs mean works often exceed the current mandatory limit of £30,000. This grant is to fund the cost of adaptations over this limit for eligible clients who are **Owner Occupiers or Social Housing Tenants (see below)** where the works are deemed 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practicable'. The client is eligible if they are already entitled to a mandatory grant e.g. children's cases or if the client is not eligible for a mandatory grant (i.e. their assessed contribution outweighs the cost of the works they require) then they must fall into at least one of the following *Better Care Fund Key Criteria*:

1. When essential adaptations (to enable access to the home and access to key facilities to ensure that living at home is possible), need to be provided "urgently" to facilitate timely discharge from hospital/nursing or residential care, (avoiding delayed transfer of care and maximising opportunity for re-ablement at home).
2. Where clients in the community, have high and complex level of disability and/or life changing diagnosis, and the risk of sudden deterioration in their condition/ reduced independence or increased risk of falls could be minimised by urgent provision of essential adaptations to the home,(to reduce risk of premature admission to hospital/ residential care, or increase in care package).
3. When the care situation in the home is at imminent risk of breakdown if essential adaptations are not provided quickly, (to support the carer and maximise client independence, health and wellbeing).
4. Where clients have catastrophic and life changing/limiting diagnosis, where urgent essential adaptations could minimise the risk of breakdown of family life and care, and enable supported living at home, delaying the time scale for the start, or increase in external health or social intervention.

5. When the timely provision of minor adaptations (in line with Health and wellbeing targets and better care priorities), would reduce the risk of falls and promote a safer home environment when clients have no immediate and safe access to alternative service options.

Depending on the works recommended by the OT it would also be advisable that even clients entitled to a mandatory grant also need to fall into one of the above key criteria's. This ensures correct reasoning has been applied to their case to ensure their needs can only be met by topping up the mandatory funding available. Typically an example of this in action would be a children's case where to meet their needs an extension must be constructed to contain a bedroom and washing facility.

To ensure that the Discretionary offer is equitable to all residents within the Winchester district any client who is referred to the service will be assessed by the in-house OT to establish the need for the additional Discretionary funding from Winchester City Council.

Whatever their tenure the council will then require the client to consult with an agent from the council's recommended list to complete a plan for the most cost effective way to meet the client's need. This will have to take place regardless if the applicant has already had plans of their own drawn up. Where possible all works should aim to be completed within the footprint of the property.

Any top up funding will only be considered having regard to the amount of financial resources the council has at the time. If it does not have sufficient resources left to fund other referrals passed to the DFG team by the Occupational Therapy Service or the in-house PSH Occupational Therapist, the council reserves the right not to approve any top up funding.

#### **Funding Limit:**

The funding limit for this grant is **£100,000.00** inclusive of all work costs and fees associated with the works including but not limited to a contingency fee, architect and planning fees Winchester City Council service charge etc.

For clients entitled to up to £30,000 mandatory funding this translates into a £30,000 mandatory grant and £70,000 top up discretionary grant. For clients not entitled to mandatory funding this translates to a £15,000 discretionary grant and a £85,000 top up discretionary grant.

#### **Local Land Charge**

Clients will not be requested to make an immediate contribution towards the works upon completion, however, the cost of the works which exceed the mandatory level will be secured on the property by a legal charge. **The legal charge will have no expiry date and therefore the charge will be paid back to the council upon sale**

**or disposal of the property.** The RRO enables local authorities to offer this financial assistance in the form of a zero interest loan. This loan is registered as a Local Land Charge against the value of the property, on which no interest is levied. When this circumstance arises the council will only consider waiving the legal charge if it causes financial hardship. An example of hardship being if the property is being sold to fund care and the legal charge prevented the client being able to move to a suitable placement. It is for the clients or interested parties of the clients to make their case of hardship to the council with supporting evidence and for the council to use its discretion when making a decision.

Summary Table of Funding Levels	
Funding level	Decision
Up to £20,000	Private Sector Housing Team Leader
Up to £50,0000	Service Lead – Strategic Housing
Up to £100,000	Corporate Head of Housing
Over £100,000	Agreed by Portfolio Holder for Housing & Communities

For cases exceeding £30,000 the final decision will be determined by a panel of the above officers depending on the level of funding being applied for.

## **6.6 Clients Living In Property Rented From Registered Social Landlord:**

The above grant can be applied for if eligible clients live in a property owned by a Registered Social Landlord. The same funding limit of £100,000 applies however the grant cannot be secured with a legal charge.

In these cases it must be ensured that it has been determined the client cannot move to another property through Hampshire Home Choice which meets their needs or would meet their needs with less cost and this should be clearly evidenced in their application for funding.

### **6.7 If Living In Property Rented from a Private Landlord:**

Grants over £30,000 are not available to those privately renting as it would be more beneficial to assist them to move to a tenure with more security through the Hampshire Home Choice (HHC). This is a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme of which the council is a member.

For clients who do not qualify for Hampshire Home Choice the expectation would be that they move home to accommodation that meets the needs of the client or can be adapted for costs below the client's level of funding entitlement. The client should intend to remain in a more suitable property for the next five years.

The Relocation Grant could also be utilised if the client requires assistance moving into a more suitable property as agreed in partnership with Winchester City Council and other invested professionals.

### **7.0 Dual residency of a disabled child**

In cases where families separate and a court order provides that residency of the subject disabled child is split between the mother and father (or other designated guardian) the Authority may consider the award of discretionary DFG to one property. The proposed adaptations will only be considered for discretionary assistance if they fall within those headings normally applied to mandatory schemes.

Mandatory DFG can only be provided to the 'sole or main residence' of the disabled applicant and in circumstances covered by this section it would be assumed that one party would apply for mandatory grant on the basis that the child occupies the subject property as their sole or main residence. The main residence will be determined by which party receives child benefit. This property may or may not be within the Winchester City Council area.

The Authority will consider the details of any court order and specifically the allocation of time spent with each parent in determining eligibility for assistance. No specific percentage split is proposed by this policy as each case will be reviewed on its own merits. Factors to be considered include the specific details of any order, likely time to be spent at each property, whether the child will stay overnight at the subject property and for what period etc.

In determining the works that might be considered as eligible for assistance the Authority will consider the suitability of the subject property for adaptation, the complexity and scope of the adaptations required and any observations or referral made by the Occupational Therapy service. The scope of any works will not necessarily mirror that to be undertaken at the sole or main residence.

Any assistance provided under this heading will be up to a maximum discretionary award of £15,000 but will not be subject to any form of means testing. Any award will be repayable to the Authority if and when the subject property is sold. The award amount will be recorded as a Land Registry charge.

## **8.0 Approval of Grants**

Although the Council is statutorily obliged to approve valid mandatory DFG applications within six months, where possible, the council will aim to approve applications within 30 days of them being determined as complete and valid.

In the case of discretionary DFG's, the Council will aim for the same timeframe as above but mandatory DFG's may take preference if the council needs to consider how to make best use of its available resources.

The council will not approve a Disabled Facilities Grant application where the relevant work has already begun and / or been completed.

## **9.0 Fee Generating Service**

The Council recognises that applicants who do not qualify for mandatory grant assistance or discretionary grant or loan assistance nonetheless still have an identifiable need for adaptations. In some cases, applicants may decide not to proceed with necessary adaptations for lack of confidence or desire to deal with the process of completing specifications, seeking and appointing suitable contractors and managing the installation, and dealing with contractors and payment demands.

The council wishes to encourage individuals to adapt their homes where necessary and appropriate to enable them to stay in their home in accordance with the wider prevention agenda of housing, social care and health authorities.

The council provides an end-to-end service, acting as agent for the applicant and charges a fee of 12% plus VAT of the grant provided towards the cost of works. This fee forms part of the grant funding allocated. The council will offer the same service at the same fee rate to all applicants.

The provision of fee paying support services can be advantageous to certain applicants who may need further works carried out in future years, as the legislation allows for the contribution made towards one scheme of works to be counted towards the applicant's contribution to a further scheme of works if this is carried out within 5 years in the case of rented property or 10 years in the case of owner occupied property, provided that the earlier scheme has been managed through the DFG process.

## 10.0 Completing the Works

The process of sourcing and appointing contractors to complete the works will depend on the likely nature and value of the works to be carried out, and the applicants preferred method of engagement.

The council offers an end to end Home Improvement Agency type service for the majority of straightforward grants and where the value of the works is likely not to exceed £15,000. For this approach, the council maintains a Framework of approved contractors whose service will be offered to the applicant if they wish to make use of the service offering.

Furthermore the council offers a choice of approved agents for higher value schemes that will typically involve planning application and Building Control application for extensions or other substantial building works.

Where either of the above options is adopted, the procurement of contractors will be carried out according to the council's procurement rules.

The applicant is under no obligation to use either approved list and is entitled to invite and submit quotes from their own choice of agents and contractors. In these circumstances the submitted quotes will be assessed only to confirm that the quotations are for works reasonably required to meet the identified needs of the applicant and for which the grant is being provided. The council may, however, wish to investigate the contractors proposed by the applicant to ensure that they are of sufficient competence and reliability to safeguard that the public purse is not put at unnecessary risk, and may seek assurance as to insurances and references before approving an award.

There may be occasions when a client would prefer a more extensive adaptation over and above what the authority has assessed as being necessary and appropriate. In these cases the council will support the application by making it clear to clients what level of grant funding will be awarded and what level of expense they would be required to finance themselves.

The council will base the award on the lowest quote that meets the needs, however the applicant may still use a higher priced contractor provided they pay for the difference in price. In exceptional cases the Council may agree to base the award on a quote higher than the lowest where circumstances, such as time for completion or known specific expertise, would indicate a better value outcome.

Applicants should be aware that the legal and contractual relationship is between the applicant and contractor and NOT with the local authority. If there is a dispute between the applicant and the contractor, the Council will not be able to get involved unless by some act or default the Council has caused the issue which has led to the

dispute. The Council will generally pay contractors on behalf of the applicant, but in the case of an unresolvable dispute the Council will pay the grant direct to the applicant. It is then for the two contracted parties, the applicant and their contractor, to take such action as they deem necessary to resolve their dispute.

## **11.0 Contact Variations**

Grant approvals are made by assessing submitted tenders for the specification provided. It is the nature of any building work that variations may be required once work commences, either to the specification to provide a more practicable solution, or for additional works due to unforeseeable circumstances.

Applicants who chose to complete their own design must ensure that it satisfies the needs identified by their Occupational Therapist.

If any applicants' design includes for other works not provided for by the grant, the grant will be strictly limited to that part of the cost of works needed to satisfy the minimum necessary and appropriate requirements as identified by the Occupational Therapist and approved by the Council.

Where variations will materially affect the design or function of the adaptation, agreement must be sought from the originating Occupational Therapist before the variation is approved.

All requests for unforeseen works / variations from contractors that will involve additional costs must be agreed in writing before works proceed.

Where unforeseen works / variations are reasonably expected to reduce costs, the contractor must be required to identify this reduction before works proceed.

In both circumstances the grant approval documentation must be suitably amended.

No additional cost will be agreed for works that an experienced contractor should have reasonably foreseen as necessary for the completion of the specified works.

## **12.0 Abortive Works**

This term relates to situation where a DFG application has been aborted before all works have been completed, this is usually applicable where an applicant has died.

The council will give consideration for the works to still be completed and grant award made with consent of the property owner and residents of property.



### **13.0 Framework of Approved Contractors**

The council will maintain a framework of approved contractors capable of completing the works typically associated with Disabled Facility Grants, including specialists in the installation of wet-rooms and stair-lifts as well as general building contractors.

This framework will be informed by a 2 yearly invitation to contractors to tender against a given schedule of works, and confirmation of suitable insurances and professional accreditation.

It is expected that the framework will include no more than 12 contractors including a minimum of 3 in any specialism.

This framework will be used for any project with a likely value of up to £15,000 in line with the summary above.

### **14.0 Contractual Relationships and Responsibilities**

In all circumstances, the contract for the completion of works will be between the applicant and the contractor appointed to complete the work.

Full details of the contractual relationships and responsibilities will be provided to all contractors invited to bid either by the council or by the applicant in the document Preliminary Information to Contractors which may vary from time to time to reflect changes in legislation and industry standards. This information will also be provided to applicants.

### **15.0 Warranties and Maintenance**

Adaptations including installed equipment belong to the owner of the property in which they are installed. This means they are responsible for ongoing maintenance and repairs after any initial warranty period expires. The council will consider funding extended warranties for equipment installed using grant funding. This typically includes five year warranties for stair lifts and through floor lifts. The owner will also remain responsible for removing equipment and adaptations once it is no longer required.

## 16.0 Framework of approved agents

The council will maintain a framework of approved agents (architectural practices and project management organisations) capable of managing the process of design, statutory applications, sourcing and assessment of quotations from contractors, and project supervision to completion.

Agents will source and assess contractors' quotations in accordance with Council Procurement Rules.

This list will typically be used for projects over £30,000 and where extensions to or substantial internal conversion of a property are required.

## 17.0 Contract Procurement Rules Summary

The Council Contract Procurement Rules identify 5 value of contract ranges for works which the method of procurement varies as follows:

Under £10,000 - minimum of one quote sought from any contractor considered competent. **The framework of approved Contractors identified in 13.00 would all meet this competency condition.**

£10,000 – £250,000 – minimum of three written quotes sought and an evaluation model based on price (awarded to the lowest cost) or most economically advantageous criteria used. The use of the framework identified in 13.00 would meet the requirements for this value. Any contractor on the approved list may be used. If not using the approved list, three quotations must be sought.

If purchasing Goods and Services the limit is £100,000.

Over £250,000 but below UK Threshold (currently £5,336,937 inc Vat) – a formal competitive tender process by Public Invitation, Restricted Invitation or by invitation to contractors on the select list.

Above UK Threshold (currently £5,336.937 inc VAT) and subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015– this is not considered applicable to grant funded works.

NB: the contract procurement rules do not apply where the applicant is not using the council's management service or approved framework of contractors or agents. In these circumstances the quotes will be assessed only to confirm that they are for works reasonably required to meet the identified needs of the applicant and for which the grant is being provided, and to determine the grant award, generally based on the lowest quote that meets the needs.

## **18.0 Assessment of bids**

Where competitive bids are received for higher value works they will be assessed according to any evaluation criteria applicable to the particular procurement.

For lower value projects where more than one quote is sought, the cheapest bid will determine the primary choice of contractor, provided that, in the view of officers, the bid is reflective of the works specified and provides good value for money.

The Council is under no obligation to accept either or any bid submitted and further invitations may be sent out.

In view of the contractual relationship, the council will recommend the primary choice of contractor to the applicant and the applicant may accept or decline this recommendation. In the circumstance that they decline the primary choice, the council may require that the applicant makes a contribution equivalent to the difference in price between the primary choice and their choice of contractor.

## **19.0 Supervision of Works and Payment of Award**

In all circumstances the council has a duty to inspect the works as they progress and on completion to ensure that monies from the public purse are being spent in accordance with the purpose for which the award was made.

The council may pay:

- The contractor directly (the council's preferred method)
- The applicant directly
- The contractor by providing the applicant with a suitable instrument of payment

Where works are deemed to meet the council's approval, but the grant applicant is not satisfied, the council will not unreasonably withhold payment to the contractor.

## **20.0 Disputes**

If there is a dispute between the applicant and the contractor, the council will not be able to get involved unless by some act or default the council has caused the issue which has led to the dispute. The council will generally pay contractors on behalf of the applicant, but in the case of an unresolvable dispute the council will

pay the grant direct to the applicant. It is then for the two contracted parties, the applicant and their contractor, to take such action as they deem necessary to resolve their dispute.

## **21.0 Complaints Procedure**

Where applicants are dissatisfied with the service they have received, including where a grant has been refused, they can make a complaint through the council's published complaints procedure which can be found at [www.winchester.gov.uk/about/complaint](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/about/complaint)

In the first instance any issues should be brought to the attention of the authorised officer dealing with the application. If you remain dissatisfied, to escalate any matter of concern, a corporate complaint can be raised as explained above.

## **22.0 Other Circumstances**


In all other circumstances not detailed in this policy document reference should be made to the provisions of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Also reference Disabled facilities grant (DFG) Delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England 2022.

## **23.0 Amendments to Policy**

Minor amendments to DFG policy may be made by the Service Lead for Strategic Housing in consultation with the Corporate Head of Housing. Significant changes must be formally approved by the appropriate council cabinet.

## Appendix 1

### Customer Satisfaction Survey

 <b>Winchester</b> City Council					
<b>Disabled Facilities Grant Customer Satisfaction Survey</b>					
<p>The Private Sector Housing Team at Winchester City Council would like to know your feedback on the Disabled Facilities Grant service we provide. This is to monitor and improve our service for our future clients.</p>					
<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following:</b>					
	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>
The time it took for your adaptation (s) to be completed					
The way you were kept informed about Progress?					
The quality of the work completed					
The contractor who carried out the work?					
how easy it was to understand the Information you were given?					
how we dealt with any problems Along the					

way					
The amount of time staff spent with you?					
how easy it was to access the service					
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received?					
<b>How did you hear about the Disabled Facilities Grant service?</b>					
<b>Do you have any comments or suggestions to help us improve the Disabled Facilities Grant service?</b>					
<i>Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions</i>					
<i>Please return this form in the self-addressed envelope provided</i>					

## **Appendix 2 – Link to Latest Guidance**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1065574/DFG\\_Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1065574/DFG_Guidance.pdf)

## **Appendix 3 – List Of Current Pass-porting Benefits**

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (not contribution-based ESA)
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (not contribution-based JSA)
- Guarantee Pension Credit (not Savings Pension Credit alone)
- Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit (where your annual income for the purposes of the tax credits assessment was below £15,050)
- Housing Benefit

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# Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery:

## Guidance for Local Authorities

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This document/publication is also available on our website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities>.

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Views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities, the Department of Health and Social Care or any other government department.

Thank you to Foundations for their work in supporting us to help formulate this guidance. Find out more at <https://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com>



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Home adaptations are changes made to the fabric and fixtures of a home to make it safer and easier to get around and to use for everyday tasks like cooking and bathing. Adapting a home environment can help restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families. Adaptations can include the installation of stair-lifts, level access showers and wet-rooms, wash and dry toilets, ramps, wider doors, and, in some instances, bespoke home extensions to existing dwellings as well as improvements to access to and from gardens. Heating systems, insulation and telecare and assistive technology (where it is capital) can be other forms of adaptations.
- 1.2 Disabled Facilities Grants are capital grants that are available to people of all ages and in all housing tenures (i.e. whether renting privately, from a social landlord or council, or owner-occupiers) to contribute to the cost of adaptations. They are administered by local housing authorities in England and enable eligible disabled people to continue living safely and independently at home. This includes autistic people, those with a mental health condition, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, cognitive impairments such as dementia, and progressive conditions such as Motor Neurone Disease. It includes those suffering from age-related disabilities and can also include those with terminal illness. The DFG is one of a range of housing support measures that a local authority can use to help enable people to live independently and safely at home and in their communities.
- 1.3 This guidance is to advise local authorities in England how they can effectively and efficiently deliver DFG funded adaptations to best serve the needs of local older and disabled people. The guidance will help local authorities to meet their responsibilities, including legal duties, and tailor local delivery to support their communities and the individual needs of disabled people, their family and carers. It does not make changes in policy, but instead brings together and sets out in one place existing policy frameworks, legislative duties and powers, together with recommended best practice, to help local authorities provide a best practice adaptation service to disabled tenants and residents in their area.
- 1.4 This publication follows calls from the home adaptations sector and local authorities for clearer guidance around local DFG delivery. It also follows the findings of the [2018 independent review of the DFG](#) that recommended new guidance should set out expectations for local authorities in administering the DFG and the rights of a disabled person making an application for the grant.
- 1.5 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have worked closely with Foundations (the national body for home improvement agencies) and engaged with key home adaptations sector partners, local government representative organisations, and organisations which represent older and disabled people, to help ensure this guidance builds on the needs of older and disabled people, the local authorities who deliver the grant, and the wider home adaptations sector. We

would like to take this opportunity to thank Foundations for their work in supporting us to help formulate this guidance.

## Who is this guidance for?

- 1.6 This guidance is aimed at local authority staff at both **local housing authorities** (district councils, London boroughs and other unitary councils) and **authorities responsible for the provision of social care services** (county councils, London boroughs and other unitary councils). This includes those responsible for:
- strategic planning to ensure home adaptations are considered in an integrated approach to person-centred housing, health and social care services locally. This includes the local Health and Wellbeing Board, as well as those responsible for developing Better Care Fund plans
  - organising and managing the home adaptations service
  - identifying and assessing the needs of applicants, and making recommendations on how to meet those needs, including Occupational Therapists and Trusted Assessors;
  - preparing specifications for adaptations and making other practical arrangements to put those recommendations into practice; and
  - administering the systems for providing financial support for adaptations, including the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).
- This guidance is applicable to those managing council house adaptations and may also be helpful for home improvement agencies and other related service organisations in England responsible for organising the home adaptations service.
- 1.7 Members of the public who would like to find out more about the DFG and application process, including disabled people, their family and carers, can find more information about the grant and how to apply at: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants>, <https://adaptmyhome.org.uk> or on their local housing authority website.
- 1.8 As the DFG is a devolved policy and grant, this guidance is aimed at English local authorities only. The National Assembly for Wales has issued separate Disabled Facilities Grant advice for Welsh local authorities. Scotland and Northern Ireland have separate schemes and grants available to eligible disabled people to adapt their homes. Links to how DFGs are delivered in all three devolved nations can be found below.
- Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/independent-living/housing-adaptations/>
  - Wales: <https://gov.wales/adapt-your-home-if-you-are-disabled-or-older-person>
  - Northern Ireland: <http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/adaptations-guide>
- 1.9 In so far as this guidance comments on the law, this guidance can only reflect Government departments' understanding of it. Local authorities are advised to seek their own legal advice.



- 1.10 Additional guidance and information on best practice from the wider home adaptations sector is highlighted where relevant throughout this document and at **Appendix D: Resources**.

## Using this guidance

- 1.11 This guidance is divided into 7 chapters, each offering advice for local authorities in areas important to local DFG delivery, underpinned by the legislation at **Appendix B: The legislation**.
- **Chapter 2:** sets out the wider strategic context of the DFG, including the funding landscape for the DFG in England. It also outlines what good local strategic and operational collaboration looks like, and how local health, social care and housing authorities can work well together and with Private Registered Providers and housing associations to provide seamless person-centred support.
  - **Chapter 3:** explains how, under the powers of the Regulatory Reform Order (2002), local areas can work together to develop and publish a local Housing Assistance Policy which aligns with wider social care, health, planning, disabled and older people's strategies to best benefit local people who need adaptations. It outlines how local areas can set policy priorities, what policy content might include, and how local authorities can adopt, publish, monitor and revise policies. It also sets out policy tools and broader procedural considerations for all local authorities.
  - **Chapter 4:** outlines key considerations for local authorities on how they commission home adaptation services, so that the right integrated teams are in place, enquiries and referrals are well-managed, and effective triage and needs assessment processes support applicants.
  - **Chapter 5:** looks into the application process including what authorities should consider when designing and providing application forms, confirming the eligibility of the applicant and the required works. This includes the specification of the works, tendering procedures and service contracts. This chapter also sets out application approval requirements.
  - **Chapter 6:** sets out how local authorities can best work with contractors and oversee the delivery of home adaptation works, including developing a list of accredited builders, managing contracts, supervising, providing payment and signing-off the works.
  - **Chapter 7:** explains how assistive technology can be included as part of a home adaptations package to help people live safely and independently.

# Chapter 2: Strategic context of the Disabled Facilities Grant

## Wider strategic context

- 2.1 A suitable home can help disabled people of all ages to build and sustain their independence and maintain connections in their community. There are currently too many older and disabled people living in homes that make it difficult for them to do everyday tasks like washing and using the bathroom, cooking or getting out and about easily. Many homes are poorly designed for older age or changes in care and support needs. In fact, in 2019-20, around 1.9 million households in England had one or more people with a health condition that required adaptations to their home.
- 2.2 Government's ambition is to give more people the choice to live independently and healthily in their own homes for longer, with fewer people staying in hospital unnecessarily or moving to residential care prematurely when that is not where they want to live. Adaptations can reduce the amount of formal care and support an individual may require, as well as often making the difference between being able to continue living in their current home or not.
- 2.3 Government wants more people to benefit from home adaptations to meet their needs, and will continue to support local areas to meet their statutory duty.

## Disabled Facilities Grant funding

- 2.4 Since 2015, Government has provided funding for the DFG through the Better Care Fund (BCF) in recognition of the importance of ensuring adaptations are part of an integrated approach to housing, health and social care locally, and to help promote joined up local person-centred approaches to supporting communities.
- 2.5 Government provides ringfenced DFG funding to Better Care Fund budget holders (usually authorities responsible for the provision of social services, including county councils, London boroughs and other unitary councils). Funding must be spent in accordance with Better Care Fund plans which are agreed between local government and local health commissioners, and owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is important that those responsible for housing and home adaptations locally are involved in developing those plans.
- 2.6 In two tier areas, district councils are responsible for home adaptations and provision of DFGs to eligible recipients. In these areas, county councils must work with district councils to agree the use of this funding, and ensure that sufficient funding is passed to districts to meet these duties. A portion of DFG funding can be retained to pay for social care and housing capital elements of joined up health, social care and housing projects at county level, where this is agreed with Districts (see para 2.12). Local authorities and local health and care commissioners can



also choose to add to Government funding for home adaptations from their own budgets.

- 2.7 Authorities may decide to spend Government funding for the DFG in three ways:
- Approving DFGs in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the 1996 Act) (see Appendix B: The legislation)
  - Providing housing assistance in accordance with a locally published Housing Assistance Policy under RRO powers (see Chapter 3:).
  - Using a portion of the DFG funding for other social care capital funding purposes (as locally agreed with district councils in two-tier areas).
- 2.8 Authorities can apply a mix of these options to meet local priorities but should consider that:
- **the local housing authority has a statutory duty** under the 1996 Act to provide adaptations for those who qualify for a DFG.
  - **the primary role of Government funding is for the provision of home adaptations** to help eligible people safely access their home and key facilities within it. **Government funding is via a capital grant so must not be used for any revenue purposes.** Local authorities are responsible for correctly classifying expenditure in their statutory accounts. Further guidance on capital/revenue and services that can be funded are covered in Appendix A.
  - **Government funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant is intended to fund adaptations for owner occupiers, private tenants, or tenants of private registered providers (housing associations).** Eligible council tenants can apply for a DFG in the same way as any other applicant. However local housing authorities with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) should self-fund home adaptations for council tenants through this account. A provision was made for expenditure in the HRA as a 'Disabled Facilities Allowance' in the 2012-13 self-financing settlement, alongside information on how to calculate it in subsequent years. The same applies to applications from tenants living in dwellings managed by an Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO) but owned by the local authority.
- 2.9 Chief Executives of Local Housing Authorities must send DLUHC an annual declaration of grant usage which states they have spent the funding in accordance with the grant conditions. (Authorities are also requested to provide DFG delivery data to DLUHC through their annual DELTA questionnaire return.)
- 2.10 Local housing authorities can provide financial assistance from their own budgets to those who do not qualify for home adaptations funding under the statutory duty or to top up Government funding (see local flexibilities in Chapter 3:).
- 2.11 Where a portion of the DFG funding is used for other social care capital projects this must be agreed as part of, and spent in accordance with, the approved local BCF spending plan that was developed in keeping with the [BCF Policy Framework](#) and [Planning Requirements](#).

- 2.12 Local authorities are encouraged to consider the level of demand for adaptations locally, and use this freedom only to fund wider projects which are likely to reduce overall demand for DFGs, so that more people can receive the adaptations that they need. Good examples of wider social care capital projects include improving toilet/showering facilities in temporary accommodation to help support disabled people including those sleeping rough, or contributing to the cost of building accessible housing for disabled people in circumstances where this would be more cost effective than adapting a current property. Further case study examples of innovative use of DFG funding are available on the [Better Care Exchange](#) and [National Body for Home Improvement Agencies](#) web sites.

## Local strategic collaboration

- 2.13 While the administration of DFGs is the responsibility of the local housing authority, it is important that other bodies and especially social services authorities and health commissioners, play a full and active part in strategic planning of home adaptations and related services.
- 2.14 Local housing authorities in England have strategic responsibilities to consider housing conditions in their area including the need for new housing under [section 8 of the Housing Act 1985](#). As they assess housing needs and develop housing strategies, [section 3 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970](#) means they must consider the special needs of chronically sick and disabled persons.
- 2.15 Creating a home environment that supports people to live safely and independently can make a significant contribution to health and wellbeing. It is therefore vital that in planning for the housing needs of disabled people, local housing authorities work closely with local health and care commissioners, and ensure strategic join up, including in use of the DFG, to align housing, health and social care aims.
- 2.16 This should be achieved through the process of developing BCF plans that are signed off by Health and Wellbeing Boards. For more information on the BCF process, please refer to the BCF Policy Framework and the DFG section of the BCF Planning Requirements.
- 2.17 Examples of good practice joint working between local health, care and housing authorities include:
- **Inclusion of local housing leads (council or district level) on health and care focussed integration boards (including health and wellbeing boards)** to support a joined-up and strategic focus on prevention and wider determinants of health.
  - **Health, adult social care and housing authorities jointly commissioning schemes** that support people as they navigate between the health and care system. This could include home adaptation schemes that support people discharged from hospital and a home first approach.

- **Health Commissioners working with housing authorities to target DFG support** to ensure resources reach the most vulnerable residents in a community through sharing health data and analysis.
  - **Pooling revenue funding to provide a wraparound support** to recipients of home adaptations (for example, commissioning handyperson services) to provide joined-up person centred care.
- 2.18 Please refer to the [Better Care Exchange](#) and [National Body for Home Improvement Agencies](#) websites for more best practice case studies.
- 2.19 Government wants to make joint working easier between the health service, social care, and local government. Subject to passage of the Health and Care Bill, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) will take on the commissioning functions of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as well as some of NHS England's commissioning functions. Integrated Care Partnerships will bring together health, social care, public health (and potentially wider representatives where appropriate). This will put more power and autonomy in the hands of local systems, to plan and deliver seamless health and social care services. Further details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-care-bill-factsheets/health-and-care-bill-integrated-care-boards-and-local-health-and-care-systems>.
- 2.20 The next sections outline the legal responsibilities of different bodies and how they can best work together to ensure a seamless DFG service for local people.

## Collaboration in DFG Service Provision

### Role of Local Housing Authorities

- 2.21 Local housing authorities have a statutory duty under the 1996 Act to provide adaptations for eligible disabled people, as well as wider powers to provide discretionary housing assistance through the Regulatory Reform Order (see Chapter 3:). The administration of DFGs is the responsibility of the local housing authority, through all stages from initial enquiry (or referral) to post-completion.
- 2.22 District councils in two tier areas have a duty to consult their social services authority (county council) on the home adaptation needs of each disabled person seeking a DFG. While it is always the district council who must decide an application, if district and county councils collaborate effectively it would be rare for a district to decide not to approve an adaptation recommended by the county.
- 2.23 A local housing authority may also provide a range of other housing assistance services, for example, information and advice around housing options, or handyperson's services, which can provide minor repairs, and safety, security and efficiency checks and fittings, as well as signpost relevant people to additional support, such as adaptations.

## Role of Social Care Authorities

2.24 Social care authorities have wide-ranging powers and duties to meet the needs of disabled people living in their area who require care and support. The responsibilities of authorities who provide social services are set out:

- for adults in the [Care Act 2014](#); and
- for children in [Part 3 of the Children Act 1989](#), as well as [section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970](#).

Powers and duties under the Care Act relate to provision of assistive technology in the home, aids, equipment and adaptations. These include a duty to provide minor adaptations up to the value of £1,000 as well as other equipment to any value.

2.25 Where an application for DFG has been made, social service authorities should work closely with the housing authority to assess the needs of the individual. The social care authority should consider the wider social care needs of the applicant, including and beyond any adaptation required.

2.26 Where the social care authority determines that a need has been established it is their duty to assist, even where the housing authority is unable to approve or to fully fund an application. So for example, where an applicant for DFG has difficulty in meeting their assessed contribution from the DFG means test or the work will cost more than the upper limit, the social care authority can step in to provide financial assistance. Or if a disabled person is assessed as needing an adaptation which is outside the scope of the statutory DFG duty, then the social care authority can provide it.

2.27 Social care authorities may also consider using their powers under the Care Act 2014 to charge for their services where appropriate.

## Working together

2.28 To ensure delivery of seamless, person-centred support including for eligible people requiring adaptations, it is essential that housing, health and social services authorities work well together given the overlap in their duties and responsibilities. This includes in circumstances where timely adaptations delivery can help facilitate people being safely discharged from hospital.

2.29 It is good practice that respective authorities should hold regular meetings between senior officers and publish on each authority's website a clear, unambiguous formal agreement on key issues and joint working to benefit the person requiring adaptations, including:

- streamlining processes, including systems for joint assessments, cross-referrals and signposting between housing, health and social care services;
- acceptable timescales for adaptations delivery; and
- funding arrangements.

2.30 The formal agreement should include reference to:

- **local agreement surrounding the integration of services.** Integration of services locally can bring together policies and options to provide person-centred support such as DFG, Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES), and social care. Delivering person centred support in this manner means that individuals are often able to get the best support for their situation. Alongside this, revenue costs can be shared between health, social care and housing.
- **the use of budgets for minor adaptations and equipment and how that links with DFG funding.** For instance, equipment which can be installed and removed easily with little or no structural modification of the dwelling is the responsibility of the social services authority. For larger items such as stairlifts and through-floor lifts which may require structural works to the property, help is normally provided through the DFG.

2.31 To ensure adaptations are progressed as quickly as possible respective authorities should agree a joint approach to the funding of different types of adaptations, unless there are exceptional circumstances. In some cases both equipment and adaptations are required. For example, where authorities agree to fund hoists through the DFG it would not be appropriate to order a sling separately unless the delivery and installation of both can be suitably arranged. The disabled person and their carers or family should experience a joined-up service.

2.32 Authorities may also choose to pool some of their funding to support person-centred services. For example, given the overlap in duties to provide minor adaptations up to £1,000 housing and social services authorities could choose to pool funding for adaptations up to £1,000 to avoid arguments over funding delaying the adaptations that local disabled people need.

2.33 Neighbouring housing authorities may also agree to pool funding across a wider area to provide greater flexibility in using DFG funding to meet local demand, where some authorities have underspends while others have waiting lists. Doing this can also smooth the risk that a few exceptionally large applications take up a significant proportion of the overall budget for an individual area. The operation of pooled funds should form part of Better Care Fund plans and be overseen by regular meetings between senior officers.

### **Collaborative working between housing and social services**

An increasing number of authorities are recognising the benefits of establishing person centred services that appear seamless from the perspective of the disabled person and their family. For example, some authorities have seconded housing and social services staff into integrated teams that provide minor adaptations and equipment as part of a package of support including access to DFGs.

By joining up delivery it becomes easier to track outcomes and to monitor the effect that home adaptations have on the ongoing need for domiciliary care and preventing avoidable moves into residential or nursing care.

Some authorities are also starting to use predictive analytics to identify cases where preventative interventions can support carers, prevent falls and reduce loneliness involving the provision of adaptations and assistive technology. With the total annual cost of fragility fractures to the UK at an estimated £4.4 billion which includes £1.1 billion for social care; joint initiatives that can pre-empt a fall are likely to provide good value for money.

## **Working well with Private Registered Providers and housing associations**

- 2.34 DFG is available to tenants of Private Registered Providers and housing associations. However, there are some different requirements compared to applications from owners which means that an authority could operate different processes so long as tenants receive a comparable level of support and experience similar timescales for the completion of works. This adds a further dynamic to the process.
- 2.35 Housing association tenants now account for around 22% of all grants approved. Therefore, good partnership working between local authorities and housing associations is essential to making the adaptation process run smoothly.
- 2.36 It is essential that local authorities are clear and have agreed with housing associations and Private Registered Providers operating in their area the expectations around any contribution to funding, timeframes for approvals and for works to be undertaken.
- 2.37 As with delivery between the housing and social services authorities it is vital that all work together operationally to ensure the best outcome for the tenant.
- 2.38 It is recommended that local authorities hold regular meetings with Private Registered Providers and housing associations so that where issues arise there is an effective communication pathway which allows clear and open engagement between all parties and for tenants to be kept informed of decisions and progress on any agreed work.

- 2.39 There may be instances where additional work is required to a tenant's property in addition to the DFG application (such as other repair work). Again to minimise disruption to the tenant the local authority and Private Registered Provider or housing association should engage to agree the best times to schedule works.

### **Working with housing association landlords**

Foundations Independent Living Trust, Habinteg and Anchor Hanover have published new guidance that makes recommendations for improving the situation in social housing, including:

- Promoting the use of landlord applications (instead of tenant applications) for the majority of cases – removing the requirement for means testing and ensuring the landlord is giving permission.
- Landlords to manage the delivery of adaptations in their own stock, with investment over and above DFG to improve the long term accessibility of their stock – reducing the number of adaptations that get ripped out upon change of tenancy.
- Greater use of adapted housing registers to make the best use of already adapted stock by enabling tenants to be matched effectively.



# Chapter 3: Developing a local Housing Assistance Policy

## The Regulatory Reform Order

- 3.1 [The Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002](#) (RRO) provides general powers for local housing authorities to provide assistance for housing renewal, including home adaptations. The powers, detailed in [Article 3](#), can only be used in accordance with a published Housing Assistance Policy. This section of the guidance can help authorities to develop or review their policy.
- 3.2 The wide-ranging powers enable authorities to give assistance to people directly, or to provide assistance through a third party such as a Home Improvement Agency, providing the assistance will improve living conditions in their area. This can include supporting people to:
- purchase a new home (whether within or outside their area) where the authority either purchases their existing home, or is satisfied that purchasing a new home would provide a similar benefit to adapting their current home;
  - adapt or improve their home (including by alteration, conversion, enlargement, or installation of equipment or insulation);
  - repair their home;
  - demolish their home and build a replacement.
- 3.3 This can include funding adaptations to be added to the design of a new build home where the prospective owner has applied for assistance.
- 3.4 Assistance can also be given to pay for any associated fees and charges, including in cases where the work does not in the end proceed, as long as the authority is satisfied those fees fall within the terms of their local Housing Assistance Policy.
- 3.5 By publishing a Housing Assistance Policy under the RRO, housing authorities can use Government funding for the DFG more flexibly. This funding is primarily for the provision of home adaptations to help people to live independently, so it is important for any local Housing Assistance Policy to clearly set out what additional adaptations assistance is to be provided. However, the wide powers enable local authorities to offer other forms assistance such as repairs, or assistance to move, if an applicant's home is unsuitable for adaptation.
- 3.6 Policies can also include measures to speed up DFG delivery. For example, a local authority could develop a simplified system to deliver small-scale adaptations more quickly, for example, to deal with access issues, to enable rapid discharge of people from hospital, or to prevent admission to hospital or residential care.



- 3.7 While the RRO gives discretion to local authorities, it is important to note that authorities still have a statutory duty to approve DFG applications which meet the statutory requirements.

### **Improving delivery through a local Housing Assistance Policy**

Housing Assistance Policies can be used to streamline the application process for home adaptations, particularly for the most common types of work such as those to modify a bathroom, create a ramped access or install a lift. This may include a brief application form, limiting the situations when the means test applies and varying the requirements around contractors.

Providing a Home Improvement Agency to help and support with making a valid application is also likely to improve take up of the grant and ensure that adaptations are fit for purpose. Authorities may consider making it a condition that any discretionary grants or loans are managed by an approved agency service.

For counties, it is good practice for district councils to collaborate in aligning their policies to provide a consistent approach. There may be specific issues that apply to individual districts but the main provisions should apply across the county, including the role of the county council and situations where social care funding will apply.

## **Aligning with social care, health and older people strategies**

- 3.8 Housing, social services departments and the National Health Service (NHS) are delivering increasingly integrated services for vulnerable households that recognise the benefits of enabling people to stay in their own homes wherever possible. Poor housing can be a barrier for older and disabled people, contributing to immobility, social exclusion, ill health and depression. Housing assistance policies can contribute by enabling people to live with greater independence in secure, safe, well-maintained, warm and suitable housing.
- 3.9 Through local Better Care Fund plans, health, and social care authorities are required to agree a joined-up approach to health, social care and housing support to improve outcomes for residents. Housing authorities should also be involved in the discussion on the use of DFG funding. A Housing Assistance Policy that considers the more strategic, flexible use of DFG funding alongside other sources of funding to provide home adaptations including minor adaptations can support this aim. In developing a Housing Assistance Policy, housing authorities should work with health and social care partners and look to align objectives with existing local social care, health and older people related strategies.

### **Working with local partners**

- 3.10 Partnership working lies at the heart of any successful Housing Assistance Policy. Strategic partnerships enable a common vision backed by commitment of resources from the principal delivery agencies.

3.11 When considering how best to deliver the key outcomes, authorities may wish to consider the following types of partnerships:

- **Local authority partnerships:** In developing new housing assistance policies, local authorities may benefit from working together. For example, a group of local authorities could share the costs of developing new policy tools.
- **Partnerships to address housing need:** Planning to meet housing needs within an authority's area could involve close liaison with housing associations, private landlords, developers, providers of support and advice services, social services, the NHS and planning colleagues.
- **Health alliances:** there is a clear linkage between poor housing and ill health, especially with an ageing population and more people choosing to live independently within the community. This generates a need for partnership working between housing authorities, health authorities, health commissioners, local GPs and social services.
- **Home improvement agencies (HIAs)** can play a major part in helping an authority achieve its client-focused objectives.
- **Working with the voluntary sector:** within any strategy LAs should think about the provision for the supply of a range of complementary formal and informal advice and advocacy services.
- **Fuel poverty and energy efficiency partnerships:** fuel poverty and energy inefficient homes can only be tackled effectively through partnerships at the local level with housing authorities working closely with HIAs, NEA (National Energy Action), the Energy Saving Trust and energy suppliers.

## Identifying local issues, needs and expectations

### Evidence-based policies

3.12 Identifying local issues, needs and expectations of local residents is the first step in establishing a robust Housing Assistance Policy. This depends on accurate and up-to-date information. The following list sets out the minimum requirement:

- details of the prevailing social and economic conditions, including fuel poverty;
- profiles of the age, health, health inequalities and disabilities of the local population;
- data indicating demographic changes and trends;
- knowledge and understanding of the local housing market;
- stock condition data, including energy efficiency;
- complaints data, and customer satisfaction surveys among existing home adaptation clients; and

- issues of concern raised by partner organisations and other stakeholders.

### Setting policy priorities

3.13 Authorities will want to consider policy options, establish priorities for action, and subsequently review the policy on a regular basis. The priorities selected will be influenced by the strategic context for housing assistance and by the issues, needs and expectations identified. The local challenges facing individual local authorities will vary widely, and to ensure that resources are well used a careful appraisal of priorities is essential, involving residents and other partners before a final policy is adopted. The following provide some example priorities:

#### Client-based

- 3.14 Depending on local need, provision of assistance may target additional help for specific groups:
- **Older people**; by seeking to assist with maintenance, repairs, improvements or the provision of basic amenities. Older people are more likely to live in substandard and poorly heated homes and are also vulnerable in terms of home accidents or crime.
  - **Specific conditions**; by providing a package of additional assistance outside the mandatory disabled facilities grant system, e.g. for those needing palliative care.
  - **Housing needs of black and minority ethnic communities or others with protected characteristics**; in line with public sector equality duties, authorities should consider whether particular groups are facing disadvantage in accessing home adaptations and recognise the cultural needs of particular groups.

#### Motor neurone disease

Housing assistance policies can be used to respond to rapidly progressing and highly debilitating conditions such as Motor Neurone Disease (MND). Often people with MND want to continue to work during the early stages of the disease, which can make them ineligible for a DFG through means testing. But by the time they can no longer work an un-adapted home can make day to day activities very difficult to manage.

Some local authorities include provisions within their policy, such as:

- a fast-track process with no means testing for works up to £5,000.
- ignoring the earnings of the person with MND in the means test where larger scale works are assessed as being necessary and appropriate.

These provisions apply to a relatively small number of people but can have a significant impact upon their lives at a time of major upheaval.

#### Sector-based: Assistance to landlords

3.15 Homelessness, and housing need should be an important consideration for a local authority. The private rented sector often plays a key role in providing

accommodation including for homeless families, and supported lodgings for young care leavers. Assistance may therefore support landlords or other partners to increase the supply of adapted accommodation.

- 3.16 Authorities may want to consider a policy to retain nomination rights to a rented property for a specified period of time where a landlord applies for assistance. This could mirror the option to secure nomination rights where a landlord applies for a mandatory DFG.

### **Working with private landlords**

Research undertaken by the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) shows that only 8% of landlords let properties to people with accessibility needs and the biggest barrier to installing adaptations is the cost. However, 79% of landlords did not know that funding is available through the DFG.

The NRLA is working with a number of local authorities to provide more information to private landlords with the aim of encouraging more DFG applications and supporting landlords to make their portfolios more accessible for disabled tenants. It is good practice to include awareness raising a part of private landlord forums and other engagement regularly undertaken by local housing authorities.

Provision can be made within a Housing Assistance Policy to streamline the grant application process where the landlord makes the application and takes the lead in managing the works. As with the mandatory DFG, the means test would not apply but nomination rights could be applied to ensure that the property could be available for let to another disabled person in the future.

### **Theme-based**

- 3.17 A policy may target assistance against themes. Examples could include:
- hospital discharge schemes; and
  - home accident prevention or health and safety initiatives.

### **Policy content**

- 3.18 The policy should set out the nature and extent of housing assistance that will be available, based on the evidence of needs identified. It should set out how the strategic aims and objectives of an authority will be met by appropriate and effective actions.
- 3.19 Authorities must also avoid fettering their discretion to provide assistance. This means that they must include a mechanism in place to consider applications for assistance which fall outside their policy. They may legitimately turn down an application for assistance that falls outside their policy, but only after individual consideration on a sound and informed basis. Such applications should be approved where appropriate.
- 3.20 It would be best practice for the full policy document detailing the assistance to be made available under the RRO to include the following:

- how the policy will contribute towards the fulfilment of the local authority's strategic aims, objectives and priorities;
- a statement of the key priorities which the policy will address and the reasons for selecting them;
- the amount of capital resources that will be committed to implementing the policy, including resources provided by partner organisations;
- a description of the types of assistance available, what the assistance will be used for, and what key outcomes will be achieved by each form of assistance;
- the circumstances in which persons will be eligible for assistance;
- the amounts of assistance that will be available to eligible persons, and how these amounts will be determined;
- the types and amounts of preliminary or ancillary fees and charges associated with the provision of assistance that will be payable and in what circumstances;
- the process to be used to apply for assistance, including any preliminary enquiry system;
- how persons can obtain access to the process of applying for assistance;
- details of conditions that will apply to the provision of assistance, how conditions will be enforced and in what circumstances they may be waived;
- advice that is available, including financial advice, to assist persons wishing to enquire about, and apply for, assistance;
- the arrangements for complaints about the policy and its implementation;
- the arrangements for applications for assistance to be considered where these fall outside policy;
- key service standards that will apply to the provision of assistance e.g. how long it will take to approve an application for assistance once submitted, how long it will take for assistance to be completed once approved;
- local performance indicators and targets that will be used to measure the progress made by policy implementation towards meeting the authority's strategic aims, objectives and priorities and the fulfilment of corporate strategies; and
- a policy implementation plan that will, amongst other things: state the policy commencement date; the planned date when a successor policy document will be issued; the frequency with which policy implementation (including performance against indicators and targets) will be reported and publicised; and the circumstances that might necessitate an earlier review of the policy document.

3.21 The forms of assistance should adhere to the powers set out in article 3 of the order (see para 3.1). The following are examples from existing policies across England:

- **Relocation assistance:** financial and practical support to move where that is more cost effective or delivers better outcomes compared to adapting the existing home.
- **Hospital discharge grant:** funding for urgent adaptations, repairs or modifications that will allow someone to be discharged from hospital sooner.
- **Waiving the means test:** for example, not requiring means testing for stairlifts to prevent falls or where the cost of the adaptations is below a certain amount.
- **Home safety grant:** funding to repair hazards in the home that can reduce risks leading to fewer falls and other accidents around the home.
- **Pooled funding:** For example to fund ramps where otherwise there would be delay while deciding if it is to be funded by DFG or social services.
- **Fast-track adaptations:** where an urgent need has been identified, bureaucracy is minimised to speed up assessment and delivery
- **Palliative care:** Assistance with fast-track works for terminally ill people being discharged from hospital or hospice.
- **Dementia grants:** small grants to fund modifications that would allow someone with a diagnosis of dementia to remain living safely in their home for longer.
- **Smart Home Kits:** such as a smart thermostat to control heating and hot water, video doorbell, smart switches, smart lightbulbs and an Alexa or Google Home for voice or other assistive technology grants (see The Disabled Facilities Grant and assistive technology)
- **Funding more than the Maximum Amount:** funding towards adaptation schemes where the cost exceeds the maximum amount for a DFG.

## Fees and charges

- 3.22 Within their policies, local authorities should state what associated preliminary or ancillary fees and charges will be paid. This might include fees charged by agency services, private architects and surveyors, and could include either in-house or outsourced loan administration costs.
- 3.23 Clearly only reasonable and necessary fees and charges should be eligible for assistance. Authorities should actively compare these costs with other local authorities and service providers, and carry out market testing where appropriate. Authorities should seek to keep the cost of eligible fees and charges to a minimum but without compromising the quality of service provided to the customer.

### **Dementia grants**

Many local authorities already include dementia grants within their housing assistance policies. They are typically preventative in nature and allow for adaptations to be provided with a diagnosis of dementia and before the condition escalates to the point where a DFG would otherwise become necessary.

The extent and cost of the works are usually relatively small (often less than £1,000) and involve a streamlined application process. The most common types of modification are:

- Labels and signs on doors and cupboards
- Task focussed lighting in bathrooms and kitchens
- Items of assistive technology, e.g. to provide reminders and to monitor activity
- Safer flooring
- Decoration to improve contrast between walls and floors
- Installing coloured fixtures to create a contrast for items like toilet seats and grabrails

These simple changes can help to keep someone living safely at home for longer, delaying the need for more costly care services or a move into residential care.

### **Local land charges for DFGs**

3.24 As part of their Housing Assistance Policy authorities should set out when it will use discretion to place local land charges for an owner-occupier's application and the cases when it would not demand repayment if the recipient of the grant disposes of the property (see Appendix B, B123 to B125).

3.25 Authorities should particularly consider whether it would be right to demand repayment in cases where:

- repayment of the grant would cause financial hardship;
- they have to move for their job;
- the move is related to their physical or mental health or well-being; or
- they need to move to provide or receive care from others.

3.26 Authorities are encouraged not to place local land charges where the application is being made for a child in a long-term foster placement.

### **Adopting and publishing the policy**

3.27 Before providing alternative forms of assistance, a local authority should consider the expected life of the policy and plan capital resource allocations accordingly. The authority must then:



- adopt the Housing Assistance Policy according to its normal procedures for such matters;
- give public notice of the adoption of the policy; and
- ensure that the full policy is available on their website, preferably with a summary in plain English (and other languages as necessary).

### **Monitoring and revising the policy**

3.28 Regular monitoring of the policy's aims and objectives against performance targets, and customer feedback is essential to check whether policy implementation is satisfactory. Customers' views and experiences of the services provided, and their needs and expectations for future services, will also be useful in considering whether revisions are needed.

### **Dealing with complaints and redress procedures**

3.29 How clients initiate complaints and the appeals procedure when assistance is turned down should be written down and freely available.

### **Changes to policy**

3.30 Where any significant changes are made to the published policy, these must also be formally adopted and published. Significant changes include those to eligibility and scope as well as any new forms of assistance introduced. Minor changes which do not affect the broad thrust of policy direction, can be accommodated without a formal re-adoption process.

## **Policy tools**

3.31 The provisions of the RRO give local authorities wide discretion to provide assistance for housing renewal. Authorities should decide the most appropriate forms of assistance to best address the policy priorities they have identified. This section reviews the main policy tools which should be considered. Assistance may be unconditional or subject to conditions such as the requirement to repay a grant if the property is sold within five years.

3.32 The RRO contains important protections relating to the giving of assistance, whether it is given as a grant, loan or another form of help. It requires that:

- authorities set out in writing the terms and conditions under which assistance is being given; and
- before giving any assistance the authority must be satisfied that the person has received appropriate advice or information about the extent and nature of any obligation (financial or otherwise) that they will be taking on; and
- before making a loan, or requiring repayment of a loan or grant, the authority must have regard to the person's ability to afford to make a contribution or repayment.



## Grant assistance

- 3.33 Local authorities can make grant funding available for home adaptations and associated works. This might be for minor items of work, works outside the scope of the mandatory DFG, or to reduce the bureaucracy involved.
- 3.34 Where a local authority offers grant assistance it will need to consider whether to apply a means test. The specific form of means test will be for the authority to decide. Means tests are inherently complex and are not always appropriate. A simpler 'passporting' method linked to entitlement for other state benefits may be an alternative. In addition, for owner-occupiers the amount of unmortgaged equity in the property might be an important consideration in whether to make assistance available.

## Loan assistance

- 3.35 The RRO also enables local authorities to offer financial assistance in the form of a loan. For example, an authority may wish to offer loans to help those required to make a financial contribution under the means test for mandatory DFG.

### Types of loan assistance

- 3.36 There is a wide range of options available for local authorities to consider and it is important that they should seek proper, comprehensive legal and financial advice before offering loan assistance. The principal categories are:
- **Interest bearing repayment loans:** conventional loans either secured or unsecured with interest charged either at the current market rate or at a preferential rate and repayable in regular instalments over a period of time. Such loans are likely to be best suited to those with a regular income which would enable them to make the required repayments.
  - **Interest-only loans:** conventional loans, usually secured, where the borrower only pays the interest charge on the amount borrowed in regular instalments. Repayments may vary as interest rates go up or down. The capital is repaid usually on the sale of the property. Again, this sort of loan is likely to be best suited to those able to meet regular interest repayments, and, where the loan is secured against the property where there is adequate remaining equity in it.
  - **Zero-interest loans:** a conventional loan registered as a charge against the value of the property on which no interest is levied. The capital is repaid usually on the sale of the property. This type of loan may be best suited to those unable to make regular loan repayments, but who have substantial remaining equity in their home.
- 3.37 In deciding which is the right financial product for any circumstance, local authorities will need to make a careful assessment of the financial position of the applicant. In the case of equity release products they will also need to assess the current and possible future value of the property and other actual and potential charges on it. Where homes are already mortgaged the lender will insist on taking the first charge.

### Loan administration

- 3.38 Local authorities must be aware of all aspects of consumer credit regulation and guidance. The principal regulators for financial services are the [Financial Conduct Authority](#).
- 3.39 Any financial service providers including local authorities and housing associations may give advice about their own financial products. However, local authorities and housing associations must not offer financial advice on other financial products. They can only offer information on the availability of other products. Where loans are being offered, especially if the local authority is working jointly with another agency to promote any loan or equity release scheme, the person should be strongly advised to consult an independent financial advisor. Where appropriate, they should advise those considering equity release products to consult their family.
- 3.40 Local authorities and housing associations (but not their wholly owned subsidiaries) are exempt from the Financial Conduct Authority's authorisation for mortgage lending and administration, arranging and advising. However, they must still adhere to the underlying key principles of mortgage regulation which will be taken into account in any case referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. These are that:
- authorities must ensure that their procedures are open and readily accessible to members and clients; and that
  - loans are administered in a manner which is both reasonable and fair.
- 3.41 The RRO is also clear that local authorities must satisfy themselves that recipients have received appropriate advice or information on any obligations arising from the assistance. This applies whether the local authority is providing the assistance directly or through third parties.

### Broader procedural considerations

- 3.42 Local authorities are free to decide their own policies and procedures through the general power to provide assistance. However, authorities should consider:
- duties under the [Local Government Act 1999](#) to provide best value through the operation of customer-focused, cost-effective, and efficient procedures;
  - obligations enshrined in administrative law such as the duty to act reasonably and fairly;
  - ensuring that policies and procedures are robust enough to safeguard and secure value for money from public funds and to minimise the risk of fraud; and
  - developing procedures that are transparent, fair, and efficient. This will help mitigate against legal challenges or allegations of maladministration.
- 3.43 Authorities are also subject to requirements of the Equality Act 2010 because they are discharging a public function and providing a service to the public. This means that they are required to make reasonable adjustments for service users who meet

the Act's definition of having a disability (see Appendix B, B5), including those who are applying for a grant. This means, for example, that DFG services must be accessible to those with a visual or mobility disability.

- 3.44 The reasonable adjustment duty is anticipatory, meaning that local housing authorities should not wait for a reasonable adjustment request, but should plan on the basis that, in a DFG application context, a substantial proportion of their clients will be disabled and therefore arrangements should be put in place to anticipate this.
- 3.45 Authorities must also not discriminate against or harass a person applying for a grant on grounds of or for reasons related to their disability or any other protected characteristic under the 2010 Act. Failure by an authority to make a reasonable adjustment to assist disabled service users make their application is unlawful under the 2010 Act, as well as other forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment, and can ultimately result in civil proceedings at County Court.
- 3.46 Local authorities are subject to the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED), and when carrying out their functions must give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Equality Act, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and others and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and others. It is for local authorities to decide what is required to fulfil their duty and the government does not have a role in overseeing this.
- 3.47 A local authority that is failing to comply with the PSED may be challenged via Judicial Review. Guidance on the PSED for public authorities in England, Scotland and Wales is available at the following link:  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance>.
- 3.48 Under [section 343AA of the Armed Forces Act 2006](#) (inserted by [section 8 of the Armed Forces Act 2021](#)), local authorities are required to have due regard to the three principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain housing functions, including allocating disabled facilities grants. Under this provision, special considerations for veterans may be justified in some circumstances. More information will be provided in the Armed Forces Covenant Duty statutory guidance to be published in 2022.

## Chapter 4: Managing a home adaptations service

- 4.1 Once the local authority has set out their Housing Assistance Policy, and determined the key outcomes they wish to see from a home adaptations service, in line with the local Better Care Fund Plan, the next step is to understand the right way to commission the service.
- 4.2 Different authorities will take a different approach. For example, Housing Revenue Account funded adaptations for council properties may be managed by DFG housing officers or directly by council housing teams. However, it is considered good practice to offer a Home Improvement Agency service to support a disabled person and their family through the often complicated process of carrying out major building works. It is also good practice to consult disabled people in service design and delivery. This chapter uses the term “client” to collectively refer to the older or disabled person, the applicant and their family and carers.
- 4.3 Whichever route is chosen, it is good practice to undertake reviews of the service set up at regular intervals to consider whether the service is still delivering the best outcomes possible and whether service improvements can be made.
- 4.4 The aim of managing a home adaptations service should always be a seamless service for the client whose needs should be the primary focus. As a matter of good practice, the client should be involved in decision making throughout the process and the outcome of all discussions and agreements must be well documented.

### Integrated teams

- 4.5 Local authorities should consider using a single, integrated team to handle the whole adaptation journey from first contact to completion of the works. A joint team, including both housing and social care professionals, overcomes the frustrations faced by clients when their case is passed between different organisations. There is emerging evidence that this more person-centred way of working reduces timescales and drop-out rates.

### Managing initial enquiries and referrals

- 4.6 To ensure the quality and consistency of response, local authorities should consider establishing a one-stop shop to channel the majority of initial enquiries or referrals to a preferred point of access, for example, a social services contact centre, or an agency service.
- 4.7 Where authorities are working in partnership, the branding should clearly feature the titles and corporate logos of all the partner organisations to demonstrate their ownership of the common process.

- 4.8 Common training on an ongoing basis should be provided for those dealing with enquiries and referrals to ensure a consistent and appropriate service is provided. This will include disability equality training for all public-facing staff.

### **The right assessment team**

- 4.9 Authorities should also ensure they have the right team of professionals to assess and recommend adaptations. For example, trusted assessors (in simple cases), paediatric occupational therapists, educational setting assessments and other occupational therapists and technical officers, particularly where major adaptations are required.
- 4.10 Trusted assessors are staff who are trained to assess people and their home environment for home adaptations in simple cases. They also know when to refer on to an occupational therapist for further assessment. It is good practice for trusted assessors to be supervised by an occupational therapist.
- 4.11 The most successful assessment systems involve occupational therapists and trusted assessors working together within multidisciplinary teams.
- 4.12 Some applicants will be assessed by a private occupational therapist. A district council must still consult the social services authority in these cases.
- 4.13 Whichever team makes the initial assessment, the final decision on awarding grant remains with the local housing authority. Decision making panel meetings that do not include the housing authority are strongly discouraged.

### **Foundations**

Foundations are the government appointed National Body for Home Improvement Agencies in England. They offer a range of services to improve the local delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants. This includes:

- An accessible website with an extensive library and how-to guides
- A network of Regional Advisors providing information, support, and guidance
- Accreditation and quality standards for Home Improvement Agencies
- Bespoke training courses, including regular free online classes on understanding DFG
- Regular free events including monthly webinars and live regional DFG Champions Roadshows to share best practice
- Housing the National Healthy Housing Awards
- Consultancy support with service improvement reviews, including process mapping and drafting of Housing Assistance Policies

## Support for local authorities

4.14 Further information on good practice in the delivery of home adaptations can be obtained from Foundations, a body funded by the Government to support local authorities and home improvement agencies around local DFG delivery.

## The key stages

4.15 There are 5 key stages of delivering a home adaptation.

- **Stage 0:** first contact with services
- **Stage 1:** first contact to assessment and identification of the relevant works;
- **Stage 2:** identification of the relevant works to submission of the formal grant application
- **Stage 3:** grant application to grant approval
- **Stage 4:** approval of grant to completion of works.

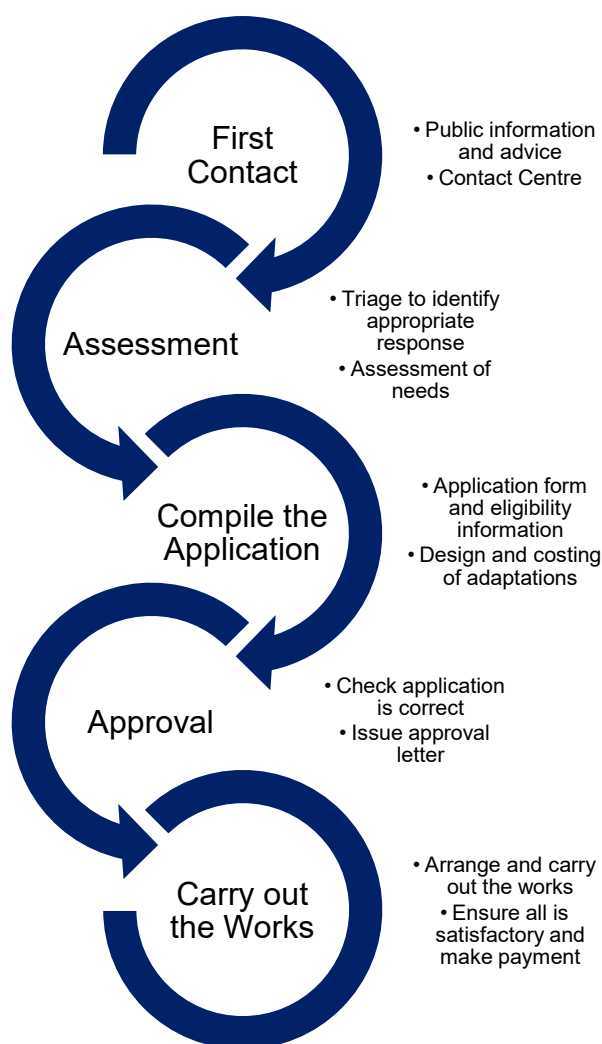


Figure 1: Key Elements of the DFG Process

4.16 The timescales for moving through these stages will depend upon the urgency and complexity of the adaptations required. More urgent cases should be prioritised for action, but larger and more complex schemes will take longer to complete. The following table sets out best practice targets, which should be met in 95% of cases. (see 4.36 to 4.39 for definitions).

	Target timescales (working days)				
Type	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total
Urgent & Simple	5	25	5	20	<b>55</b>
Non-urgent & Simple	20	50	20	40	<b>130</b>
Urgent & Complex	20	45	5	60	<b>130</b>
Non-urgent & Complex	35	55	20	80	<b>180</b>

4.17 It is important to keep the client updated on progress (and any potential delays) at all stages. People told about the causes of delay are more likely to accept it and may offer ways to mitigate any problems.

**First contact**

4.18 Authorities should put in place pre-application processes to efficiently channel enquiries into the most appropriate type of assistance at an early stage or signpost them to more appropriate agencies to help resolve their problems.

**The provision of good information, advice, and publicity**

4.19 The provision of clear, concise, easy to understand and readily accessible information is a vital aspect of providing a good service. It is important that anyone who needs it has appropriate access to information about DFGs, local policies for providing assistance, and how to apply. Authorities, working with partner agencies, should produce information in a range of formats, including on the authority website. This should include:

- the types of grant, loan or other assistance available;
- whether their personal circumstances make them eligible to apply, with a reasonable expectation of receiving some form of assistance;
- how to make an enquiry and application for assistance, including any application forms;
- any help or advice available with making an application through home improvement agencies or partners in any loan scheme operating locally;
- approval and payment processes;
- what happens if they start work before approval;
- any conditions that apply;



- how their contribution (if any) or loan repayments will be calculated and when the loan repayment would be required;
- how to resolve problems during and after completion of works;
- target timescales for operating different parts of the process, such as times taken for assessment, survey, approval and construction stages;
- assistance that may be available instead of or in addition to a grant or loan;
- advice, assistance and advocacy services that may be available where support is required;
- provisions for dealing with requests for assistance that fall outside the policy and the complaints procedure.

Authorities should ensure the information provided is up-to-date, accessible and easily understood for example, by people with learning and communication difficulties, or by those whose first language is not English.

### **Public information and self-assessment**

Foundations (the National Body for Home Improvement Agencies in England) host the [AdaptMyHome.org.uk](http://AdaptMyHome.org.uk) website which includes general information about DFG and home adaptations.

It also includes a guided self-assessment that help people to consider:

- whether they would benefit from making adaptations to their home;
- if they might be eligible to apply for a DFG;
- whether they might be better to consider moving to somewhere more suitable; and
- their estimated contribution towards the costs through means testing.

By entering their postcode they can also find the contact details of their local authority or forward the details of their self-assessment.

Local authorities are able to register and update their details.

## **Dealing with complaints**

- 4.20 The right to complain about adaptations services should be clearly set out on each authority's website and other media and made available to enquirers when they first make contact. This information should detail who they should complain to and the processes and timescales involved. For cases that cannot be resolved through the normal complaints procedure, contact details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman should also be provided.
- 4.21 Authorities should also have a contingency fund to pay for remedies to be swiftly carried out when adaptations have gone wrong. People in these circumstances should not be put in a queue to wait for a reassessment.



## **Providing an effective response to enquiries and referrals**

- 4.22 To ensure clients receive a seamless service, on initial enquiry there should be an initial screening process, with agreed criteria, to determine whether an assessment is required for other forms of social care assistance.
- 4.23 Where the enquiry is received by a social services contact centre, housing needs should be an integral part of any needs assessment. People who do not qualify for social care services may nevertheless be entitled to a DFG.
- 4.24 Agreed criteria for assessing adaptation needs should be used. This should include criteria to enable an initial level of priority of the case - this can be revised later in the light of additional information or changes of personal circumstances.
- 4.25 The essential requirements include:
- a means of identifying and prioritising urgent cases;
  - other criteria that may assist in setting a priority based on the needs of the client. An example of arbitrary criteria would be a decision to give low priority to people seeking help with bathing problems; and
  - a system for checking that a correct decision has been made, for example by feeding back to the client or the referral agency the information which has been logged to ensure that it is correct.
- 4.26 A written response, or response in another format as appropriate, should be made to every enquiry providing an explanation of the action which is to be taken and the expected time scale. It should make clear who is responsible for each action (including the client if more information is required) and should give a clear point of contact.
- 4.27 The client should be informed of the next steps, including when they should expect a response and contact details to follow up in the event of delay. The date on the initial enquiry should be regarded as the starting point for a request for assistance for measuring against the target timescales as set out in paragraph 4.16.
- 4.28 Authorities should also consider introducing a secure online portal where clients can check the progress of their case.

### **Single point of contact**

- 4.29 The response to referrals or enquiries should identify a single point of contact, who the client can contact for information about their case. Ideally, this contact point should remain the same throughout the process, rather than being transferred, for example, from social services to housing if a DFG has been identified as the appropriate solution.

### **Preliminary means test for DFG**

- 4.30 The DFG means test is in place to ensure that DFG funding reaches those people who are on the lowest incomes and least able to afford to pay for the adaptations themselves.

- 4.31 Authorities should consider a preliminary means test for DFG at an early stage. It can be frustrating for both applicants and staff to discover at a late stage that the DFG means test indicates they will receive little or no financial assistance. A preliminary enquiry about resources (e.g. through a self-service online portal such as [adaptmyhome.org.uk](http://adaptmyhome.org.uk)) can short-circuit these delays and may encourage the disabled person to pursue other solutions.
- 4.32 More information on the means test can be found in Appendix B at paragraph B98.

### **Triage and assessment**

- 4.33 Everyone is an individual and one size does not fit all. Assessments should be person centred, and consider the individual views, values and cultural needs of the client. Practitioners in housing, health and social care should work together to help ensure clients feel confident and empowered to manage daily risks, drawing upon clients' strengths and assets to achieve positive outcomes.
- 4.34 For disabled children and young people, assessments should take account of their views and those of their parents. Assessments of disabled children should consider the developmental needs of the child and their progress towards maximum independence, the needs of their parents as carers and the needs of other children in the family.

### **Autism and behaviours that challenge**

Where home adaptations are being considered to deal with behaviours that challenge, the family and carers of the disabled person should be highly involved in the assessment discussions and decision making process. It is also good practice to consult with specialist colleagues to fully explore the correct balance between therapeutic interventions and adaptations.

Where behaviours threaten the safety of others living within the household, the grant can be used to reduce the risks to their safety. For instance, where siblings share a bedroom and there is the threat of harm during the night, then creating a separate bedroom can meet this purpose.

Grant could also be used to create a safe space for a person who is likely to injure themselves. This could, for example, include items such as upholstered and washable walls, soft flooring, radiator covers or a television enclosure. See Appendix A for further details on use of capital funding.

### **Triage**

- 4.35 It is recommended that authorities use a triage system to make an initial assessment of the complexity and urgency of a case. A good triage system will help everyone gain a shared understanding of the likely timescales for delivery. It will also enable the right team with the right skills to properly assess the case. Occupational therapists can be a limited resource, so it makes sense for qualified

Trusted Assessors to assess simpler cases, enabling occupational therapists to focus on the most complex cases.

### Deciding what is complex and needs occupational therapy input

4.36 To effectively route clients down different pathways, it is important to understand the potential complexity of the case at the outset. A complexity framework for home modification services has been developed in Australia which considers two aspects of complexity:

- Firstly, whether the adaptation is likely to be minor or major, defined by the structural changes required to adapt the home environment rather than cost.
- Secondly, whether the person's situation is straightforward or complicated – using a range of factors including the nature of the person's condition, the type of activity the person is wanting to do, and how ready the person is to have their home adapted.

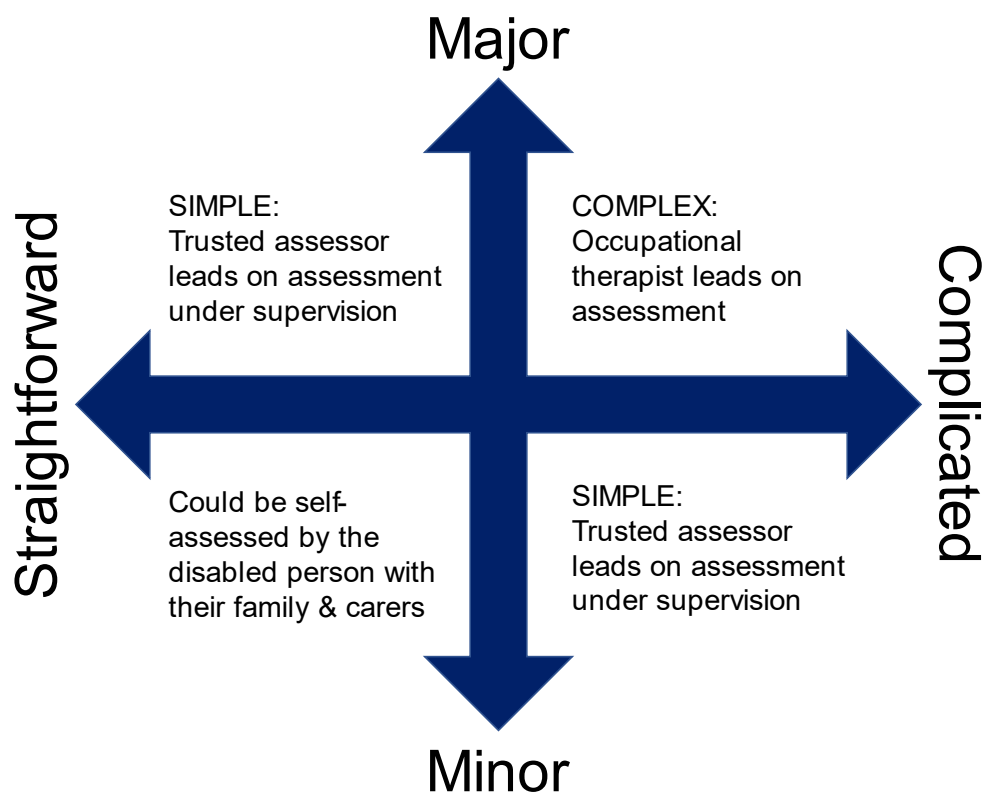


Figure 2: Model for deciding the complexity of an adaptation

4.37 This model can be adapted to identify the cases where occupational therapy input will be most beneficial. More detail on adopting this approach can be found in the Adaptations without Delay framework published by the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

## Deciding the urgency

4.38 Authorities are recommended to treat cases as urgent in the following circumstances:

- Coming out of hospital and at risk
- Living alone and at risk
- Severe cognitive dysfunction and at risk
- Living with a carer who is elderly or disabled
- Living without heating or hot water and at risk
- Limited life expectancy

4.39 Categorising complexity and urgency at this early stage will set the target timescales for the rest of the process. However, this should be kept under review as circumstances change or if further information is uncovered during the assessment.

## Assessment of need

4.40 In the DFG assessment, the authority must identify the client's needs and what 'relevant works' are necessary and appropriate to meet their needs. Further information on legislation around the relevant works and what is necessary and appropriate can be found at Appendix B, paragraph B61. Below are some key principles to consider when identifying the adaptations needed.

- The primary purpose should be to modify a home environment to help restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families.
- The DFG can be used for a wide range of capital works to a home provided it meets the purposes set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (see Appendix B, para B45).
- Authorities should judge each request for adaptations on its merits in accordance with the legislation (see Appendix B) and not seek out reasons to refuse or delay approval.
- The starting point and continuing focus should be the needs experienced and identified by the client and their carers. The process should be one of partnership in which the older or disabled person and carers are the key partners.
- All partners should work to ensure that each adaptation is delivered sensitively, is fit for the purpose identified by the client, their family, or their carers, and within a timeframe that is made explicit at the outset.
- Authorities should consider how best to achieve value for money, taking into account:
  - how to design adaptations that will meet current and anticipated future needs; and
  - projected costs of health and social care in the longer term.

- Value for money will not always be achieved by choosing the cheapest option. An adaptation should satisfy the present and anticipated needs of the disabled person even in large and complex adaptations costing above the grant maximum of currently £30,000.

### **Recycling adaptations and value for money**

When considering value for money local authorities should take into account their investment into the long term accessibility of the housing stock in their area.

For example, carrying out the minimum works necessary to adapt a bathroom to meet the functional needs of a disabled person is unlikely to see those adaptations retained at the next change of occupier.

For specialist equipment such as stairlifts, homelifts, hoists and so on, authorities should consider how these items can be reclaimed, refurbished and recycled for use by others who may need them. There are different approaches to consider, including:

- Including recycling within a bulk purchasing arrangement / framework.
- Establishing an agreement with a provider to reclaim and refurbish equipment and offer them at a discounted rate to people who are not eligible for a DFG
- Reclaiming lifts to the local community equipment store for refurbishment and re-use.

Authorities should also consider the benefit of providing long term maintenance agreements and warranties for specialist equipment. This will ensure that the item will continue to operate over a longer period and maintain the independence of the disabled person.

## **Tailored solutions**

- 4.41 Adaptations should provide a sustainable and effective, individualised solution, including considering the role that assistive technology could play in meeting the identified needs (see Chapter 7:). It is important that the assessment of need focuses on what is important to the disabled person, rather than solely on safety and function.
- 4.42 To reduce the risk of installing inappropriate adaptations, authorities should follow the nine guiding principles identified by Heywood (2004) in her research into the needs older and disabled people consider important when being assessed:
- Need to retain (or restore) dignity
  - Need to have values recognised
  - Need for relief from pain, discomfort, and danger
  - Need to minimise barriers to independence
  - Need for some element of choice
  - Need for good communication as part of giving choice

- Need for light
  - Particular needs of children: to provide for growth and change; and the need for space
  - Needs of other family members and of the family as a whole
- 4.43 The above principles provide a framework to support decision-making and communication of what works are necessary and appropriate in each case.

### **A collaborative model of assessment for complex cases**

- 4.44 An integrated approach between the occupational therapist and technical officer is recommended to help determine the eligible works in complex cases.
- 4.45 In complex cases an occupational therapist may require the support of a technical officer to identify what adaptations are reasonable and practicable to install given structural limitations of the property. Only then can the occupational therapist recommend (in collaboration with the client), which solution is appropriate. More information on what is considered reasonable and practicable can be found in Annex B paragraph B84.
- 4.46 An integrated approach to assessment is illustrated in Figure 3 and demonstrates that the client is at the centre of the process:
- 1. This begins with the assessment of need and with identifying if it is necessary to adapt the home environment.
  - 2. The next step involves considering the home environment and identifying the potential solutions for adapting the home environment and meeting the needs of the person.
  - 3. From the range of solutions, the occupational therapist collaborates with the person to identify the most appropriate solution.
  - 4. The final stage of the process considers whether it is reasonable to award a grant.

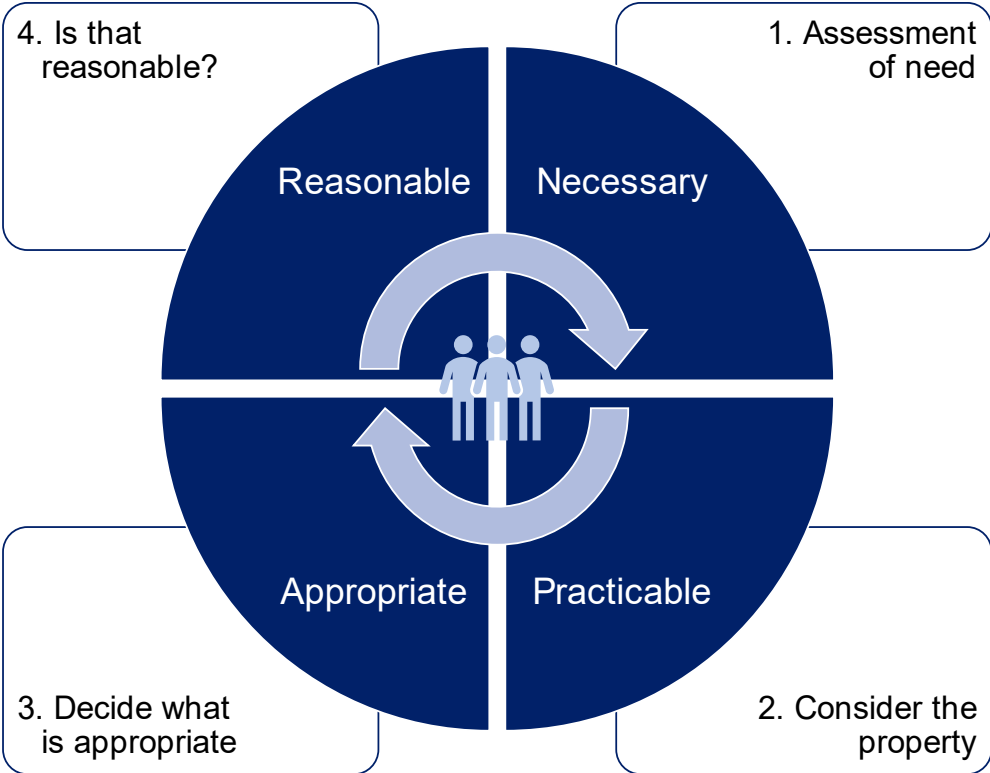


Figure 3: Integrated approach to assessment

### Client choice

- 4.47 In most cases the client will agree the ‘relevant works’ that are necessary and appropriate to meet their needs. However, there will be occasions when a client would like to consider different or more extensive works to their home. This may be because they need additional works outside the normal purposes of DFG or due to a preference on how they intend to use their home.
- 4.48 Authorities should consider how they support client choice and not seek to deny access to a Home Improvement Agency service for cases where a client seeks to exercise their choice. See Appendix B, para B90 for how to calculate the amount of grant.

## Chapter 5: The application

- 5.1 Local housing authorities have a duty to consider all formal DFG applications. This includes successive DFG applications for adaptations in the same property (see Appendix B para B111).
- 5.2 Local housing authorities should ensure the needs of applicants are at the heart of the grant application process, including through the provision of clear information to applicants, and specification design.
- 5.3 The advice in this chapter applies both to DFG applications made under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and to other grants and loans contained in a local Housing Assistance Policy.

### Application forms

- 5.4 Application forms should be available on request, be written in plain English and be simple to understand. It is for an authority to decide its own application processes in line with its local assistance policy.
- 5.5 It is important that the amount of information sought from an applicant should be proportionate to the extent and cost of the work. For small-scale adaptations applicants should have to provide only the minimum amount of information necessary. As a matter of good practice standard application forms can enable the operation of a transparent and fair system, help make best use of public funds, and assist with detecting and preventing fraud.
- 5.6 When designing new application forms authorities may find it helpful to refer to the following checklist of items to be included:
  - the name, address and age of the person applying for assistance;
  - the name and address of the owner of the property;
  - the address of the property for which assistance is being sought;
  - whether the applicant is an owner, landlord or tenant;
  - the provision of sufficient information on the income and outgoings of the applicant to enable the assessment of any contribution or their ability to finance loan repayments;
  - a summary of works required or the costs of materials;
  - a detailed breakdown of the works along with competitive estimates from at least two builders;
  - details of any agent handling the application;
  - details of ancillary services and charges;
  - certificate of owner-occupation;
  - certificate of ownership;



- tenant's certificate;
- certificates binding applicants to provide information when required, to demonstrate that they are complying with any conditions the local authority has set;
- proof of title;
- utility bill showing the applicant's name, and the address of the application property;
- valid application date;
- a clear statement that all information provided by the applicant will be checked thoroughly and could be shared with other organisations handling public funds to prevent and detect fraud;
- a clear statement that knowingly providing false information or withholding information could lead to prosecution for fraud; and
- provision of a statement that the owner of the property consents to the work being undertaken.

5.7 Authorities may wish to seek advice from their legal departments about the wording of certain parts such as in relation to the prevention and detection of fraud.

### **Support for the grant application process**

5.8 Some people will require support to submit a grant application, including the provision of drawings and specifications, planning permission and competitive estimates. Helping an applicant to navigate the process and make a grant application in a timely manner is an essential part of delivering good outcomes.

5.9 Local authorities cannot make charges for processing grant applications or for responding to enquiries. (See Appendix A: Identifying capital expenditure for DFG purposes)

### **Involving an agency service**

5.10 Local authorities should consider providing a Home Improvement Agency service to offer practical help to carry out home adaptations and improvements. The service offered varies but normally covers help in diagnosing issues, identifying solutions, assisting in raising money to cover the costs (including grant applications), selecting a builder, and ensuring that work is carried out properly. Some agencies are independent non-profit organisations, some are run by housing associations or private companies, and others operate in-house within a local authority. Further information on the role of agencies in helping older and disabled people can be obtained from Foundations, the body currently funded by the Government to support them.

## Data sharing

- 5.11 Where more than one organisation is involved in developing an application, there should either be a single joint IT system or appropriate data sharing protocols in place. Using the NHS number as a common field should allow for accurate data matching between different systems. This will minimise delays and allow for the whole process to be monitored.
- 5.12 Using a casework management system can significantly improve delivery. Efficient workflows, automatic generation of documents and comprehensive reporting functionality are vital components of an effective system.

## Confirming eligibility

- 5.13 Only certain people are able to make a valid application and in many cases this will not be the disabled person themselves. Authorities should take appropriate steps to confirm eligibility of the applicant, including considering who can sign the required certificate containing information about future occupation of the property, who has to give permission for relevant works to go ahead, and whether the disabled person meets the means test requirements for the grant.
- 5.14 The legislation to inform how a local authority should make their decisions on a DFG application is set out in Appendix B: The legislation, including information on determining:
- The disabled occupant (definition of a disabled person – which includes disabilities due to older age - and consideration of where the disabled person lives or intends to live)
  - The applicant (including application process per tenure, the grant condition period and intention to reside, and adaptations for the Armed Forces Community)
  - The eligible works (including the purposes, relevant works, and what is necessary and appropriate, and practicable and reasonable)
  - The amount of grant (including the grant maximum per individual applicant, services and charges, means test and exemptions, successive applications and nil grants, and application approvals)
  - The grant conditions (including charges on properties, nomination rights, recovery of equipment, payments, changes in circumstances, insurance and legal claims)

## Confirming ownership

- 5.15 The vast majority of homes are now registered with the Land Registry, and searchable online. Housing staff should request direct access to these systems to easily confirm whether an applicant does have an owner's interest (where applicable).

### **The means test**

- 5.16 An applicant can be passported through the means test if they are already in receipt of means tested welfare benefits. Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits data can be accessed through an online customer information system called Searchlight, so local authorities do not have to collect this information from the applicant.
- 5.17 Where a means test applies, the applicant will need to provide evidence of income and savings. This evidence should be collected with the application form. The process of approval should not be delayed by seeking this information later.
- 5.18 All requests for financial information, and communication of the outcome, should be treated sensitively and with the highest level of confidentiality.

## **Confirming the works**

### **Standard specifications and 3D design**

- 5.19 In developing specifications, authorities should consider the aesthetics of adaptations as well as functionality. Common specifications can save time and effort, although personal needs and properties differ, so these should be flexed where needed to meet the nature of each job. The level of specification should be appropriate to the job. For simple jobs, a standard instruction to the contractor can suffice, but in more complex cases, an individual detailed specification with drawings will be necessary. Authorities should approach adaptations as a longer-term investment, particularly where they may be used by future residents. The national body of home improvement agencies, Foundations, can provide more information on the development of common specifications and good adaptations design.
- 5.20 Most people know very little about adaptations. 3D design tools can help people better communicate how they use their home, and help practitioners show the home adaptation options available. Such tools can improve communication and avoid misunderstandings.
- 5.21 In all cases, clients should be fully involved with the design and specification of works to their home. Depending on the circumstances, the agreement and consent of other affected parties (such as a landlord) may also be required.
- 5.22 There may be occasions when a client would prefer a more extensive adaptation than the authority has assessed as being necessary and appropriate. In these cases it can still be appropriate to support the application, while making it clear what level of grant will be available and how much additional funding is required. Authorities should not withhold support simply because the applicant has the means to fund more extensive works than could be funded by a grant alone.

### **Flat pack extensions**

Where additional space is required to meet the needs of the disabled person a home extension may be required. Currently most extensions funded through DFG are constructed traditionally with concrete foundations and brick and block floors. While this approach is tried and trusted it is labour intensive – usually creating months of mess and disturbance, particularly during periods of inclement weather, requiring on-going supervision by the local authority.

An alternative is to use modern methods of construction – flat pack extensions that are made in factories and assembled on site. By using screw pile foundations there is very little material to be excavated and these extensions can be weather tight in a few days and completed within as little as two weeks.

Most flat packs use structural insulated panels (SIPs) which are very thermally efficient and provide a strong fixing for grabrails and other equipment. For sites with poor access the panels can usually be carried through the house.

Costs are usually equivalent to a traditional build, but by expanding the use of flat pack extension should open the market for greater innovation and efficiency in the future.

### **Planning permission**

5.23 It is important to ensure that planning approval procedures do not add unnecessary delays to the adaptation process. Local housing authorities should:

- liaise with the local planning department (which will normally be within the same authority) to determine matters which will require planning permission and any exceptional circumstances (for example when a property lies within a conservation area);
- understand “permitted development rights” for home extensions
- develop procedures to assist applicants to obtain planning permission quickly, using their knowledge and experience; and
- develop procedures to resolve problems with planning permission where these arise, including the use of temporary planning permissions.

### **Tendering procedures**

5.24 In order to ensure good value for money, the most appropriate tendering procedures need to be considered. At a minimum, two competitive estimates will normally be required. Please see Appendix B paragraph B90 for more information on estimates for the cost of the eligible works.

5.25 Authorities should consider whether to offer access to contractors who have agreed a schedule of rates for adaptations work. Standard clauses for use in specifications or contracts should also be adopted wherever possible. The benefits of such a system are considerable: costs can be calculated directly from the specification, a cost of works fixed, and the level of grant assessed without waiting for tenders to be returned and evaluated. Online systems are available to

manage the process and a Dynamic Procurement System (DPS) is also well suited to this type of work.

- 5.26 For frequently used equipment, authorities can make considerable savings through bulk purchase arrangements, although there should be some scope for ordering outside the standard range. Framework agreements can allow authorities to provide applicants with access to individual items at a “contract” price, including options for reclaiming and recycling of equipment. (See Chapter 3: for how to make this a condition of grant funding).

### **Service contracts**

- 5.27 Some items installed as part of an adaptation, such as stair and through-floor lifts and ceiling hoists, will need regular servicing and repair. It is good practice for arrangements, covering the likely service life of the equipment, to be made at the time of installation. The cost of an extended guarantee or service contract to be paid upfront on commissioning can be included in the calculation of grant payable.

## **Approval of the application**

- 5.28 The 1996 Act sets a maximum period of 6 months for a local authority to decide an application. This timescale allows for cases where an application is developed independently of the local authority. In practice, the vast majority of approvals will be a straightforward process of checking the details gathered during the application stage and should take no longer than 5 working days for an urgent case or 20 working days for a non-urgent case.
- 5.29 In some cases there will be works that are more urgent than others. In these cases the urgent works should be approved in advance of the remainder where waiting could cause harm. For example, an application for a lift may be approved while plans for bathroom works are being prepared. The approval can be redetermined at a later date to include the other adaptations.
- 5.30 Where a variation to the originally approved scheme is necessary, authorities are required to seek the applicant’s consent to the variation (unless the applicant has requested it). This is particularly important as an applicant’s contribution could increase with the increased cost of work, or a local land charge could apply. It is not recommended to include a contingency sum within every grant approval as it will make it more difficult to estimate the overall amount of funding committed and require every approval to be redetermined when the works are completed.
- 5.31 In approving any grant, loan or other form of assistance, authorities are required to set out:
- The type(s) of assistance being approved
  - The person(s) and property to which the assistance applies
  - A description of the works to be carried out (the eligible works)
  - The estimated cost of the works
  - The estimated cost of any associated fees and charges

## The application

- The applicant's expected contribution towards the costs and how this will be paid
- The amount of assistance approved and the maximum amount that can be provided
- Time limits for the commencement and completion of works, having regard to the nature and extent of the assisted work
- The contractor(s) expected to carry out the works
- Any terms and conditions that apply to the assistance being provided, including any local land charges and circumstances in which they may be waived in the future
- What would happen if circumstances change before the works are completed and when assistance may be reclaimed
- If and when recovering and recycling of any equipment would apply (e.g. ceiling hoists and stairlifts)
- The process for signing off the works and paying the contractor(s) with caveats about varying payment authorisation where there is a dispute about quality of work
- Requirements for certificates and invoices to be provided
- Responsibility for ongoing repairs and maintenance after the works are completed
- That the applicant's home insurance company and mortgage provider should be notified as applicable

5.32 All this information should be available on the local authority's website and made available to potential applicants early in the process.

## Chapter 6: Contractors and managing the works

6.1 Contractors are a crucial part of the home adaptations process. Authorities should develop a list of qualified contractors who will deliver quality works in a timely manner, with due consideration for the needs of the disabled person and their family. Delivery through agency services can enable a better service to applicants, and allow the authority to better control standards of work and regulatory compliance, as part of a regular monitoring and vetting process.

### Managing lists of accredited builders

6.2 Authorities should strongly consider establishing a list of accredited builders for home adaptation works. Such schemes bring significant benefits by setting criteria for inclusion such as:

- standards of customer care such as keeping to appointments, keeping the site tidy, controlling noise etc.;
- vetting of financial standing, tax and VAT status;
- requiring the use of suitable building contracts;
- promoting good health and safety practices;
- requiring the use of warranty schemes;
- wearing of local authority designated ID badges;
- ensuring that adequate insurance is held;
- requiring references; and
- providing applicants with start and completion timescales.

6.3 here should be clear and transparent criteria and processes for applying to be included, and for exclusion or removal. Authorities may wish to collaborate on establishing a list that covers a number of local authority areas, sharing the costs.

6.4 Authorities should adequately manage the list, including client feedback as part of the regular monitoring to encourage good customer service. Consistently poor feedback should result in action and ultimately removal from the list. Applicants should be aware of whether a builder is on the accredited list, and that the legal and contractual relationship is between the applicant and builder and not with the local authority.

6.5 It is good practice to have a written code of conduct setting out what to expect from builders. This could include things like keeping the client informed, protecting the property, welfare facilities, how to deal with variations, and what to include with the invoice. When everyone knows what's expected, jobs run more smoothly.



- 6.6 Authorities can also consider the use of Trustmark to give consumers greater confidence in choosing a building contractor. Trustmark is the only UK Government approved trusted trader scheme and includes robust standards, dispute resolution services, and added protection by way of insurance backed warranties.
- 6.7 Setting up a contractors' forum to offer training (e.g. from local building control officers), discuss changes in regulations, and consult on new proposals can show that you appreciate what they do and want to work with them to improve services. Some authorities are worried about potential cartels, but with robust procurement practices the risk is low compared to the benefits of proper engagement.

## Delivering building works

- 6.8 The works must usually be completed within 12 months of the approval date (see Appendix B, para B131)
- 6.9 When an applicant has selected a suitable contractor and the grant has been approved, authorities should consider how to ensure a good working relationship is established. Arranging building works can be a stressful process but there are strategies that can be put in place to prevent unnecessary problems.

### Pre-start meetings

- 6.10 Authorities should consider holding a pre-start meeting to properly introduce the client and contractor, discuss the sequence of events, any other considerations, who to contact if there is a problem and sign the building contract. Use a simple agenda, record all the information and share the details. Investing time in setting jobs up to succeed means they are far less likely to go wrong.
- 6.11 It is also well worth having a booklet that tells your client what they should expect while the contractor is working in their home, to prevent misunderstandings later. Ensure that the client knows who to contact in case of a problem or emergency.

### Building contracts

- 6.12 It is recommended that a formal contract is signed between the applicant and the contractor for all building works. This will set out the rights and responsibilities of both parties and can include the role of contract administrator, normally the technical officer employed by the agency/local authority.

### Payment

- 6.13 The authority will need to consider the terms of the contract between the applicant and contractor when making any payments. The authority will usually pay the grant directly to the contractor but must notify the applicant before approval of the application.
- 6.14 The grant will either be paid in instalments as the work progresses or in full on completion. More information can be found at Appendix B, paragraph B129.



## Site supervision

- 6.15 Establishing and maintaining a list of accredited contractors, hosting pre-start meetings, and signing formal contracts should minimise the requirement for ongoing supervision of building works on site. However, all major adaptation work should be visited by a supervising officer at least once whilst in progress. The client should always be involved and given an opportunity to comment on the progress of works and raise any difficulties or queries. If there are any disagreements or doubts about the suitability of the works to meet the needs of the disabled person then the supervising officer should arrange a joint site meeting with the person who carried out the assessment, the client and the contractor.

## Variations

- 6.16 For any building job, there is potential for unforeseen works which can add to the overall cost of the required works. Any variations that require an increased contribution from the client, including any land charges, should be formally agreed before proceeding.

## Sign off

- 6.17 Contractors should be encouraged to develop a “right first time” approach, with no snagging items remaining upon completion. Requiring the contractor to systematically submit photographic evidence for every project can enable a quality audit to be carried out remotely. The records will also assist with investigations into any problems or defects that occur later. For complex projects it is good practice for the person who carried out the assessment to confirm the suitability of the completed adaptations. In all cases the client should sign to confirm their acceptance of the completed works.

# Chapter 7: The Disabled Facilities Grant and assistive technology

## Assistive technology

- 7.1 According to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the term ‘assistive technology’ refers to ‘products or systems that support and assist individuals with disabilities, restricted mobility or other impairments to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible’.
- 7.2 Assistive technologies enable people to live healthy, productive, independent and dignified lives. They can help people participate in education and the labour market as well as stay in contact with family, friends and carers and use online services to access shopping, entertainment and information.
- 7.3 There is a large market in specialist assistive technology, offering a wide range of products and services to help disabled people in their everyday lives. In addition, mainstream technologies also often have features that can be beneficial for disabled people.
- 7.4 Assistive technology can be included as part of a DFG award package to maximise the benefits of home adaptations. This is a non-exhaustive list of examples of specialist and mainstream assistive technologies that can be provided through the Grant. The examples are organised according to the different DFG purposes they support.

### **Smart homes technology**

The range of technology available to control the functions of a home have increased significantly since the DFG was first introduced in 1990. The cost of equipment has also decreased as use of assistive technology has become more mainstream. For example, a system to manage and monitor the internal environment that used to cost several thousand pounds can now be achieved for less than £300.

Local authorities should consider the most appropriate way to provide smart technology where it is not part of a larger adaptation, and whether an application for DFG is the most cost effective way to do so. Some areas include a streamlined grant within their Housing Assistance Policy (see Chapter 3:).

The DFG is a capital grant and authorities should also take into account their de-minimis limits and the ongoing costs of any maintenance or monitoring.

## **The Disabled Facilities Grant and assistive technology**

### 7.5 Facilitating access to and movement within the dwelling

- Automated door openers to allow easy access to the residence
- Stair and platform lifts to help people with mobility impairments traverse steps

### 7.6 The preparation and cooking of food

- Adapted and height adjustable cooking surfaces

### 7.7 Accessing and using the bedroom

- Ceiling track hoists to help people with mobility impairments to transfer from a wheelchair or armchair to bed

### 7.8 Controlling sources of power, light and heat

- Smart lighting that can be remotely turned on and off, made brighter or dimmed, change colour and synchronise with other devices
- Smart thermostats that can automatically learn user temperature preferences and self-adjust when users leave or enter a room, and be remotely controlled via a smart phone or another device
- Smart hubs that allow people to control household devices and appliances using a voice activated assistant, an app on their smart phone or an alternative assistive technology.
- Infrared controlled power sockets to switch devices on and off with a remote control
- Automated light switches that can be activated using voice commands, a smart phone app, or via sensor triggered by movement or a timer

## **Improving digital connectivity within a dwelling**

7.9 Local authorities should note that some products may need a suitable level of digital connectivity to function. If the dwelling does not already have the necessary infrastructure to support assistive technologies, they may use the Disabled Facilities Grant to fund capital equipment if it is required to support the overall package of adaptations to the home such as:

- Wireless routers
- Wi-Fi signal extenders
- Cabling

## **Maintenance and support costs**

7.10 Some assistive technologies have associated ongoing maintenance and support costs. The DFG can fund installation costs and fees associated with the initial set up of the capital adaptation (see Appendix A: Identifying capital expenditure for DFG purposes), but it does not fund ongoing maintenance or support costs. Ongoing costs (such as monthly fees to an Internet Service Provider) cannot be included in a DFG award. However, there are a number of ways to manage these

expenses in tandem with other local and national public services and programmes, including by:

- Extended guarantees or a service plan (if purchased up front as part at the time of installation) can be considered as part of a grant award.
- Sharing costs with individuals and their families – most effective when the initial period is free of charge to allow people enough time to become familiar with the technology and its benefits
- Sharing or transferring costs to other local and national public services, such as:
  - Adult social services – including social care budgets, such as the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) and Technology Enabled Care Service (TECS) or telecare budgets.
  - Children's social services SEND provision – including Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
  - Local health services – including NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) and telehealth services.
  - NHS England's nationally commissioned Environmental Controls Service – which provides assistive technology to help people with complex physical disabilities enjoy greater independence at home.
  - The Department for Work and Pensions' Access to Work programme – can provide funding for support and adjustments (both in the workplace and working from home) such as specialist aids and equipment for disabled people.

## **Assistive technology assessments**

- 7.11 Appropriate assessments are vital to making sure that assistive technology meets the needs of individual users and does not fall into disuse. Assistive technology assessments can be built into the triage and assessment process for the Disabled Facilities Grant described (in Chapter 4:).
- 7.12 The aim of assistive technology assessments should be to match the everyday activities and situational requirements of the disabled person to the features and capabilities of the available products and services. Assessments must be co-produced with the disabled person, their families and carers, taking account of their preferences, requirements and aspirations. This approach encourages more personalised decision making than basing assessments solely on the person's medical diagnosis.
- 7.13 Depending on the circumstances, assessments can be conducted by qualified occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, social workers and trusted assessors. As outlined in Chapter 4 above, assessments should be conducted in a way that is proportionate to the complexity of a person's needs.

## **Using discretionary housing funding for assistive technology**

7.14 Under the Regulatory Reform Order local housing authorities can offer discretionary funding – in any form (e.g. a grant, loan or equity release) – to help pay for home adaptations and repairs, provided this is in accord with a published local policy (see Chapter 3:).

7.15 Discretionary funding can be used to:

- Speed up the acquisition of assistive technology on behalf of a disabled person by avoiding some of the procedural requirements associated with Disabled Facilities Grants
- Fund specialised assistive technology grants. Such grants can be designed to improve access to assistive technology in the home for all local disabled people, or specifically aimed at enhancing the health, wellbeing and independence of particular groups such as disabled children and young adults, people with dementia or autistic people.

# Appendix A: Identifying capital expenditure for DFG purposes

The DFG provides capital funding for the provision of home adaptations.

Capital expenditure typically includes expenditure on non-current assets such as land, buildings and plant and equipment.

To qualify as capital, expenditure incurred must result in either the acquisition/construction or addition/enhancement of an asset. In addition, the benefits to the entity from the works must last for more than one accounting period (i.e.: more than one year).

The grant can only fund capital expenditure. Please consult your finance department about what can be classed as capital expenditure.

Under [section 16\(1\) of the Local Government Act 2003](#), capital expenditure for a local authority is expenditure of the authority which falls to be capitalised in accordance with proper practices (though this is subject to 16(2)).

Proper practices are those set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Accounting Code and through statute which are summarised within this code. Further capital spend is listed in Regulation 25 of the [Local Authorities \(Capital Finance and Accounting\) Regulations 2003](#).

Monies spent must be recorded as capital expenditure and certified as such in a return to DLUHC.

Below are some examples of expenditure, explaining whether or not they might qualify as capital spend:

Type of Expenditure	Is it Capital Expenditure?	Reason
Construction of an extension to an existing dwelling	yes	Creation of an asset, which will provide benefit for more than one accounting period.
Major adaptations to existing facilities such as a shower adaptation, ramp or stairlift	yes	A major adaptation, which will increase the economic benefits offered by it – e.g.  Increased independence / reduced care costs.
Replacing a floor covering or repairing a shower unit	no	Repairs only maintain the asset; they do not increase the life of the dwelling.

Type of Expenditure	Is it Capital Expenditure?	Reason
New replacement stairlift	yes	Creation of an asset, which will provide benefit for a period of more than one accounting period.
Repairs to stairlift after breakdown	no	Repairs only maintain the asset; they do not materially increase the life of the stairlift.
Extended warranties for lifts and hoists	sometimes	Can be considered for capitalisation as part of the overall project costs of a new adaptation, as it will ensure that an asset that will provide benefit for more than one accounting period
Slings for hoists and shower seats	sometimes	Can be considered for capitalisation as part of the overall project costs of the new adaptation, which results in the creation of an asset that will provide benefit for more than one accounting period
Smart lighting, smart thermostats	sometimes	Can be considered for capitalisation as part of the overall project costs of the new adaptation, which results in the creation of an asset that will provide benefit for more than one accounting period
Hoists, shower tables, etc.	yes	New assets that provide benefit for more than one accounting period.
Refurbishment of existing adaptations	sometimes	The repair of broken or worn-out adaptations is not capital. However, costs could be capitalised if adaptations are being replaced with a better product (enhancement).  For example, flush floor shower replacing a tray with a step would qualify as betterment.
Conversion of a garage into a habitable room	yes	Enhancement of an existing asset which will last for more than one accounting period.

Type of Expenditure	Is it Capital Expenditure?	Reason
Installation of a new kitchen including new cooker, dishwasher, microwave	yes	Enhancement of an asset that will extend its useful life.
Internal decoration of an existing property	sometimes	Decoration only maintains the asset; it does not increase the life of the building. Can be considered as capital expenditure if included as part of the whole project costs of the adaptation
Purchase of materials only for a major adaptation project	yes	If the materials will be used for enhancement/betterment of the property the purchase of materials is classed as capital.  Materials for routine repairs and maintenance are classed as revenue costs.
Purchase of materials for repairs and maintenance (e.g. a new shower hose, replacement sections of fencing, parts for equipment etc)	no	Purchases associated with routine maintenance and repairs would be classed as revenue expenditure.
Agency fees - for a major adaptation. Applies to other fees such as planning etc.	yes	Can be considered as capital expenditure if included as part of the whole project costs of the adaptation – see services and charges order below.
Staff costs for supporting the delivery of major adaptations	yes	Can be considered as capital expenditure for direct support to clients/applicants (including advice) linked to the activities in the services and charges order (below)
Occupational therapy assessment fees	yes	Can be considered as capital expenditure if included as part of the whole project costs of the adaptation and carried out and invoiced by a private OT (see



Type of Expenditure	Is it Capital Expenditure?	Reason
		services and charges order as below)
Funding other temporary accommodation when residents need to move out during the execution of building works	yes	Can be considered as capital expenditure if included as part of the whole project costs of the adaptation
Training of staff	no	No, as no asset is being created.
Funding towards purchase of a new dwelling?	yes	Acquisition of an asset, which will provide benefit for more than one accounting period. Be careful around leases. Can also include cost of advising and supporting someone to move.
Assessment and approval of grant applications	no	No, as no asset is being created.
Developing policies and strategies on home adaptations	no	No, as no asset is being created.
Supervision of staff	no	No, as no asset is being created.
Monitoring of the program	no	No, as no asset is being created.
Delivering a handyperson service	sometimes	Yes, where new adaptations are being fitted that will last longer than a year and support someone to live independently. But not if the service is predominantly carrying out repairs

## Specified services and charges order

The Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) Order 1996 specified the services and charges which can be properly included within an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant:

- a) confirmation, if sought by the local authority, that the applicant has an owner's interest,
- b) technical and structural surveys,
- c) design and preparation of plans and drawings,
- d) preparation of schedules of relevant works,
- e) assistance in completing forms,
- f) advice on financing the costs of the relevant works which are not met by grant;
- g) applications for building regulations approval (including application fee and preparation of related documents),
- h) applications for planning permission (including application fee and preparation of related documents),
- i) applications for listed building consent (including application fee and preparation of related documents),
- j) applications for conservation area consent (including application fee and preparation of related documents),
- k) obtaining of estimates,
- l) advice on contracts,
- m) consideration of tenders,
- n) supervision of the relevant works,
- o) disconnection and reconnection of electricity, gas, water or drainage utilities where this is necessitated by the relevant works, and
- p) payment of contractors.

In a case where the application is for disabled facilities grant, the services and charges of an occupational therapist in relation to the relevant works are also specified for those purposes.

## Appendix B: The legislation

- B1. The primary legislation for the DFG is set out in the [Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 \(the 1996 Act\)](#). This appendix sets out the legislation to help inform how a local authority makes decisions on DFG applications, including determining:
- The disabled occupant
  - The applicant
  - The eligible works
  - Amount of grant
  - Grant conditions
- B2. Once a formal application has been properly submitted, the housing authority is under a duty to consider it. An authority would be open to legal challenge if they refuse to accept a valid application or won't provide the necessary application forms.
- B3. Local authorities cannot make charges for processing grant applications or for responding to enquiries.

### The disabled occupant

- B4. A valid application can only be made by the owner or tenant (or occupant in the case of a houseboat or caravan) where the disabled person lives or is going to live – in many cases this will not be the disabled person themselves. In the legislation the disabled person who needs the adaptations is known as 'the disabled occupant'. In deciding whether the application is on behalf of a disabled occupant, the local authority must consider if the intended beneficiary meets the definition of a disabled person for the purposes of the DFG, and where they live or intend to live. Key considerations are covered below.

### A disabled person

- B5. For the purposes of a DFG application a person is disabled if:
- their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired,
  - they have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind,
  - they are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury or impairment
- B6. and a person over 18 is taken to be disabled if:
- they are an adult who is or could be registered under [section 77 of the Care Act 2014](#)

- they are an adult who is or could be registered under [section 18\(5\) of the Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)
- they are a child or young person registered under [paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989](#)
- they are a disabled child as defined by [s.17 of the Children Act 1989](#).

#### **Where the disabled person lives or intends to live**

- B7. A DFG is available to fund facilities for a disabled person living or intending to live in a:
- dwelling, or
  - qualifying houseboat or caravan.
- B8. A “dwelling” is defined as a building or part of a building (e.g. a flat) occupied or intended to be occupied as a separate dwelling, together with any yard, garden, outhouses, and appurtenances belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it. This includes dwellings where someone lives as part of their employment, like a farm cottage or a flat over a shop.
- B9. A “caravan” as defined by the Act means any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted (excluding railway rolling stock on rails and tents) and includes any yard, garden, outhouses and appurtenances belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it.
- B10. A “qualifying houseboat” is a boat “designed or adapted for use as a place of permanent habitation”. It must have its only or main mooring within the area of a single local housing authority, have the right to be moored there and be registered for Council Tax.
- B11. Where more than one disabled person lives at the same address, the housing authority can consider multiple applications based on their individual needs. However, the authority would be best advised to use its wide discretionary powers to ensure integration of the necessary works, having regard to the impacts on the disabled persons.

#### **Children living in joint residency arrangements (previously ‘custody’)**

- B12. Where a disabled child has parents who are separated and the child lives for part of the time with each parent, a statutory DFG is only available at the address which is the main residence of the disabled child, usually the home of the parent in receipt of child benefit. However, it will often be in the best interests of the child to provide adaptations at both locations. Authorities are encouraged to use their discretionary powers in considering applications to adapt the homes of disabled children in these situations to ensure that they can maintain normal living arrangements.

### **Children in foster care**

- B13. Children and young people who are placed in foster care have a wide range of needs and are in different kinds of placements ranging from short-term breaks to a long-term foster placement intended to last until adulthood. The social services authority is responsible for assessing the child's needs and providing appropriate services to meet those needs, which include services to meet needs arising from disability. Children and young people who are placed in foster care should be placed in housing suited to their individual needs.
- B14. Foster carers are eligible to apply for a DFG on behalf of a foster child, but provision may depend on the type and length of placement, including consideration of the grant condition period (see paras B34-B36). The application would be made to the housing authority where the foster carers live, although it is likely that the foster child's social services authority would need to fund any works over the maximum grant limit.

### **Who can make a DFG application? (Who owns the property and when there's a tenant)**

- B15. Only certain people can make a valid application - in many cases this will not be the disabled person themselves. The three questions for local authorities to understand are:
- Who can make an application for a DFG?
  - Who has to sign the required certificate containing information about the future occupation of the property ("certificate of future occupation"); and
  - Who has to give permission for the relevant works to go ahead.

## **The applicant**

- B16. A valid application can be made by:
- someone who has an owner's interest in the property (either an owner-occupier or a landlord);
  - a tenant of a dwelling; or
  - the occupant of a caravan or qualifying houseboat.
- B17. Under the Act, no grant is payable to the following:
- Public bodies such as a Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group
  - A "person from abroad"
  - Anyone under 18 years of age. (Applications on behalf of children or young people aged 17 years and under must be made by an appropriate adult).

### **An application from someone with an owner's interest [\[s21\]](#)**

- B18. An owner-occupier or landlord would usually need to have, or propose to acquire, an owner's interest in all the land where adaptations need to be made (however

an exception to this is set out in The Housing Renewal Grants (Owner's Interest) Directions 1996). The owner's application must be accompanied by an owner's certificate in respect of the dwelling to which the application relates, or in the case of a common parts application, in respect of each flat in the building occupied or proposed to be occupied by a disabled applicant which confirms that they:

- already have or propose to acquire an owner's interest; and
- intend that the disabled person will live in the dwelling (or as the case may be flat) as their only or main residence for the grant condition period (usually 5 years) or for such shorter period as their health and other relevant circumstances permit.

B19. For a prospective owner, they can make the application before they have acquired the property, but the application cannot be approved until they take ownership.

B20. Where there is more than one owner, then any person with an owner's interest can make a solo application.

B21. There is no specific requirement for the housing authority to obtain proof of ownership other than the owner's certificate but it is good practice to cross reference the details with the Land Registry. There is also no requirement for the housing authority to seek permission from the applicant's mortgage provider or to ensure they have adequate household insurance, although they should advise the applicant of the need to inform both.

B22. A leaseholder is classed as an owner if 5 years or more remain on the term of the lease.

B23. A freehold landlord may also make an application as the owner of the dwelling.

### **A tenant's application [\[s22\]](#)**

B24. The term "tenant" includes:

- a secure tenant, introductory tenant or statutory tenant;
- a protected occupier under the [Rent \(Agriculture\) Act 1976](#) or a person in occupation under an assured agricultural occupancy within the meaning of [Part I of the Housing Act 1988](#); or
- an employee who occupies the dwelling as part of their job

B25. A tenant's application must be accompanied by a tenant's certificate which confirms that they:

- are making a tenant's application; and
- intend that the disabled person will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence for the grant condition period (usually 5 years) or for such shorter period as their health and other relevant circumstances permit.

B26. All tenant's applications should also be accompanied by an owner's certificate signed by the landlord, unless the local authority thinks it is unreasonable to require such a certificate in the circumstances. This discretion may be used where

the housing authority considers the landlord is unreasonably withholding an owner's certificate.

- B27. Note that even where the tenant's application is entertained without an owner's certificate, a grant cannot normally be awarded without the landlord's permission to carry out the works. However, a local authority can award a grant for works inside a disabled person's home in the absence of a landlords' permission, where such permission has been unreasonably withheld, or where the landlord has attached unreasonable conditions to the consent in breach of the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- B28. Under the Equality Act 2010 a landlord cannot unreasonably withhold their consent to an adaptation or attach unreasonable conditions to any consent. Where consent is refused, or conditions attached, the burden is on the landlord to show that their consent has not been unreasonably withheld to make adaptations (and how easy it would be to undo them).
- B29. If the landlord's consent is unreasonably withheld, or unreasonable conditions have been attached it must be taken that consent has been given. LAs will have to form a view in each individual case as to the issue of whether or not consent has been unreasonably withheld and what they should do in such cases.
- B30. These provisions do not apply to a protected tenancy under [S1 of the Rent Act 1977](#) or a statutory tenancy under [S2 of that Act](#) or a secure tenancy under the [Housing Act 1985](#).
- B31. Government is planning to bring legislation into force which would align the situation for adaptations in common parts of residential buildings with this. Please see the common parts section below for more detail (B57 and B58).

#### **A houseboat or caravan occupier's application [\[s22A\]](#)**

- B32. An occupier's application must be accompanied by a certificate which confirms that they:
- are making an occupier's application; and
  - intend that the disabled person will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence for the grant condition period (usually 5 years) or for such shorter period as their health and other relevant circumstances permit.
- B33. Unless the local authority thinks it is unreasonable to do so in the circumstances, all occupier's applications should also be accompanied by a consent certificate signed by owners of the houseboat or mooring or the caravan or caravan park.

#### **The grant condition period and intention to reside**

- B34. The grant condition period is usually 5 years. However, the intention required by an owner / tenant / occupier is for the disabled person to live in the dwelling as their only or main residence for that period or for "such shorter period as his health and other relevant circumstances permit" [See [s.21\(2\)\(b\)](#), [22\(2\)\(b\)](#) and [22A\(2\)\(b\)](#)]. So, prognosis of a deteriorating condition or possible imminent death of the disabled person should not be a reason for withholding or delaying grant approval.

- B35. Each certificate confirms the intention of the applicant at the time of the application and so long as that was genuinely their intention, no repayment of grant is required if circumstances change and the disabled person can no longer occupy it as intended. This is the case whether or not the prognosis was known to the disabled person, their family or carer at the time of application.
- B36. The grant condition period starts on the date when the works are completed to the satisfaction of the housing authority (“the certified date” [\[s44\]](#)).

### **Properties held in trust**

- B37. These should be treated in the same way as applications by owner-occupiers, tenants or occupiers. Eligibility for the grant is likely to depend on the terms of the individual trust and authorities must consider any such application on its merits based, as necessary, on their own legal advice.
- B38. A trustee or beneficiary applying for a grant must be able to fulfil all the normal grant conditions. So, for example, the applicant must be able to demonstrate a relevant interest in the property, either as an owner or a tenant, and to meet the relevant conditions

### **Persons from abroad**

- B39. The applicant cannot be a ‘person from abroad’ within the meaning of [regulation 10 of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006](#) or as the case may be [regulation 10 of the Housing Benefit \(Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit\) Regulations 2006](#) (see [regulation 3 of the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 \(S.I. 1996/2890\)](#)). The authority is also not allowed to pay a grant where a person who could have applied for a grant is a “person from abroad”, even though the applicant is not a “person from abroad”.

### **The Armed Forces community**

- B40. For injured or disabled service personnel who live in Service Accommodation and continue to work in the Armed Forces, any adaptations for them or their dependents will be funded by the Ministry of Defence. Any applications from injured or disabled personnel who live in Service Accommodation should be signposted to the Ministry of Defence.
- B41. Local authorities might receive applications from serving Armed Forces personnel who live in their own accommodation, on behalf of themselves or family members. Applications might also be received from veterans of the Armed Forces. In these cases, the statutory Armed Forces Covenant Duty is likely to apply. More information will be provided in the Armed Forces Covenant Duty statutory guidance to be published in 2022.

### **Mental capacity**

- B42. Where an authority thinks an applicant lacks capacity to make a particular decision or take a particular action for themselves at the time the decision or



action needs to be taken, they should follow the guidance laid out in the [Code of Practice to the Mental Capacity Act 2005](#).

## The eligible works

- B43. The following steps should be followed in sequence when deciding which adaptations are “eligible works” for grant assistance:
- Does the disabled occupant need adaptations that meet one or more of the “purposes”?
  - Are there “relevant works” (proposed adaptations) that would meet the identified needs for one or more of the “purposes”?
  - Are those “relevant works” “necessary and appropriate” to meet the needs of the disabled occupant and “reasonable and practicable” to carry out given the age and condition of the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan?
- B44. If the “relevant works” pass all stages of this test they become the “eligible works” – the adaptations that a grant can be approved for.

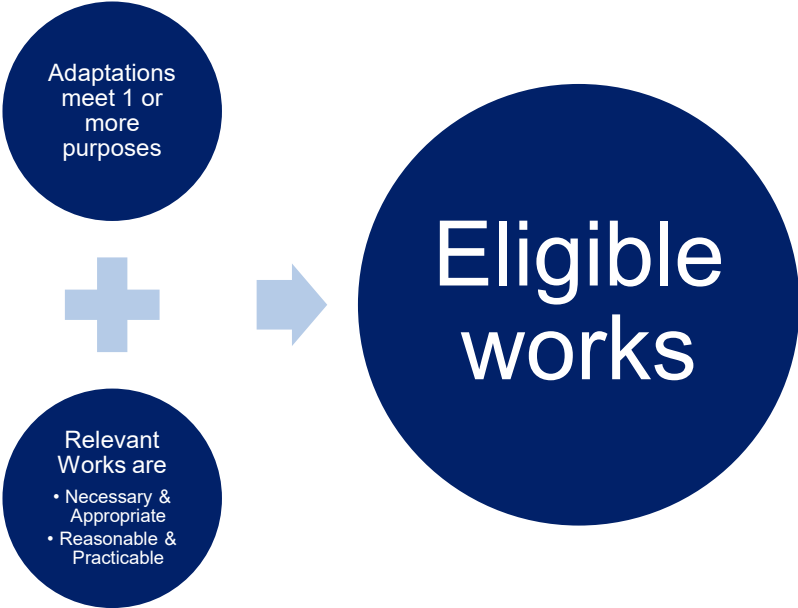


Figure 4: Decision process for Eligible Works

## The purposes

- B45. The Act sets out a number of “purposes” [s23] for which a grant must be approved. The first stage is to assess whether the disabled person needs adaptations to meet these “purposes”.

### **Facilitating access to the home and garden**

- B46. There is a need to remove or help overcome any obstacles which are preventing the disabled person from moving freely in and out of the property, including common parts, in and around the garden and any yard, outhouse or “other appurtenance” (e.g. a balcony or the land adjacent to the mooring of a qualifying houseboat).
- B47. Access can also include works outside the normal curtilage of the dwelling, such as a dropped kerb pavement crossing.

### **Making the premises safer**

- B48. There is a need to make the home safer for the disabled person and other people living with them. It’s not appropriate to be too prescriptive but the needs covered under this subsection might include situations where:
- someone with challenging behaviours is hurting themselves, other people they live with or damaging the property;
  - someone with impaired vision cannot safely navigate into and around their home or carry out everyday tasks and activities;
  - someone with impaired hearing can’t hear a standard smoke alarm; or
  - someone with a physical disability could not safely escape in the event of a fire.

### **Access to the principal family room or bedroom**

- B49. The disabled person is unable to access a room suitable for use as a living room or gain access to a room usable for sleeping. Or where the disabled occupant shares a bedroom with another person, they cannot access a room of sufficient size so that the normal sleeping arrangements can be maintained.

### **Access to a toilet**

- B50. The disabled person cannot access a room with a toilet or cannot use the existing toilet.

### **Access to a bath or shower**

- B51. The disabled person cannot access a room with a bath and/or a shower or cannot use the existing bath and/or shower. In cases where the disabled person needs access to a bath and a shower they would need to demonstrate a medical need for both.

### **Access to a wash hand basin**

- B52. The disabled person cannot access a room with a wash hand basin or cannot use the existing wash hand basin.

### **Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food**

B53. The disabled person cannot access or does not have suitable facilities to prepare and cook food for themselves and others living with them.

### **Better heating**

B54. People with limited mobility who remain in one room for long periods usually need a warmer home than able-bodied people.

### **Control of power, light and heat**

B55. The disabled person cannot operate the controls for power, light or heating in their home.

### **Caring for others**

B56. The disabled person cannot move around the home to care for another person who normally lives there, whether they are related to the disabled person. This may include a spouse, partner or family member, another disabled person or a child. Importantly the dependent being cared for need not be disabled.

### **Common parts**

B57. An application can be made to fund adaptations to the common parts of buildings containing one or more flats. This can include the structure and exterior of the building, routine parts of the building such as the front door and paths, as well as common interior areas of the building including emergency/fire exits, stairwells and passageways.

B58. The Government intends to commence the remainder of [Section 36 of the Equality Act 2010](#) in England and Wales which will require landlords to make reasonable adjustments to the common parts of leasehold and commonhold homes, including hallways, entrances and stairs. A consultation is planned for 2022.

### **The relevant works**

B59. The purposes cover a wide range of potential adaptations to cover most circumstances and to meet the adaptation needs of disabled people whose needs are less obvious, such as those with a sight or hearing impairment or a learning disability. If one or more purposes have been identified, the next step is to consider the proposed adaptations (the relevant works) to meet those purposes. For example:

- a ramp could be the relevant works to meet the purpose of facilitating access to the home
- a stairlift could be the relevant works to meet the purpose of accessing a room usable for sleeping.

B60. For each of the relevant works the housing authority must consider whether a grant should be awarded by deciding if they are “necessary & appropriate” (see paras B61-B68) and “reasonable & practicable” (see para B84-B86).

## **Necessary and appropriate**

- B61. The housing authority must be satisfied that the relevant works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person [S24(3)(a)]. For district councils this must include consulting the social services authority.
- B62. DFGs are designed to give disabled people a degree of independence in the home and should aim to meet current and anticipated future needs. If the disabled person has care needs, the impact of adaptations on the level of this care should be considered including whether tasks will be reduced or eased. Adaptation works will not achieve their objective if the disabled person does not gain an acceptable degree of independence, or where the disabled person remains dependent upon the care of others and the adaptation does not significantly ease the burden of the carer.
- B63. The duty to consult the social services authority relates solely to the question of “necessary and appropriate”. There is no specific requirement on how the consultation should be done. It is for social services authorities to decide in each case who should respond to the consultation and be involved in any assessments. However, the housing authority always makes the final decision on what can be funded by the DFG.
- B64. Many housing authorities now employ their own occupational therapists and trusted assessors. It is also possible to include the costs of an assessment carried out by a private occupational therapist as one of the eligible services and charges in a grant application. However, it remains important to maintain close collaboration with the social services authority to ensure an integrated approach to meeting the needs of the disabled person and the duty to consult still remains.
- B65. To reduce the risk of installing inappropriate adaptations and to ensure consistency of practice, this guidance provides a set of written principles to assist professionals involved in the complex process of identifying what works are necessary and appropriate (see 4.44).
- B66. In all cases the assessment of whether relevant works are necessary and appropriate must be made against each applicable purpose individually. So, for example, if it is not possible to appropriately provide access to a room suitable for sleeping, that should not in itself prevent a grant being awarded to gain access to the home.
- B67. Where the disabled person has a limited life expectancy then it may be appropriate to consider funding adaptations that can be more easily removed when they are no longer required if that is considered the right approach in the circumstances.
- B68. There will be occasions when the need to address one or more purposes is significantly more urgent than others. In these circumstances authorities should consider the benefits of proceeding with assessing the urgent works if there would be undue delay in assessing for all.

### **Facilitating access to the home and garden**

B69. Access to the garden should allow the disabled person to access their home or garden for drying clothes, playing or supervising play and gardening.

### **Making the premises safer**

B70. There are a wide range of options that could be considered relevant works to make a home safer, both for the disabled person and other people living with them. They could include, for example:

- for those with hearing difficulties, an enhanced alarm system to provide improved safety for the disabled occupant when cooking, or facilities to provide means of escape from fire;
- adaptations designed to minimise the risk of danger where a disabled person has behavioural problems which cause them to act occasionally or regularly in a boisterous or violent manner damaging the house, themselves and perhaps other people;
- the provision of specialised lighting, toughened or shatterproof glass in certain parts of the dwelling to which the disabled person has normal access or the installation of guards around certain facilities such as fires or radiators to prevent the disabled person harming themselves;
- the reinforcement of floors, walls or ceilings; or
- cladding of exposed surfaces and corners to prevent self-injury

### **Access to the principal family room**

B71. Access to the principal family room should allow the disabled person to socialise with their family or others that they live with.

### **Access to a room usable for sleeping**

B72. In some cases a living room may be large enough to partition off a second room for sleeping, in smaller homes this will not be possible. The provision of a new room usable for sleeping should only be undertaken if the authority is satisfied that the adaptation of an existing room in the dwelling (upstairs or downstairs) or the access to that room is unsuitable in the particular circumstances. Where the disabled occupant shares a bedroom with another person, grant may be given to provide a room of sufficient size so that the normal sleeping arrangements can be maintained. In considering whether an existing room could be used for sleeping, the religious and cultural beliefs of the household should be taken into consideration.

B73. Overcrowding in itself is not a valid reason to refuse a grant, but it would not normally be necessary and appropriate to provide a new room if other bedrooms are accessible but occupied. However, where an additional bedroom would make the premises safer for the disabled person or others living with them, then providing a new room could be considered under that purpose. For example,

where two siblings currently share a room but one is a risk to the other due to behaviours that challenge.

### **Access to a toilet, bath, shower or wash hand basin**

B74. Access to toilet, washing, bathing and showering facilities are listed separately to clarify that a disabled person should have access to a toilet wash hand basin and a shower or bath (or if more appropriate, both a shower and a bath). The provision of facilities for `strip washing` is not an acceptable alternative to an appropriate bathroom. It may be appropriate in some cases to resort to this as a short term interim solution, and a disabled person may exercise the choice to strip wash rather than use an accessible bath or shower provision, but it is not considered a “necessary and appropriate” solution. For the most complex needs specialist equipment such as a wash/dry toilet, rise and fall bath or height adjustable basin may be required.

### **Preparation and cooking of food**

B75. The relevant works to enable a disabled person to cater independently could cover a wide range of potential adaptations. Eligible works include the rearrangement or enlargement of a kitchen to ease manoeuvrability of a wheelchair and specially modified or designed storage units, gas, electricity and plumbing installations to enable the disabled person to use these facilities independently.

B76. Where most of the cooking and preparation of meals is done by another household member, it would not normally be appropriate to carry out full adaptations to the kitchen. However, it might be appropriate that certain adaptations be carried out to enable the disabled person to perform certain functions in the kitchen, such as preparing light meals or hot drinks.

B77. It is important that any assessment should recognise a disabled child’s changing developmental need and his or her progress towards maximum independence. It is also important that the assessment considers the need for the disabled child to be able to participate in all aspects of family life, for example, in ensuring that dining space is available to enable all members of the family to eat together.

### **Better heating**

B78. Where there is no heating system or where the existing heating arrangements are unsuitable to meet the needs of the disabled person, a heating system may be provided. However, DFG should not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms which are not normally used by the disabled person. The installation of central heating to the home should only be considered where the wellbeing and mobility of the disabled person would otherwise be adversely affected.

B79. Air conditioning or other cooling systems could also be considered where heat exposure can cause or heighten fatigue, numbness, blurry vision, tremors, confusion, imbalance, and weakness as associated with conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis.

### **Control of power, light and heat**

B80. Relevant works could include the relocation of power points to make them more accessible, the provision of suitably adapted controls where a disabled person has difficulty in using normal types of controls and the installation of additional controls. Smart home technology could provide alternative controls by using an app or by voice control.

### **Caring for others**

B81. The relevant works could include adaptations to a part of the home to which the disabled person would not normally need access but which is used by a person they are caring for and therefore it is reasonable for such works to be carried out. This could include providing parents with access to their child's bedroom.

### **The most cost-effective option**

B82. Authorities should be mindful of achieving best value for money. Where there are potential alternative options for the relevant works that could meet the required purposes, then the authority would usually choose the lower cost option. For example, where the purpose is to provide access to a room suitable for sleeping, then a stairlift or utilising an existing ground floor room are likely to be preferred over building a new bedroom.

B83. There will be some cases where the disabled person and the applicant elect for a higher cost option. The housing authority will still need to ensure that the works meet the required purposes and are necessary and appropriate, but the estimated expense would still be based on the lower cost option.

### **Reasonable and practicable**

B84. Where the relevant works have been judged to be necessary and appropriate, the housing authority then has to consider whether it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having "regard to the age and condition" of the property. The reason for this test is that it may not be a good use of resources to award a DFG to adapt an old, run-down building.

B85. Each application should be considered on its own merits but where a home is in serious disrepair or beyond economic repair then a housing authority may consider that the relevant works are not reasonable and practicable. In these cases, it would be good practice for local authorities to provide information and advice to the applicant on their housing options.

B86. Other issues, such as whether the property is otherwise suitable for the disabled person are not relevant considerations.

### **Amount of grant**

B87. Housing authorities should consider the following when they are determining the amount of grant:



- the cost of carrying out the eligible works along with the cost of associated services and charges - the “estimated expense”; and
  - the amount of grant they will pay, taking into account the estimated expense, the means test and the maximum amount of grant.
- B88. In England the maximum entitlement of grant under the DFG is currently set at £30,000 per applicant, and authorities are not required to provide additional costs over this maximum but can top up grants, as agreed locally and set out in their local Housing Assistance Policy. For more complex home adaptations, including those involving applications for bespoke extensions to existing dwellings, these can substantially exceed the upper limit in some cases.
- B89. Where an authority has a locally published Housing Assistance Policy under the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) (2002), authorities do have discretion to top up amounts above the DFG £30,000 limit per applicant. Where an authority has not used this discretion within their policy they will still need to give due consideration to exceptional cases. A decision to award DFG grant above the existing £30,000 limit per applicant will be a local one, and should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the impact that rejecting it may have on the ability for the applicant to proceed without the additional funding in place.

### **Estimates for the cost of the eligible works**

- B90. Grant applications are normally required to include at least two estimates from different contractors for the costs of the relevant (proposed) works. Authorities would not be expected to require more than two estimates other than in exceptional circumstances, for example, where the relevant works are very extensive and expensive. In the rare cases where the eligible works (see para B43 -B44) are different to the relevant works, the authority will need sufficient information to estimate the cost of the eligible works. For example, if an application had proposed a bedroom extension as the relevant works, but the authority decides that a stairlift to gain access to a bedroom are the eligible works, the authority could use estimates of the cost of a suitable stairlift from other applications to estimate the cost of the eligible works.
- B91. When assessing estimates submitted, authorities must ensure there is genuine and full competition. Authorities should seek to obtain the best package available, taking into account the following relevant considerations when coming to a judgement:
- price;
  - the reputation of the contractor;
  - their ability to carry out the works to a good standard and in good time; and
  - their VAT registration.
- B92. Housing authorities have discretion to require only one estimate in any particular case. Housing authorities should consider when to apply this discretion. Situations where this may be appropriate include where:



- the relevant works are either small or very specialised;
  - there is a known difficulty in finding contractors willing to undertake particular kinds of work; or
  - where the estimate has been produced using a schedule of rates or framework agreement approved by the authority.
- B93. Without an approved schedule of rates or framework the discretion to require only one estimate should be used sparingly.
- B94. Given that the contract for carrying out the works will be between the applicant and the contractor, public procurement rules do not apply.
- B95. Most adaptation work is zero rated for VAT but where the relevant works are taxable at the standard rate of VAT this should be included within the estimated expense. To treat competing estimates equally, authorities should bear in mind that contractors who charge VAT may be able to recover VAT they pay, whereas contractors who are not registered for VAT are still required to pay VAT on materials and have to absorb these costs.

#### **Other services and charges**

- B96. The Act allows the cost of certain services and charges to be included with the grant application such as costs associated with preparing the application and the carrying out of works:
- confirming that the applicant has an owner's interest;
  - technical and structural surveys;
  - the design and preparation of plans and drawings;
  - the preparation of specifications or schedules of relevant works;
  - assistance in completing forms;
  - advice on financing the costs of the relevant works which are not met by grant;
  - making applications for building regulations approval (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
  - making applications for planning permission (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
  - making applications for listed building consent (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
  - making applications for conservation area consent (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
  - obtaining tenders/estimates;
  - providing advice on building contracts;
  - considering tenders;
  - supervising the relevant works;

- disconnecting and reconnecting electricity, gas, water or drainage utilities where this is necessitated by the relevant works; and
- paying contractors.

B97. The services and charges of a private occupational therapist in relation to the relevant works can also be included. The Government funding for Disabled Facilities Grant is capital expenditure, and should only be spent on capital items. Appendix A: Identifying capital expenditure for DFG purposes gives more detail on where works and services could be considered as capital expenditure and funded as part of a DFG.

### **The means test**

B98. The DFG means test is in place to ensure that DFG funding reaches those people who are on the lowest incomes and least able to afford to pay for the adaptations themselves. Means testing applies to applications made by owner-occupiers, tenants and occupants of a qualifying houseboat or caravan. Different rules apply where the application is made by a landlord (see para B108).

B99. The assumed weekly needs of the household (the “applicable amount”) is calculated taking into account the number of people, their ages and other circumstances. This is then compared to actual income, and where income is greater than the applicable amount, a “loan generation factor” is applied to the “excess income” to arrive at a notional “affordable loan”.

B100. This is the amount by which the grant is reduced, or the contribution expected from the applicant. The reduction in grant caused by this test is lower for tenants because it is assumed that loans will be available on less favourable terms than owner occupiers.

Contribution = (actual income – applicable amount) x loan generation factor.

B101. It is the income of the disabled person, and where applicable their partner, that is taken into account - rather than the applicant if that is a different person. In the regulations this is the “relevant person”.

B102. For someone with variable income, authorities can calculate average weekly earnings over a representative period of up to a year that reflects the current situation. For example, the average weekly income of a relevant person currently in stable employment should not be diluted by including any previous periods of unemployment. Similarly, where a relevant person has recently been made redundant, it may not be appropriate to include periods of employment in their assessment of income.

B103. The final contribution should be calculated immediately prior to making the formal application. See Chapter 4: 4.31 for guidance on providing preliminary calculations earlier in the process.

### **Exemptions to the means test**

B104. Where the disabled person is a child or young person or is in receipt of one of the following income-related benefits, then the authority must assume that their income is not greater than the applicable amount:

- Income Support;
- Housing Benefit;
- Guaranteed Pension Credit;
- Income-Based Job-Seekers Allowance;
- Working Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £15,050;
- Child Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £15,050; and
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance.

In effect this means that they are exempt from means testing and the amount of their grant is not reduced - i.e. they do not have an assessed contribution.

B105. Usually the authority can make decisions about whether a child is to be treated as a child of the family by following decisions made about Child Benefit.

B106. A child is a person under 16. The definition of a "young person" follows the definition of a qualifying young person for child benefit purposes. This refers to young people who are 16 or over but under 20 and receiving full-time education up to and including A level. The course must last more than 12 hours a week not counting homework and meal breaks. The definition excludes certain young people under the age of 20 such as those claiming certain benefits in their own right. A local authority can make decisions about who is a qualifying young person by following decisions made about Child Benefit.

B107. A local authority can use its discretionary powers to waive the means test altogether in some cases if they feel the applicant would face excessive financial hardship if required to pay for the entirety of the adaptations (see Chapter 3:).

### **Amount of grant for a landlord's applications**

B108. Landlord's applications are not means tested by the housing authority. When deciding the amount of grant to award, the authority should take into account the extent to which the landlord is able to charge a higher rent for the premises because of the works. Any relevant matters from a Housing Assistance Policy can also be considered (see Chapter 3:).

B109. The authority may, if they think it appropriate, seek and act upon the advice of rent officers.

### **Maximum amount of grant**

B110. The maximum amount of grant that can be awarded for any single application is currently £30,000. (Note that authorities do have discretion to award higher amounts - see Chapter 3:)

B111. Where the cost of the eligible works (including relevant services and charges) is over £30,000, any assessed contribution from the means test is deducted from the maximum amount, not the cost of the works.

	Example A	Example B
Cost of the eligible works	£35,000	£25,000
Cost of services and charges	£3,500	£2,500
Total estimated expense	£38,500	£27,500
Maximum amount of grant	£30,000	n/a
Less the contribution from the means test	£10,000	£5,000
Amount of grant	£20,000	£22,500

### Successive applications and nil grants

B112. For people with degenerative conditions, further adaptations may become necessary at a later date. There is no restriction on successive applications for DFG on the same property. In such cases, any previous contributions will be taken into account - in the last 5 years for tenants and 10 years for owners. Any new assessed contribution will be reduced by any previously assessed contribution if the applicant went ahead with the previous adaptations.

B113. This means that if a new application is made within five or ten years (depending on whether the applicant is a tenant or owner) of completing the previous adaptation works, the new contribution will be reduced by the amount that they have already paid. For example, if the applicant paid a £7,000 contribution towards the previous adaptations, and the new means test shows a contribution of £8,000, this will be reduced to a contribution by the applicant on the second DFG of £1,000.

B114. Local authorities should inform applicants when it may be in their best interests to proceed with an application even where it is clear that their contribution will exceed the costs of the work. Although this will lead to the approval of a 'nil grant' applicants should be aware that in a subsequent application their contribution may be reduced. Where a local authority approves a nil grant they should still ensure that the works are completed to a satisfactory standard.

### The approval

B115. The authority must notify an applicant as soon as reasonably practicable and not later than six months after the date of the application, whether an application is approved or refused [s34]. Where an authority or home improvement agency has helped to prepare the application, the approval process would not be expected to take longer than 4 weeks.

B116. The authority may approve an application on the basis that the grant, or part of the grant, will not be paid before a date specified in the notification [s36]. This date must not be later than 12 months after the date of the application. The purpose of

the provision is to provide authorities with discretion to delay payment of a grant for up to twelve months. It is only to be used in exceptional circumstances where there has been an unusually high number of applications received and approving them all within the statutory six months required by [s34](#) would create serious resource problems for the authority towards the end of a financial year.

- B117. The powers under [s36](#) should be used sparingly and not where it would cause hardship or suffering to an applicant whose adaptation needs have been assessed as urgent, for example where a disabled person will be leaving hospital or residential care to return home or to move into a new dwelling. It is also likely to be inappropriate to use the [s36](#) power where the long-term costs of doing so would be disproportionate to the short-term savings.
- B118. The DFG is a mandatory grant and the refusal to accept applications due to a lack of resources is unlawful.
- B119. A grant cannot be approved if the works have already started [\[s29\]](#) – unless there is a good reason why. A grant cannot be approved if the works have already been completed. Authorities should make this clear in their application forms, leaflets and on their website.
- B120. The grant approval notice has to list the eligible works and the estimate of the expense of the eligible works and cost of any services and charges (and how those amounts have been calculated) and the amount of grant. These can be revised if circumstances change, like unforeseen works or where urgent works need to be completed in advance of other measures.
- B121. Where a grant is refused, the authority must detail the reasons why.

## Grant conditions

- B122. All conditions should be explained to the applicant prior to making the application and detailed as part of the grant approval documentation.

### Charges on properties

- B123. The [Disabled Facilities Grant \(Condition relating to approval or payment of grant\) General Consent 2008](#) gives housing authorities the discretion to impose a local land charge on a dwelling, if it is sold or otherwise disposed of within ten years of the certified date. The charge can only be placed on owner's applications where the amount of grant exceeds £5,000. The maximum charge is £10,000.
- B124. If a dwelling is sold or disposed of within ten years, the housing authority must consider whether or not it is reasonable to demand repayment or part repayment of the charge taking into account:
- the financial hardship it would cause;
  - whether the sale is due to an employment related relocation;
  - whether the sale is connected with the physical or mental health or well-being of the grant recipient or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and

- whether the sale will enable the recipient of the grant to provide care to a disabled person.

B125. Every housing authority should have a policy on whether it will place charges and how it will use its discretion on repayment (see Chapter 3:). If a grant is initially awarded for an amount of less than £5,000 the applicant must be consulted before the grant is revised if it would result in a charge being placed.

### Recovery of equipment

B126. The Housing Renewal Grants (Additional Conditions) (England) General Consent 1996 allows authorities to include a condition that specialist equipment, such as a stairlift, may be recovered where it is no longer required. Where it is clear that the equipment will not be reused because of age or condition, a local authority may decide to waive this right to recovery.

### Nomination rights

B127. Where a landlord makes the application, The Housing Renewal Grants (Additional Conditions) (England) General Consent 1996 also entitles authorities to include a condition allowing them to nominate tenants to the property throughout the grant condition period. This means that a landlord would need to agree that if (and every time that) the property becomes vacant between that approval date and the end of the grant condition period, they will hold it for letting by persons nominated by the authority for a reasonable period of up to four weeks.

### Payments

B128. Unless the housing authority is carrying out the works directly [\[s57\]](#), then the contractual relationship for carrying out the works will be between the applicant and the contractor. The authority will need to consider the terms of that contract when making any payments. Local authorities should clearly explain to applicants at the outset that any outlay an applicant makes without all appropriate approvals and confirmations from the authority is entirely at their own risk.

B129. The grant can either be paid in instalments as the work progresses or in full on completion [\[s35\]](#). If paying by instalments, no more than 90% of the grant can be paid before the works are completed. The housing authority can also specify how the works should be carried out [\[s37\]](#) and will only make a payment if they're satisfied with the works and receive an acceptable invoice.

B130. An invoice for carrying out the works cannot be accepted from the applicant or members of their family [\[s37\(4\)\]](#). Allowing works to be carried out by members of the applicant's family could provide value for money, but there is also the potential for collusion and fraud. It would be acceptable to pay invoices for the costs of materials from a third party where the applicant or their family member provides the labour for free.

B131. The works must be completed within 12 months of the approval date [\[s37\]](#) (or the deferred date under [s36](#)) – but this can be extended with the authority's agreement.

- B132. The works should be done by a contractor who provided one of the estimates for the application [\[s38\]](#) – unless the authority agrees otherwise.
- B133. The authority will usually pay the grant directly to the contractor [\[s39\]](#). In order to do this the authority must tell the applicant before the application is approved. Acknowledgement would normally be obtained as part of the application process. Where both the authority and the applicant are satisfied with the works this should cause no problems. However, there may be difficulties where there is a difference of opinion.
- B134. If the applicant is satisfied but the housing authority is not, the grant must not be paid until the defects are remedied to the authority's satisfaction. If the housing authority is satisfied but the applicant is not, the authority should ensure – in the light of the applicant's expressed concerns – that they have arrived properly at their judgement under [s37\(4\)\(a\)](#) before making a payment.
- B135. In situations where the eligible works are completed to the satisfaction of the housing authority but the applicant is not fully satisfied with those works, authorities have the power [\[s39\(2\)\]](#) to withhold payment to the contractor at the applicant's request, should they consider it appropriate. In these circumstances they may make payment to the applicant instead. Care needs to be exercised when paying contractors directly where the authority is not meeting all the cost of the works to ensure that all commitments have been met under the building works contract.

### **Changes in circumstances**

- B136. When after approval but before the works are finished, the applicant stops being eligible for the grant (e.g. they sell, or intend to sell the property) then the authority won't make any further payments and can demand repayments [\[s40\]](#). If the disabled person dies, moves, or the works become unsuitable to meet their needs, then the authority will need to consider whether any more payments can be made, and the authority are able to demand repayments if this is considered appropriate [\[s41\]](#).
- B137. If the disabled person dies after approval, but before the works are completed, the authority can still pay for some or all of the works including any fees or charges [\[s56\]](#). The authority can refuse to pay, reduce the grant or even demand repayments, if after approval they discover that:
- the application was wrong; or
  - works were started before the approval date; or
  - works were not completed within 12 months of the approval date; or
  - the eligible works cost less than expected; or
  - the works were done by a different contractor



## Insurance and legal claims

- B138. A housing authority may impose a condition requiring the applicant to take reasonable steps to pursue a legal claim for damages in which the cost of works to the premises to which the grant relates is part of the claim [s51]. The Housing Renewal Main Grants (Recovery of Compensation) General Consent 1996 allows authorities to apply this condition in relation to claims for personal injuries in respect of works required under a DFG.
- B139. This would typically be used in cases where there could be an urgent need for works to be undertaken to meet the needs of a disabled person and that grant assistance could be sought. However, in some cases the cost of the works may be covered either by an insurance payment or a claim against a third party. It may be appropriate for the authority to give grant aid to ensure the works are completed at the earliest opportunity. However, where subsequently the grant applicant receives a payment on an insurance or damages claim in respect of the grant aided works then they should repay to the authority the grant, so far as is appropriate, out of the proceeds of any claim.
- B140. Claims in such cases can take a long time, so there would not usually be a time limit on this condition for the recovery of grant where compensation has subsequently been paid. A housing authority has the discretion [s51(4)] not to demand repayment or to demand a lesser amount where this is appropriate. In operating this discretion the authority should fully consider the terms of any settlement received by the grant applicant.
- B141. Where insurance claims have been made and payment received in advance of grant applications a local authority will need to take a view as to whether it would be an appropriate use of resources to give grant aid. If the local authority decides to proceed in approving the application, details of the insurance payments should be included in the grant application form.



## Appendix C: Directions and consents

Some of the Directions and Consents previously issued for the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 are not available to view elsewhere. They are collated here for reference.

### The Housing Renewal Grants (Owner's Interest) Directions 1996

The Secretary of State for the Environment, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by sections 7(3), 19(3), 25(2) and 146 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf, hereby gives the following directions:

#### Citation and commencement

1. These directions may be cited as the Housing Renewal Grants (Owner's Interest) Directions 1996 and shall come into force on 17 December 1996.

#### Owner's interest condition

2.

- (1) A local housing authority may treat the condition in sections 7(1)(a), 19(1)(a) and 25(1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as fulfilled by a person who has, or proposes to acquire, an owner's interest in only part of the land to which an application for a grant relates if
  - (a) the relevant works include specified works which are to be carried out (in whole or in part) on land which is not the applicant's land; and
  - (b) the applicant has the power to carry out the works.
- (2) In sub-paragraph (1) "specified works" means -
  - (a) works to connect the applicant's land with a gas, electricity, water or drainage utility at the nearest practicable point so as to provide to the applicant's land-
    - (i) adequate lighting;
    - (ii) adequate heating;
    - (iii) an adequate piped supply of wholesome water; or
    - (iv) an effective system for draining of foul, waste or surface water;
  - (b) works described in section 23(1)(a) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; or

- (c) works to repair or replace (in whole or in part) any of the works described in paragraph (a) or (b).
- (3) In sub-paragraph (2) "applicant's land" means land in which the applicant has, or proposes to acquire, an owner's interest.

### **Application**

- 3. These directions –
  - (a) shall apply to local housing authorities in England only; and
  - (b) shall not apply in a case where the application for a grant was made before the date on which these directions come into force.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State  
C L L Braun  
Assistant Secretary. Department of the Environment  
2 December 1996

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## **The Housing Renewal Grants (Additional Conditions) (England) General Consent 1996**

The Secretary of State for the Environment, as respects England, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by sections 52 and 94 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996(1), hereby gives the following Consent:-

Citation, commencement and interpretation

- 1.
  - (1) This specification may be cited as the Housing Renewal Grants (Additional Conditions) (England) General Consent 1996 and shall come into force on 17 December 1996.
  - (2) In this Consent,-
    - "the Act" means the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996;
    - "authority" means a local housing authority;
    - "applicant", without more, means an applicant for a grant under Chapter I of Part I of the Act (private sector housing renewal: main grants) and includes any person who is for the time being an owner of the property;
    - "the property" means the dwelling, house or building which is grant-aided.

### **Additional Conditions**

2. Where an authority approves an application for a grant under Chapter I of Part I of the Act, they may impose such of the conditions set out in paragraphs 3 to 7 as appear to them appropriate.

### **Notice of relevant disposal**

3.
  - (1) The applicant shall forthwith notify the authority of his intention to make a relevant disposal of any dwelling, building or house in multiple occupation with respect to which there is in force, as a grant condition, any condition under sections 45 to 52 of the Act and shall furnish to the authority any information reasonably requested by them in connection with such notification.
  - (2) This condition shall have effect during the grant condition period.

### **Nomination of tenants to the property**

4.
  - (1) In the case of an application to which any of paragraphs (a), (c) and (d) of section 31(1) of the Act (determination of amount of grant in case of landlord's application for renovation grant, disabled facilities grant or HMO grant) applies, the authority shall be entitled to nominate tenants to the property (or a relevant part of the property) throughout the grant condition period.
  - (2) The applicant agrees not to offer the property (or a relevant part of the property) for letting, and the authority agrees not to make nominations to it, in such manner (including as to timing and the terms of any offer or nomination) as would prevent this condition being, or continuing to be, operable fairly and reasonably.
  - (3) Without prejudice to the generality of sub-paragraph (2), the applicant agrees-
    - (a) if the property (or part of it) is or becomes vacant on the date of approval of the application, or
    - (b) if (and every time that) the property (or part of it) becomes vacant between that date and the end of the grant condition period,  
forthwith to hold the property (or the vacant part of it) available for letting by persons nominated by the authority and to notify the authority of its availability for that purpose and of the terms upon which it is so available.
  - (4) Subject to the applicant's strict compliance with sub-paragraph (3), this condition shall not have effect while the property (or each of its several parts) is occupied under a tenancy or tenancies satisfying the requirements of such certificate of intended letting, owner's certificate or

certificate of future occupation as was submitted with the application (or, in a case where the requirement for such certificate was waived by the authority, would meet that certificate's requirements had one been so submitted).

- (5) Where the authority approves a conversion application for a renovation grant, they may apply this condition to one or more only, or to a proportion, of the total number of dwellings to be provided by the conversion; provided that the dwellings, or the proportion of dwellings, in the house or other building and to which this condition is to apply shall be identified to the applicant in writing when the application is approved.
- (6) Where the authority approve a landlord's application for a disabled facilities grant for adaptations to the common parts of a building containing one or more flats, and the application is for the benefit of more than one flat in the building, they may apply this condition to one or more only, or to a proportion, of the flats which the application is intended to benefit; provided that the flats, or the proportion of the flats, to which this condition is to apply shall be identified to the applicant in writing when the application is approved.
- (7) In this condition,-  
"a relevant part of the property" means a part of the property which is or becomes vacant as described in sub-paragraph (3);  
"tenancy" includes a licence arrangement satisfying the certificate of intended letting, owner's certificate or certificate of future occupation in question, and related expressions shall be construed accordingly.

### **Recovery of specialised equipment for the disabled**

5.

- (1) Where an application for disabled facilities grant has been approved under section 23(1) or (2) (disabled facilities grant: purposes for which grant must or may be given) and the eligible works consist of or include the installation in the property of specialised equipment for the disabled occupant(s), the applicant shall notify the authority if and as soon as the equipment is no longer needed.
- (2) For the purposes of this condition-
  - (a) the authority shall, on approving the application, specify in writing the equipment to which this condition is to apply and the period (being a reasonable condition period for the equipment in question) during which it is to apply, and shall serve on the applicant a copy of such written specification; and
  - (b) the authority, or the social services authority on their behalf, shall be entitled, upon reasonable prior written notice given to the applicant either following the giving of the notification under sub-paragraph (1) or at any time during the condition period specified

under paragraph (a), to inspect the equipment and, subject to complying with sub-paragraph (3), to remove it.

- (3) The authority agrees, within a reasonable time following an inspection of the equipment,-
  - (a) to notify the applicant in writing whether the equipment is to be removed; and
  - (b) if the equipment is to be removed, to remove it or arrange for it to be removed and forthwith to make good any damage caused to the property (whether by the authority themselves or the social services authority) by its removal.
- (4) The authority further agrees, where the applicant has contributed to the cost of carrying out the eligible works, to pay to him, within a reasonable time of the removal of the equipment, the reasonable current value of that proportion of its original cost which represents the proportion of his contribution to the cost of carrying out the eligible works.
- (5) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (4), the reasonable current value of the equipment shall be its value at the time of removal from the property.
- (6) Subject to the authority giving prior written notice in accordance with sub-paragraph (2)(b) or, as the case may be, (3)(a), the applicant agrees to afford, or to use his best endeavours to arrange for the affording of, reasonable access to the property to the authority or the social services authority for the purposes of inspection and removal of the equipment.

#### **Insurance for grant-aided property**

6. Where the applicant has an insurable interest in the grant-aided property, he shall arrange and maintain in effect adequate insurance for the property, subject to and with the benefit of the completed works, throughout the grant condition period.

#### **Repair of grant-aided property**

7. Where the applicant has a duty or power to carry out works of repair to the grant-aided property, he shall ensure that, to the extent that his duty or power allows, the property remains fit for human habitation throughout the grant condition period.

#### **Repayment of grant**

8. In the event of a breach of any of the conditions set out in paragraphs 3 to 7, the authority may demand repayment from the applicant of a sum equal to the amount of the grant paid or, as the case may be, any instalments of grant paid and the same shall become repayable to the authority in accordance with section 52 of the Act.

### **Application**

9. Paragraphs 2 to 8 shall not have effect in relation to applications for grant made before 17 December 1996.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State  
C L L Braun  
Assistant Secretary. Department of the Environment  
2 December 1996

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## **The Housing Renewal Main Grants (Recovery of Compensation) General Consent 1996**

The Secretary of State for the Environment, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by sections 51 and 94 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf, hereby gives to local housing authorities in England the following general consent:

### **Citation and commencement**

1. This consent may be cited at the Housing Renewal Main Grants (Recovery of Compensation) General Consent 1996 and shall come into force on 17 December 1996.

### **Consent**

2. Where a local housing authority approve an application for grant under Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 they may impose a condition requiring the applicant to take reasonable steps to pursue any relevant claim to which section 51 of that Act applies and to repay the grant, so far as is appropriate, out of the proceeds of such a claim.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State  
C L L Braun  
Assistant Secretary. Department of the Environment  
2 December 1996

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## The Housing Renewal Grants (Landlord's Applications) (England) Direction 1996

The Secretary of State for the Environment, as respects England, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by sections 31(3)(b) and 146(1) and (2) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996(1) ("the Act"), hereby makes the following Direction:-

### **Citation and commencement**

1. This direction may be cited as the Housing Renewal Grants (Landlord's Applications) (England) Direction 1996 and shall come into force on 17 December 1996.

### **Determination of landlord's grants**

2. In determining the amount of grant (if any) where they approve an application to which section 31 of the Act applies (determination of amount of grant in case of landlord's application), the local housing authority shall take into account, in addition to the matters referred to in section 31(3)(a) of the Act, such other matters as seem to them to be relevant in all the circumstances, having regard in particular to any relevant policy contained in their published renewal strategy (if any) for private sector housing in their area.

### **Application**

3. Paragraph 2 shall not have effect in relation to applications for grant made before 17 December 1996.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State  
C L L Braun  
Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environment  
2 December 1996

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## The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in exercise of her powers under sections 34(6)(b), 46, 52 and 94 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (“the Act”) gives to all local housing authorities in England the following general consent:

### Citation and commencement

1. This consent may be cited as the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008 and shall come into force on 22 May 2008.

### Interpretation

2. Words and expressions used in this consent shall, unless the context otherwise requires, take the same meaning that is given to them in the Act.

### Consent

3.
  - (1) Where —
    - (a) local housing authority approves an application for a grant under Part 1 of the Act;
    - (b) the grant is for a sum exceeding £5,000; and
    - (c) the applicant (“the recipient”) has a qualifying owner’s interest in the premises on which the relevant works are to be carried out,the local housing authority may impose the conditions (or conditions to like effect) contained in paragraph (2).
  - (2) The local housing authority may demand the repayment by the recipient of such part of the grant that exceeds £5000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000) if—
    - (a) the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and
    - (b) the local housing authority, having considered—
      - (i) the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he to be required to repay all or any of the grant;
      - (ii) whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment;



- (iii) whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
- (iv) whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity,

is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment.

**Application of Section 52 of the Act**

4. The conditions in paragraph 3 are local land charges and are binding on any person who is for the time being an owner of the dwelling or building.

# Appendix D: Resources

## Key legislation

- **Equality Act 2010**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- **Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53>
- **The Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/2890/made>
- **The Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) Order 1996**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/2889/made>
- **The Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Repair Assistance (Maximum Amounts) (Amendment No. 2) (England) Order 2001**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2001/4036/contents/made>
- **The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/1860/contents/made>
- **The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1189/introduction/made>
- **The Housing Renewal Grants (Prescribed Form and Particulars) (Revocation) (England) Regulations 2010**  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2417/contents/made>

## Further reading

- **Adaptations without delay. A guide to planning and delivering home adaptations differently.** Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2019.  
<https://www.rcot.co.uk/adaptations-without-delay>
- **Care Act 2014 - Guidance for occupational therapists - Disabled Facilities Grants**  
<https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/rcot-publications/downloads/care-act-2014-dfg>

- **Local Government Ombudsman: Making a house a home: Local Authorities and disabled adaptations**  
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/2815/FR-DFG-March-2016.pdf>
- **Local Government Association: Meeting the home adaptation needs of older people**  
[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.74%20Accessible%20housing\\_v05\\_1%20-%20BM%20amends.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.74%20Accessible%20housing_v05_1%20-%20BM%20amends.pdf)
- **National Residential Landlords Association – Adaptations: A good practice guide**  
<https://www.nrla.org.uk/download?document=1275>
- **Considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people in housing**  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/sector-support-offer/care-and-health-improvement/autistic-and-learning-disabilities/autistic/considering-and-meeting-sensory-needs-autistic-people-housing>
- **Act to Adapt: Access to home adaptations for people with motor Neuron disease**  
<https://www.mndassociation.org/app/uploads/2019/09/Act-to-Adapt-Full-report.pdf>
- **Adapted homes, empowered lives: A report on home aids and adaptations**  
<https://www.versusarthritis.org/policy/policy-reports/adapted-homes-empowered-lives/>
- **Foundations' How To Guides**  
<https://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com/guides/>

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**WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL – BUSINESS & HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

	Item	Lead Officer	Date for BHP	Date for Cabinet/ Cab Cttee
<b>Meeting 29 November 2022</b>				
1	Housing Strategy	Gillian Knight	29 Nov 2022	21 Mar 2023
2	Disabled Facilities Grants	Kevin Reed	29 Nov 2022	2 Feb 2023
3	Sustainable Tourism Strategy - scoping plan	Susan Robbins	29 Nov 2022	
<b>Meeting 28 February 2023</b>				
4	Tenant Engagement and Communication Strategy including the White Paper – Charter for Social Housing Residents.	Gillian Knight	28 Feb 2023	
5	Cultural Strategy - scoping plan	Susan Robbins	28 Feb 2023	
<b>Items to be confirmed</b>				
6	Item regarding previous committee discussion re decent homes standards/asset management/showers vs baths			

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