

REPORT TITLE: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY 2025-2028

4 NOVEMBER 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr K Becker: Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report outlines the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) policy 2025-2030 that directly aligns with the council's strategic priorities, Good Homes for All, Thriving Communities, and Healthy Communities. The provision of disabled adaptations will continue to be a key part of the council's role following local government re-organisation; therefore, this policy has a five-year life in order to ensure a smooth transition into any new structure

The DFG is a statutory grant provided under the *Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996*. Its primary aim is to support eligible disabled individuals, defined under the 1996 Act, to live safely and independently in their own homes. The grant funds essential adaptations that facilitate independent living, such as accessible bathrooms, stairlifts, and ramps. It is important to note that this grant does not apply to tenants of Winchester City Council (WCC).

Local Authorities are legally obligated to administer DFGs to qualifying applicants. The introduction of the *Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002* expanded the scope of the DFG, allowing for more flexible and locally responsive use of funds.

Since 2015, DFG funding has been channelled through the Better Care Fund, which promotes an integrated approach to health and social care. This reflects a broader recognition of the critical role that housing plays in supporting health outcomes, a principle embedded in both the current policy and the proposed revisions.

The DFG policy 2025 – 2030 address evolving challenges, including:

- Increased demand for adaptations

- Budgetary constraints and stagnant grant allocations
- Rising costs of construction and adaptation works
- Recommendations from a recent internal audit

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet Committee: Housing

- 1) Approve the Disabled Facilities Grant policy for 2025-2030 as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2) Give delegated authority to the Corporate Head of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities to make minor changes or those linked to legislative change, to the DFG policy 2025-2030.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

Greener Faster

- 1.1 The council's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) policy contributes to a greener and faster council by streamlining home adaptation processes while aligning with sustainability goals. By enabling elderly and disabled residents to remain safely in their homes through targeted improvements, such as energy-efficient heating systems and structural modifications the policy reduces the need for residential care, which typically has a higher environmental footprint. This policy supports independent living and complements the council's broader carbon neutrality ambitions by promoting energy-conscious upgrades and reducing unnecessary relocations.

Thriving Places

- 1.2 The policy assists to create thriving places by enabling residents to live safely, independently, and comfortably within their communities. By funding essential home adaptations such as stair lifts, accessible bathrooms, and improved heating systems the policy helps individuals with disabilities remain in their homes, reducing displacement and fostering long-term community stability. This not only enhances individual well-being but also strengthens local neighbourhoods by ensuring diverse, inclusive living environments. It enables the district of Winchester a place where people of all ages and abilities can flourish.

Healthy Communities

- 1.3 Disabled Facility Grants play a vital role in advancing the council's priority of building healthy communities by promoting safe, independent living for residents with disabilities. Through funding essential home adaptation such as accessible bathrooms, stair lifts, and improved heating the policy helps reduce health risks associated with unsuitable housing and prevents avoidable hospital admissions or long-term care placements. By enabling people to remain in their homes with dignity and comfort, the DFG policy supports physical and mental well-being, reduces social isolation, and fosters inclusive neighbourhoods where all residents can thrive.

Good Homes for All

- 1.4 The policy actively supports the council's priority of providing good homes for all by ensuring that housing is safe, accessible, and adaptable to individual needs. Through both mandatory and discretionary grants, the policy enables vital modifications such as stair lifts, accessible bathrooms, and heating improvements that allow disabled residents to live independently and comfortably in their own homes. This not only enhances the quality and suitability of housing stock across the district but also reduces the need for relocation or residential care. By tailoring homes to meet diverse needs, the

DFG policy helps create inclusive communities where everyone can thrive in a home that truly works for them.

Efficient and Effective

- 1.5 The council's use of an approved contractor framework and clear procedures accelerates delivery timelines, ensuring adaptations are completed swiftly and efficiently. By focusing on timely, targeted support, the DFG policy enables the council to deliver meaningful outcomes with precision and speed, maximising value for both residents and public resources.

Listening and Learning

- 1.6 The policy supports the priority of listening and learning by having embedded feedback mechanisms and continuous improvement into its delivery. The inclusion of a customer satisfaction survey within the policy framework ensures that the voices of service users are actively heard, allowing the council to assess the effectiveness of adaptations and identify areas for refinement. Additionally, the policy outlines clear procedures for handling complaints and disputes, demonstrating a commitment to transparency and responsiveness. By regularly reviewing and amending the policy based on resident experiences and evolving needs, the council fosters a culture of learning that strengthens trust and ensures services remain relevant and person-centred.

Residents are consulted on the design of the adaptation when applying for a grant which enables a successful outcome for residents.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Funding for DFGs comes from central Government as part of the Department of Health and Social Care's Better Care Fund (BCF). It is distributed to Winchester City Council and other Hampshire local authorities in May of each year via Hampshire County Council (HCC) under a formula determined by NHS England.
- 2.2 For the financial year 2025/26 the council was allocated £1,527,515 which was the same as the previous financial year. It has been reported that the DFG grant allocation to local authorities will not increase and will remain the same up until and including financial year 2026/27.
- 2.3 The Government is currently consulting on proposed changes to how each district and borough allocation of the DFG better care funding is awarded. The proposed new formula will now include:
- Income levels and housing types.
 - Build costs in each region.
 - The number of disabled adults and children.

- The older population in each area.

This will likely see a decrease in the amount of DFG funding awarded to Winchester, with the demand for adaptations likely to increase. This is because overall the district of Winchester is quite wealthy and therefore by including income levels and housing tenure the new formula will likely result in a decreased amount of funding as the better care fund is targeting at the more deprived districts and boroughs with lower Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD).

- 2.4 It is anticipated this year that based upon the council's current and committed spend to date, and a projection of referrals and inflationary related cost increases that the DFG award for 2025/26 will be fully allocated.
- 2.5 This policy proposes that the approach of the current fee generating service charge and instead will retain a portion of the grant to cover the administrative costs of providing this service. This will increase the amount of DFG available to the residents of Winchester to the value of approximately £24,000 as illustrated in point 12.24.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Following consultation between the council's Private Sector Housing Team, Procurement, and Legal Services it was agreed that DFG funded adaptations fall outside of the scope of public procurement activity as long as it is put in place in a certain way, namely that the adaptations contract is between the client and the contractor and not the council. The council's relationship with the client will be as part of a grant arrangement. To ensure the grant funding is used effectively and efficiently works will be tendered on the following basis where the cheapest tender is awarded the works:

- Works under £10,000.00 – quotes must be obtained from two contractors.
- Works above £10,000.00- quotes must be obtained from three contractors.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The council is in the process of recruiting a DFG support officer and another Private Sector Housing officer who will have DFG responsibility.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Recommendations within the report have no impact on council property and assets as this policy does not apply to the council housing stock.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION.

- 6.1 The 2025 – 2030 policy options were considered by the Economic and Housing Policy Committee at its meeting on 26th November 2024. The committee provided debate, comments and feedback regarding three options with differing opinions including no change from the existing policy to withdrawal of all elements of the discretionary grant.

Members of the policy committee agreed with officers for the team to operate a test model of option 3, which was to means test all applicants, allow a discretionary grant, and revise the top up grant amount - alongside the existing policy to understand the full impact on the council's residents before any policy changes are agreed.

- 6.2 Foundations, the government appointed advisory organisations for DFG's was consulted regarding the policy changes. Constructive feedback was provided by Foundations in the form of suggestions and comments to make the policy clearer and more robust whilst ensuring it still meets the needs of those who the policy is intended for.

Foundations also felt the 2025 – 2030 DFG policy was thoughtful and strategic especially the dual residency provision and the way the proposed policy aligns Better Care Fund objectives with discretionary assistance to address gaps in the mandatory offer.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Where replacement works are undertaken to upgrade a heating source the contractor will install an energy efficiency heating system which will improve the thermal capacity of the property and reduce energy costs.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 Under s149 (1) of the Equality Act the council must have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, (and Cabinet must, as the decision maker in respect of the proposed decision, have due regard) to the need to: a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act. b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them. c) Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment, appended to this report, has been completed and has considered the impact on those with 'protected characteristics' and has identified that the DFG Policy will not negatively impact on any of those groups.

- 9.2 However, there is a group of people who may be impacted by the proposal to remove the current £15,000 non means tested discretionary grant. The introduction of mandatory means testing may also result in applicants who will now not qualify for financial assistance. To mitigate this, and to better align the offer of discretionary funding with the requirements of the BCF, a Pathway to Home Grant of up to £10,000 is proposed in the 2025 – 2030 policy. This grant will allow any disabled resident, regardless of income, to apply for funding if they fall into the key qualifying criteria. Further detail is set out in para 12.23.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 None required in respect of the 2025 – 2030 policy as there is no change to the way applicant's data is recorded or stored.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure Risk of not committing allocated budget Risk of committing too much	Detailed monthly financial monitoring and amending policy if applicable The recommendations made in this report as well as budget monitoring	
Exposure to challenge Risk of Better Care Fund financial allocation being reduced	To keep the DFG policy under review.	Exploration of alternative funding sources from charities etc. e.g. SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) for certain specific cases
Innovation Applying more innovative discretionary grants to target more of the requirements of the better care fund framework.	To keep the DFG policy under review and to proactively respond to framework changes as required.	To help more residents with discretionary works that may not have previously been funded via DFG.
Reputation Failing to update the DFG policy would result in the DFG service not being adequately supported	Introducing a new policy will give clarity and guidance to staff and the public as to what the DFG	Review staffing levels under review to ensure the council can meet

through lack of clear guidance and risk of challenge.	Service can offer residents across the district. Internal Audits and implementing the recommendations.	demand and administer the grant fully.
Achievement of outcome Fully commit to the budget by approving DFG grants and making the requiring adaptations for our residents	Critical that current staffing levels are at least maintained	Reviewing staffing levels under review to ensure the council can meet demand and administer the grant fully.
Property None		
Community Support OT referrals withdrawn from Hampshire County Council	Need for increased medical assessments by in-house Private Sector Housing OT.	
Timescales An increase in DFG referrals or increase in complex cases can cause applications not to be approved within statutory time limits	Monthly Monitoring through 1-1's and team meetings. Evaluating the quarterly performance indicators to review if any action is required.	Tailored resources to accelerate the DFG process from application to approval.
Project capacity If the DFG funding reduces this may reduce resources which reduces the capacity to adequately deliver the service	The resources within the DFG team remain as they currently are.	
Other		

12 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 12.1 Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 the council in its capacity as a housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide DFGs to applicants who qualify.
- 12.2 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 be admitted to hospital reducing the burden on the social care system and National Health Service (NHS). DFGs are subject to a financial/means test which means that the applicant's income and savings must be assessed.
- 12.3 The Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges Order) 1996 lists the services and charges which are eligible to be included in the DFG calculation and includes services which are typically provided by a DFG Grant Officer.
- 12.4 Councils are encouraged to actively compare these costs with other local authorities and service providers and to keep the cost of eligible fees and charges to a minimum but without compromising the quality of the service provided to the resident.' Fees are typically calculated as a percentage of the cost of the eligible works and included in the calculation of the eligible expense for each individual grant.
- 12.5 There is both a mandatory and discretionary element to DFGs. All local authorities must operate the mandatory scheme; the current policy includes a generous discretionary scheme.
- 12.6 A mandatory grant will 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. The maximum funding level is up to £30,000 for DFGs for those on passporting benefits for example, Universal Credit and Guaranteed Pension Credit or if the application is for a dependent child.
- 12.7 The council operates a discretionary top up grant under the current DFG policy. These have been provided for funding schemes which exceed the mandatory limit of £30k and the discretionary offer of £15k, to a maximum of £100k as follows:
- Mandatory grant of £30,000 plus up to £70,000 discretionary top up.
 - Discretionary grant £15,000 plus up to £85,000 discretionary top up.

- 12.8 In the year 24/25 the council approved 117 applications with a total value of £1,608,000. Of the 117 applications approved,
- a) 95 were discretionary grants up to £15,000,
 - b) 18 were Mandatory grants up to £30,000 and
 - c) the remaining four grants were top ups for works more than £30,000.

The total value of top ups awarded for 24/25 was £185,454.04.

- 12.9 DFGs are exclusive to homeowners, private rented tenants and registered social landlord tenants. As the council has a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) it is expected that the council should self-fund adaptations to its own stock for council tenants through this account. Therefore, there is a separate aids and adaptations policy for council tenants seeking adaptations.
- 12.10 An internal audit report undertaken in May 2025 by Southern Internal Audit Partnership, who are a collaborative service hosted by Hampshire County Council made several recommendations, including the necessity to ensure all grant awards are means tested and support the changes recommended in the 2025 policy.
- 12.11 The 2025 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 to promote independent living and well-being for residents in the Winchester district.

For the council to use its discretionary powers under the RRO it must have a DFG policy.

- 12.12 The review of the current policy has considered the following:

- The continued rise in demand and increasing costs of works. The discretionary element of the current policy is no longer sustainable due to an increase in approved grants against a stagnant grant allocation budget as well as the expectation that grant levels could reduce under the Government's proposed new formula.
- In addition, the discretionary top up element of the current policy is not flexible enough and needs simplifying to target those most in need.
- And greater attention should be paid to prevent admission to hospital/care and accelerate discharge from hospital.

13 The 2025 – 2030 Policy

13.1 The key principle of the 2025–30 policy is that the most vulnerable are assisted, therefore, this policy has at its core, the

- Development of the Welfare Grant to further align the offer of funding with the social care element of the Better Care Fund (BCF). This could include a deep clean or declutter, up to £2000.00, of essential parts of the home, which are critical to the person's welfare.
- Enhancement of the top up grant to enable a more flexible offer of funding based on individual need. This could include, depending on the family's circumstance, the award of a full top up grant to cover the cost of the works over the £30,000.00 mandatory limit, without the need for a contribution from the family or a land charge being placed on the property.
- Introduction of a Pathway to Home Grant to align with the principles of the Better Care Fund. This could include up to £10,000.00 worth of funding towards works that are essential to allow a person to remain at home where there is an imminent risk of care placement or admission to hospital. This can also be used to help people return home, where an installation of specialist equipment is needed to allow them to return.
- A continued focus of targeting limited funding to those in most need through
- mandatory means tested for those not in receipt of passporting benefits. This is a legislative requirement.
- Withdrawal of the £15,000 discretionary grant for all applicants.
- The DFG administration charge is made by retaining a portion of the total grant received from Government.

13.2 To consider the effect that the proposed implementation of mandatory means testing would have on residents, the team implemented a test model of non-mandatory means testing to all applicants. This approach analysed the impact of the proposed changes to the DFG policy. As part of the test model, 30 mean tests (financial assessments) were carried out. Out of these 30:

- 14 clients would qualify without a financial contribution.
- 6 clients could qualify but with contributions between £ 357.94 and £13,590.00.
- 10 clients would not qualify for financial support.

Therefore, there is an impact of the introduction of mandatory means testing in that not all residents who are disabled would qualify for DFG funding for aids and adaptations.

- 13.3 This approach would still assist those who are most vulnerable and on lower incomes but would mean that the council is not funding works for those residents that have the financial means to self-fund. This still enables the grant allocation to be administered to assist those most in need, or at risk of homelessness, whilst ensuring compliance with statutory duties and the principles of the better care fund.
- 13.4 The test model demonstrated that the impact of removing the blanket policy of all applicants, regardless of their financial means qualifying for funding up to £15,000 towards an adaptation. This would enable the council to repurpose up to £150,000 on these 30 cases that were tested. This funding can then support those that do not have the financial means to fund their own adaptations. This would ensure the council assists those that are more vulnerable and minimises the risk of the council not having the funds to administer grants for the most in need.
- 13.5 The 2023 policy has the following discretionary grants:
- Welfare grant up to £2,000.
 - Heating grant up to £4,000.
 - Relocation grant up to £8,000.
 - Top up grant of up to £100,000.
- 13.6 Since the current policy was adopted, no residents have applied for any of the discretionary grants apart from the top up grant. For the financial years 23/24 and 24/25 four top up grants were awarded totalling £444,424.23. Of these four grants three were owner occupied properties, and one was a registered social Landlord. All the top cases were for children and young persons.
- 13.7 The 2025 policy proposes to revise 2 of the discretionary grants, the welfare grant and the top up grant, and to introduce a new Pathway to Home Grant, with no change to the heating and relocation grant.
- 13.8 **Welfare Grant**
- The policy proposes that the element of the installation of specialist equipment of the Welfare Grant is removed as it is more appropriate to have a standalone grant for this in the form of a Pathway to Home Grant.
 - The policy also proposes a qualifying criteria for the Welfare Grant to ensure it targets the most vulnerable owner occupants.
 - The proposed Welfare Grant will still include, deep cleans, declutters and minor repairs but will introduce repairs to specialist equipment, and to be used to carry out minor repairs to owner occupied properties where a hazard has been identified that presents a risk to the occupant.

An example of a hazard may be breakdown of specialist equipment such as a stairlift that is out of warranty. The impact of this is that it allows the council to provide a discretionary repair service to vulnerable homeowners ensuring they remain safe in their homes and are appropriately safeguarded and keeping in line with the principles of the better care fund. The policy (Appendix A) outlines the qualifying criteria.

13.9 **Top Up Grant**

- The draft 2025-2030 policy aims to simplify the qualifying criteria and process for both the applicant and the council.
- Currently the policy allows for either a £85,000 top up or a £70,000 top up depending on whether the applicant qualifies for the discretionary £15,000 or the mandatory £30,000. Whether top up funding is awarded is dependent on the applicants' financial circumstances. For a child's case it is dependent on the parents' financial means and tenure of property.
- The current policy also, depending on financial means and tenure, will means test applicants over the discretionary or mandatory amount to determine any contribution toward the cost of the works above either the discretionary or mandatory award. The final contribution is currently 10% of the assessed contribution which is calculated by a government approved system for means testing.
- The draft 2025-30 policy will simplify the above by awarding a minimum £30,000 and a maximum of £100,000 and the criteria for this is clearly outlined in the draft policy and in line with the better care principles. This eradicates the complexities of the current policy which will expediate the application process and ensuring complex adaptations are completed in a timely manner.
- If an applicant does not qualify for a discretionary element of the DFG grant, there is no appeal process.

13.10 **Pathway to Home Grant**

- The Pathway to Home Grant is a new grant being proposed in the 2025-30 DFG policy and incorporates the installation of specialist equipment that is proposed to be removed from the Welfare Grant. The current criteria for the Welfare Grant is not broad enough to incorporate the better care fund criteria of aiding speedy discharge from hospital and preventing admission to hospital and or care.
- The Pathway to Home Grant will allow up to £10,000 of funding by installing the one item of specialist equipment and minimises the impact of removing the discretionary £15,000 grant as this grant will not be means tested.

- The key difference between the former discretionary grant of up to £15,000 and the proposed new Pathway to Home Grant, is that the Pathway to Home Grant is aimed at those who are awaiting hospital discharge or where it is documented that there is a risk of hospital admission or care placement if adaptations are not made. The £15,000 discretionary grant is currently available to any person applying for a DFG where the works will cost less than £15,000 regardless of whether the adaptations are for specialist equipment.
- The Pathway to Home Grant ensures that the allocation of grant funding is tailored at those who meet the better care criteria and minimises additional costs and burden to the NHS and social care providers.

13.11 Administrative Fees

- The council currently provides an end-to-end service, acting as agent for the applicant and charges a fee of 12% plus VAT of the grant works 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, apart from when a grant approaches or exceeds £25,000. At this point a service fee of £2,030 plus VAT will be applied. This equates to a total service fee charge of £2,436. This flat fee for works above £25,000 was to prevent the service charge from taking the grant over the £30,000 mandatory limit.
- The council now proposes to remove this fee and charge an admin fee directly to the grant. This removes the bureaucracy associated with administering this fee and increases the total amount available for aids and adaptations, by approximately £24,000. This is demonstrated in the table below:

Staff costs	Current 12% plus VAT admin charge (figures based on 24/25)	Proposed change to admin charge
Staff costs	326,652	326,652
Supplies & services	10,543	10,543
Overheads	98,165	98,165
Income - other	- 100,650	- 100,650
Income - staff capitalisation	- 168,635	- 168,635
Income - Service Charge	- 119,823	- 119,823
Total	46,253	46,253
Impact on DFG Grant		
VAT	23,965	-
Service charge	119,823	119,823
Staff capitalisation	168,635	168,635
Cost to DFG	312,422	288,458

13.12 Implementation timeline

If agreed by Cabinet, the proposed recommendations to this policy will take effect for all new DFG applications received by the council from 1st December 2025. It is important to note that a referral from any Occupational Therapist, is not classed as a DFG application. The changes to the administration charge will also take effect from the 1st of December 2025.

Web pages and guidance will be updated to ensure that the customer's experience is smarter and more streamlined, ensuring that the most vulnerable residents are supported while still ensuring best use of public funds. The 2025-30 policy will also have a layer of protection to ensure that those who may not qualify for a mandatory grant may still be supported through the discretionary grant options.

14 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 14.1 Not to amend the current policy at which point the council would be at risk of not being able to fulfil the existing policy with the current level of funding from

central government. Therefore, not to amend the policy is not an option and rejected.

- 14.2 Remove all discretionary elements of the policy. This could put the council at risk of not fulfilling the requirements of the Better Care Fund which could result in increased hospital admissions and delayed hospital discharge. Therefore, this is not an option and rejected.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: -

Winchester City Council's DFG Policy 23-25 [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) - Winchester City Council](#)

Previous Committee Reports: -

CAB3375 (H)- Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy

CAB3382(H)- Disabled Facilities Grant [CAB3383\(H\) Disabled facilities grants](#)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Revised DFG policy 2025-2030

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 1- Disabled Facility Grants Policy 2025-2030

Disabled Facilities Grant Policy

2025-2030

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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), the 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 flexible policy the council has adopted in respect of DFGs.
- This policy replaces the former Disabled Facility Grants Policy and Procedure 2023 -2025 and supersedes any other council policy relating to Disabled Facilities Grants.
- The policy links with the Council Plan 2025 -2030 and contributes towards the Council Plan priority of “Good homes for all” and “healthy communities” as it assists residents with continuing to live safely within their homes by supporting independent living for longer and targeting the key criteria of the Better Care Fund framework.

2.0 Aims of the Policy

- Enable disabled residents to live safely, independently, and with dignity in their homes.
- Ensure equitable access to DFG funding across all tenures and demographics.
- Promote transparency, consistency, and fairness in decision making based on individual circumstances.
- Support and promote integrated working with health and social care partners ensuring effective use of and compliance with the Better Care Fund, in particular reducing hospital discharges and allowing early discharge.
- Ensure non-discriminatory and equitable access regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, or housing tenure.
- To improve the lives of people with disabilities by enabling access and movement around their own home with the use of adaptations
- 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.

3.0 Regulatory Framework

There are a number of legal provisions governing DFGs and their applications. The administration of DFGs is detailed in 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 (DFG) delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England 2022
- The Housing Act 2004.

- The Care Act 2014
- The Public Sector Equality Duties
- The Armed Forces Act 2006/2021

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 health disorder or impairment of any kind; or
- They are physically disabled by illness or impairment present since birth or otherwise.

A person aged eighteen 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

The eligibility criteria for DFGs are outlined 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 Mandatory Means Test of financial information, 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 disabled person.

The DFG Purpose of caring for others.

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, it is normal practise for housing authorities with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to fund these adaptations. The council's Landlord Services Team therefore have a separate policy for processing Winchester City Council tenant applications.

Please see **appendix 1** which outlines what the council will do in the event of the passing of the disabled person during the DFG process.

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.

Applications for a Disabled Facilities Grant is dependent firstly on the applicant having been assessed by either:

- A Hampshire County Council (HCC) Occupational Therapist (OT)
- The council's in-house Private Sector Housing OT
- A private registered OT, or:
- The councils in house trusted assessor.

Help is also available to those who may struggle to apply or have questions about the policy. Assessments undertaken by the HCC OT will be forwarded to Winchester City Council. Alternatively, residents, can apply on-line via the council's web site after which they will be assessed to determine their eligibility:

[Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) - Winchester City Council](#)

Further information and guidance regarding DFGs can be found in the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery Guidance for Local Authorities in England published March 2022:

[Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England](#)

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

- An applicant, who defined by the Act as a person with a disability, is eligible for assistance, but in some circumstances, where an applicant is not in receipt of a means tested benefit, the council must perform a mandatory means test of the applicants' finances to determine eligibility.
- 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.
- The council reserves the right to refuse grant assistance where the works are not necessary, appropriate, reasonable, practicable, the applicant does not qualify financially after a means test and/or where the property is not suitable for adaptation. This is because the council has a duty to protect public funds and will therefore seek to support the option that provides the most value for money. If appropriate, and where the applicant qualifies, 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 where the applicant is in receipt of a means-tested benefit or the adaptation is for a disabled child under 16 years of age or a young person in full-time education under 21 years of age.
- Applicants who receive certain specified "passported" benefits are exempt from the means-test; however, the means-test is mandatory by law, and the council does not have any discretion when applying it. See **Appendix 2** for a list of passported benefits.

- If a disabled person is eligible, the council has a maximum of six months to either approve or decline the application from date of submission of a formal application. This means receipt of a fully completed application form and determined financial contribution if necessary. The mandatory timescale for completing works from the date of approval is 12 months.
- 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.
- An applicant must be 18 years of age or older.
- Parents or guardians can apply on behalf of children.
- Landlords can 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 at least five years. Landlords and/or the property owners must certify they intend to allow the disabled 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, but each application must have a relevant referral and recommendations from an occupational therapist specifying a new need. Each referral will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

7.0 Mandatory Means Testing

Section 30 of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 outlines the need for both owner occupied and tenanted applicants to be means tested to assess whether they qualify for a DFG, and if so, what their assessed contributions might be.

This ensures that eligible residents are receiving the appropriate assistance and allows the council to comply with its mandatory duty of protecting the public purse in line with the relevant legislation. It also allows our allocation of grant funding to be equitable.

Therefore, unless an applicant is on a means tested benefit, they will need to complete a mandatory means test using the governments approved tool for

assessing client contribution. Refusal to submit all financial information will mean that the council cannot proceed with your application.

Any applicant who qualifies with or without a contribution will have access to a grant of up to £30,000, but the cost of the works will be necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practicable.

6.0 Discretionary Grants

Discretionary grants have the same application process as mandatory grants as well as the same criteria. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 allows councils to provide discretionary assistance to disabled residents in certain circumstances, ensuring awards are equitable and in line with individual circumstances. The discretionary grants that we offer and their qualifying criteria are outlined below.

There is no appeal process for decisions made regarding discretionary grants.

6.1 The Pathway to Home Grant

Purpose.

As part of the council's commitment to helping residents remain in their homes for as long as possible, and to assist with hospital discharge/admissions, funding can be provided for fast-track adaptations that do not fall within the remit of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Eligibility Criteria

The Pathway to Home Grant allows for up to £10,000 to fund specialist equipment when there is a need to aid hospital discharge or prevent admission to hospital or care. The works should be to improve and enhance the applicant's quality of life at home and support the continuation of them staying in their home by enabling discharge from hospital and preventing admission to hospital or care. The applicant should have a clear medical need and be eligible for disability registration.

The council recognises the complexities and urgency of these cases, as well as the difficulty in collecting and assessing financial information during what are naturally stressful circumstances for the person. As a result of this, the council will waive the requirement to means test applicants who fall into this criteria.

Only applicants awaiting a discharge from hospital or care placement or those where there is an evidenced based risk of admission to hospital/care without immediate intervention are eligible. The needs must also have been identified by a social worker or other professional, e.g. an Occupational Therapist. Examples of specialist equipment include:

- Stairlift (curved or straight)

- Ceiling track hoists
- Ramping.

Conditions

Only one item of equipment can be funded. If more than one item is required, then the referrer will need to determine which item is the most critical to meet the immediate needs of the patient and the above criteria. Any other items can then be submitted via a referral and recommendations from an Occupational Therapist and be subject to a means test if the applicant is not in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

This allows the council to comply with the requirements of the Better Care Fund and enables the council to recognise the need for discretion in order to help the most vulnerable return safely home from hospital and prevent them from going into hospital or care.

6.2 Welfare grant.

Purpose

This discretionary grant is designed to fund small scale works which are critical to a person's welfare which have been identified by a social worker or other professional.

Funding repairs to equipment ensures that the person is safeguarded as a matter of urgency and the repairs are made quickly. The process for applying for a DFG can be lengthy so it is important that vulnerable residents have access to the right help as soon as possible to limit the risk to their welfare. By specifying a savings limit, we can ensure we are targeting those who are the most socially vulnerable and cannot afford to fund the repairs themselves.

Eligibility Criteria

The disabled person should have a clear medical need/ be eligible for disability registration. The applicant must also be in receipt of a means tested benefit or have a total household savings of less than £23,250. This figure is the maximum amount of savings a client can have to qualify for social care.

- **Deep Cleans / Declutters of essential parts of the home up to a maximum of £2000.** The grant will contribute towards converting a home that cannot currently be inhabited by the person applying for the grant into one which can be, (i.e. through cleaning/decluttering of the kitchen/living room/hallway/bathroom/bedroom (and extra bedrooms if carers need to stay overnight) in particular in preparation of the installation of equipment.
- **Minor Essential Repairs and Improvements up to a maximum of £2000.** To address a risk or serious hazard for a person with disabilities that would impact on the extent to which their home can be used. The works must be

proportionate to the nature of the risk and hazard. A broken item must have a substantially deleterious impact on the extent to which a property can be used.

Examples include, repairing of specialist equipment such as a stairlift to minimise hospital admission or care placement, making good disrepair to flooring to make safe and remove a hazard, or improving the safety and security of a property to a higher standard to enable it to be occupied by a person with a disability.

In cases where repairs are needed to remove a hazard, the council must visit the property and carry out a Housing Health and Safety Rating System Assessment (HHSRS) to determine the presence and severity of a hazard.

Conditions

Repairs are only available to owner occupied properties where the repair responsibility falls to the owner. As repair responsibility for Registered Social Landlord and Private Rented Tenants falls with the landlord, the council is unable to offer repairs to these tenures.

6.3 Heating Grant

Purpose

This grant is aimed to offer replacement of boilers, radiators and other substantial components of heating systems to bring systems and equipment up to a higher standard of reliability, safety or usability as might be required by an owner occupier with disabilities.

Eligibility Criteria

The referrals for this grant need to come directly through a professional body such as:

- LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) which can be contacted at [Energy Support | LEAP](#)
- Hitting the Cold Spots, 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), a charity based in Southampton which provides advice on sustainability and other matters including fuel poverty and 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 applicant's circumstances (applicants must be on passporting benefits and disabled). Persons in the community who are **not** on any income assessed benefits, who come into contact with our service, and who are in need can be assisted with funding if

they can prove they do not have savings in excess of £6,000. In exceptional circumstances a legal land charge will be considered in order to cover the value of the works (if the works exceed £4000).

- Replacement of boilers, replacement of faulty radiators or other substantial components of any heating systems to bring systems and equipment up to a higher standard of reliability, safety or usability as might be required by a person with disabilities.

Conditions

Works can be funded up the value of £4000. If the necessary works exceed this amount the homeowner will be required 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 possible referrals in the winter seasons up to 2027/28.

6.4 Relocation Grant

Purpose

To assist disabled persons, who are owner/occupiers 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 as their home. Such assistance supports best value by ensuring DFG funding is focused on properties where adaptations can be delivered and enabling people to move to suitable property where this is not the case.

Eligibility Criteria and Conditions.

- Applicants must be 18 or over on the date the application is made (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, WCC in house OT, or a private OT.
- The council and the OT must be satisfied that the proposed property already meets the needs of the disabled person without further adaptation or be satisfied that it can be adapted at a reasonable cost under the mandatory grant limit of £30,000.
- This grant will cover the costs of purchasing a property such as estate agent's fees and conveyancing, but not other relocation costs such as removal expenses.

Relocation costs can be funded up to the value of £8,000.

6.6 Top Up Grant

Purpose

The council recognises that referrals from occupational therapists are becoming more complex with the cost of materials increasing, which means that often the amount of DFG funding that is needed exceeds the mandatory level of £30,000. This is especially the case with referrals for children, who often have a variety of needs that must be met.

Eligibility Criteria

To ensure that the offer of discretionary top up funding is equitable to all residents, each application for top up funding will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering the needs of the disabled person, as well as the financial circumstances and makeup of the family as well as the below criteria.

This Top Up grant is to fund the cost of adaptations over £30,000 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 total amount of top up funding available is £30,000, however in certain circumstances more than one top up can be approved up to a maximum of £100,000.

To qualify, the applicant) must fall into at least one of the following *Better Care Fund Key Criteria*:

1. Where 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 applicants have a high and complex level of disability and/or life changing diagnosis; and the risk of sudden deterioration in their condition or 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 or residential care or increase in care package).
3. Where 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 the applicant's independence, health and wellbeing).
4. Where applicants have catastrophic and life changing/limiting diagnosis, and 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. Where 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 applicants have no immediate and safe access to alternative service options.

Depending on the works recommended by the assessing OT, it would be advisable that applicants entitled to a mandatory grant also fall into one of the above key criteria. 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 where an extension must be constructed to contain a bedroom and washing facility for someone less than 18 years' old.

All other avenues including alternative methods of funding must also be explored which include, but are not limited to the following:

- Can the applicant contribute financially or apply for a loan. This may be in the form of a land charge, or a percentage amount of 10% of an assessed contribution following a means test. (This means test will not be applicable to those who already have an assessed contribution to pay following a means test at application stage.)
- Explore whether the housing association can contribute.
- Explore whether the disabled person's needs can be met in another way, for example re housing through Hampshire Home Choice.
- Is a top up grant the only option available to ensure the disabled person is safeguarded and their needs are met.

Conditions

Any Top Up Grant funding will be considered having regard to the number of financial resources the council has available at the time of the application. 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.

In the case of an owner-occupied property, any top up funding may be secured via a land charge against the property in the form of an equity loan, or as a percentage amount of 10% of an assessed contribution following a means test. (This means test will not be applicable to those who already have an assessed contribution to pay following a means test at application stage.)

The legal charge will have no expiry date and therefore the charge will be paid back to the council upon sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise 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 waiver of the legal charge if it causes financial hardship. An example of hardship is if the property is being sold to fund care and the legal charge prevents the applicant being able to move to a suitable placement. It is for the applicant or

interested parties of the applicant to make their case of hardship to the council with supporting evidence and for the council to use its discretion when making a decision.

In the case of a registered social landlord property when assessing whether a top up grant is appropriate, it must first be determined that the applicant cannot move to another property through Hampshire Home Choice which meets their needs or would meet their needs with less cost than the provision of a Top Up Grant. Tenants in a RSL tenancy must stay active on Hampshire Home Choice for one year from the date of activation before a Top up Grant to extend or structurally modify their home can be considered. Staying active means placing bids on possible suitable properties and engaging with the Housing Occupational Therapist and the Housing Allocations Team. Depending on the nature of the adaptation, the council may encourage RSLs to contribute towards the cost of the works based on any possible increase in market value of the property, as a result of the works being carried out. For example, when an extension is being provided to create an extra bedroom.

Unfortunately, Top Up 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) a sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme of which the council is a member.

Any Top Up Grant funding will be considered having regard to the number of financial resources the council has available at the time of the application. 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.

Summary Table of Funding Levels	
Funding level	Decision
Up to £20,000	Senior Private Sector Housing Officer
Up to £50,000	Service Lead – Strategic Housing
Up to £100,000	Corporate Head of Housing

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.

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 council 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.

A mandatory DFG can only be provided for 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 District. In exceptional circumstances under the RRO, a discretionary grant may be awarded in order to adapt the home of the other parent (or guardian) should there be a legitimate and evidenced need.

The council 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 council 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.

8. Administration Charge

The council provides an end-to-end service for the applicant. A fee is not charged to the applicant for this service, but a portion of the total grant received from the government is retained by the council to cover the administrative cost of providing this service.

9. Complaints Procedure

Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the service they have received, they can make a complaint through the council's published complaints procedure which can be found at [Compliments and complaints - Winchester City Council](#). In the first instance any issues should be brought to the attention of the council's authorised officer dealing with the application. If an applicant remains dissatisfied, to escalate any matter of concern, a corporate complaint can be raised as explained above.

If the applicant wishes to appeal a decision made for a mandatory grant, then the applicant, in the first instance, should contact the DFG team at the council and ask for a detailed explanation of the decision. The applicant can also request a copy of their OTs assessment. They can also contact organisations such as [Foundations](#) for advice and support.

10. 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.

An “exceptional circumstances” clause applies to this policy, which allows the council to apply further discretion where needed. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Private Sector Housing Officer in consultation, where necessary, with the Service Lead for Strategic Housing.

11. Amendments to Policy

When required minor amendments to DFG policy may be made by the Corporate Head of Housing in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing.

Appendix 1 – What will the council do if a person passes away during the DFG process.

<p>What will the council do if a person passes away during the application process?</p>	
<p>If the disabled person passes away before the grant is approved</p>	<p>As the DFG is a person specific grant, if the disabled person passes away before approval the council will close the application. If any costs have been incurred these will normally be absorbed by the council.</p>
<p>If the disabled person passes away once the grant has been approved but before the works have started</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>If the disabled person passes away once the grant has been approved and the works have started</p>	<p>The council may complete the works if they benefit surviving household members and will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stage of the works • Financial commitments already made. • Whether the adaptations serve a continuing need. • May pay any costs already incurred. <p>The council will make a decision on a case-by-case basis and act with discretion and compassion.</p>
<p>If the applicant passes away following completion of the works but where funding has been secured as a local land charge that has not expired.</p>	<p>If the property is not sold the land charge will remain in place until the 10-year period expires and no payment is triggered merely by the death of an applicant.</p> <p>The charge may transfer to the estate of the surviving owner, but no action will be taken until the property is sold.</p>

	<p>If the property is sold before the 10-year expiry date the local authority may seek repayment of the charge.</p> <p>The council will make a decision on a case-by-case basis, considering our policy and will act with discretion and compassion.</p>
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Appendix 2 – List Of Current Passported 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

Appendix 3 – Summary Table of The Different Types of Assistance Available.

Mandatory Grants	Qualifying criteria	Aim
Mandatory DFG up to £30,000	<p>Relevant referral and recommendations from an Occupational Therapist detailing the works that are necessary and appropriate.</p> <p>Passported benefit, young person or child, assessed contribution following a means test.</p>	To administer mandatory DFG funding to qualifying residents to ensure properties are adapted ensuring residents can remain safe in their homes for longer and comply with the Better Care Fund framework.
Discretionary Grants	Qualifying criteria	Aim
The Pathway to Home Grant	<p>Any resident who is awaiting hospital discharge where the delay in returning home is because of a need for specialist equipment to be installed before they can return home.</p> <p>Also available to prevent admission to hospital or care where the installation of specialist equipment is needed to mitigate this risk,</p>	To allow up to £10,000 to meet key criteria of the Better Care Fund and to fund specialist equipment when there is a need to aid hospital discharge or prevent admission to hospital or care. The works should be to improve and enhance the applicant's quality of life at home and support the continuation of them staying in their home by enabling discharge from hospital and preventing admission to hospital or care.
Welfare Grant	Owner occupiers on passported benefits or total household savings of £23,500 or less.	To fund small scale works up to £2,000 which are critical to a person's welfare which have been identified by a

	<p>Applicable to RSL tenants in some circumstances.</p> <p>The disabled person should have a clear medical need/ be eligible for disability registration.</p>	<p>social worker or other professional, including deep cleans, de clutters and repairs to specialist equipment.</p>
Discretionary Grants	Qualifying criteria	Aim.
Heating Grant	<p>LEAP Energy Support LEAP</p> <p>Hitting the Cold Spots, a Hampshire County Council based service which provides advice on heating and energy matters for Hampshire residents and can be contacted at Hitting the cold spots Health and social care Hampshire County Council</p> <p>The Environment Centre (tEC), a charity based in Southampton which provides advice on sustainability and other matters including fuel poverty and can be contacted at the Environment Centre (tEC) – Bringing the benefits of sustainability to everyone</p> <p>applicants <u>must</u> be on passporting benefits and disabled</p> <p>Those applicants not on any income assessed benefits, who come into contact with our service, and who are in need can be assisted with funding if they can</p>	<p>To offer works up to £4,000 replacement of boilers, radiators and other substantial components of heating systems to bring systems and equipment up to a higher standard of reliability, safety or usability as might be required by an owner occupier with disabilities.</p>

	prove they do not have savings in excess of £6,000.	
Discretionary Grants	Qualifying criteria	Aim.
Relocation Grant	<p>Applicants must be 18 or over on the date the application is made (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, WCC in house OT, or a private OT.</p> <p>The council and the OT must be satisfied that the proposed property already meets the needs of the disabled person without further adaptation or be satisfied that it can be adapted at a reasonable cost under the mandatory grant limit of £30,000.</p> <p>This grant will cover the costs of purchasing a property such as estate agent's fees and conveyancing, but not other relocation costs such as removal expenses.</p>	<p>To assist disabled persons, who are owner/occupiers 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 as their home. Such assistance supports best value by ensuring DFG funding is focused on properties where adaptations can be delivered and enabling people to move to suitable property where this is not the case.</p> <p>Costs can be funded up to the value of £8,000</p>
Top Up Grant	<p>The applicant must fall into at least one of the Better Care Fund Key Criteria, and all alternative options must have been explored and deemed not applicable.</p> <p>Discretionary on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>To offer, where applicable, assistance to residents where the cost of the works exceeds the mandatory £30,000 to ensure the disabled persons needs are met and that they can remain safe in their home.</p>

Appendix 2



Winchester City Council
Equality Impact Assessment
Section 1 - Data Checklist

When undertaking your Equality Impact Assessment for your policy or project, it is important that you take into consideration everything which is associated with the policy or project that is being assessed.

The checklist below is to help you sense check your policy or project before you move to Section 2.

		Yes/No	Please provide details
1	Have there been any complaints data related to the policy or project you are looking to implement?	No	This is a new DFG policy (2025-2030) and is to replace the former DFG Policy & Procedures 2023-2025.
2	Have all officers who will be responsible for implementing the policy or project been consulted, and given the opportunity to raise concerns about the way the policy or function has or will be implemented?	Yes	All the DFG team within the Private Sector Housing Service have provided input and comments on the writing and content of the policy.
3	Have previous consultations highlighted any concerns about the policy or project from an equality impact perspective?	N/A	No
4	Do you have any concerns regarding the implementation of this policy or project? <i>(i.e. Have you completed a self-assessment and action plan for the implementation of your policy or project?)</i>	No No	The policy outlines how the council will undertake its functions in respect of DFGs under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as well as The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Policy is now written and to be presented to cabinet on 04/11/25
5	Does any accessible data regarding the area which your work will address identify any areas of concern or potential	No	Nothing identified

	problems which may impact on your policy or project?		
6	Do you have any past experience delivering similar policies or projects which may inform the implementation of your scheme from an equality impact point of view?	Yes	
7	Are there any other issues that you think will be relevant?	No	No concerns or issues were raised by members of the public following the publication of the previous DFG policy & procedures.

Section 2 - Your Equality Impact Assessment form

Directorate:	Your Service Area: Strategic Housing	Team: Private Sector Housing	Officer responsible for this assessment: John Corrie	Date of assessment: 29/08/2025
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	Question	Please provide details
1	What is the name of the policy or project that is being assessed?	Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2025-2030
2	Is this a new or existing policy?	A new policy to replace the former DFG Policy 2023-2025
3	Briefly describe the aim and purpose of this work.	The aim of the policy is to identify the actions which the council can take in order to spend its allocated budget from the Better Care Fund with the purpose of grant funding adaptations in the homes of disabled and /or aged individuals whilst meeting the key criteria of the better care fund framework. The policy will also detail the range of discretionary grants that the council can offer.
4	What are the associated objectives of this work?	To provide adaptations in the homes of disabled and /or aged individuals to enable them to remain living independently at home.
5	Who is intended to benefit from this work and in what way?	The DFG Policy will benefit disabled and / or elderly residents in the Winchester district. It will detail the various DFG grants available to those eligible to

		apply for and it will enable those who have successfully applied for a DFG to have adaptations undertaken in their home.
6	What are the outcomes sought from this work?	To maximise the number of DFGs granted in any given year during the duration of the policy so that the council can adapt as many homes as possible and safeguard as many residents as possible allowing them to remain safe in their homes.
7	What factors/forces could contribute or detract from the outcomes?	<p>Contribute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the Better Care Fund DFG grant allocation. • An increase in staffing levels in the DFG service • Local Councillor member support <p>Detract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If funding levels were reduced • If DFG Service staffing levels were reduced
8	Who are the key individuals and organisations responsible for the implementation of this work?	<p>The principal team responsible for this work will be the DFG Service situated in Private Sector Housing and principally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Occupational Therapist • DFG Case Officer x 2 • Private Sector Housing Officer • DFG support officer
9	Who implements the policy or project and who or what is responsible for it?	The Senior Private Sector Housing Officer in conjunction with PSH DFG Service colleagues will implement and be responsible for the strategy.

	<p>Summary</p> <p>The policy in itself isn't believed to affect individuals or communities differently; but consideration is required in the way it's applied to take into account the different needs of our residents to ensure the best outcome whilst complying with the policy and legislative requirements.</p> <p>Therefore, the approach taken is to ensure that services are delivered in accordance with the council's equality policy especially in respect of the format of communication.</p>
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	Complaints will be monitored as a form of customer insight which may highlight any changes required.		
		Please select your answer in bold . Please provide detail here.	
10a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of race differently in a negative way?	Y	N As mentioned above the approach to engagement should mitigate against the potential barrier for any applicants that do not possess a sufficient level of English to understand any letters etc. sent to them. Written and verbal communication may need to be translated or interpreted.
10b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	The most recent Census data available (2021) identifies that 97.2% of the district's population state 'English' as their main language. The need for translation or interpretation of letters etc. is therefore likely to be low. However, all aspects of communication will comply with the council's Equality Policy and access to translation services can be provided if required.	
11a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of sex differently in a negative way?	Y	N No specific impacts.
11b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	There is no evidence to suggest that the strategy would have a potential impact on this characteristic as the need for adaptation is based on need and not sex.	
12a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of disability differently in a negative way? <i>(you may wish to consider:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Physical access</i> • <i>Format of information</i> 	Y	N Suitable assistance will be provided to DFG applicants if needed in line with the council's equality policy. Such assistance can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking home visits should homeowners have a physical disability that prevents them from

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Time of interview or consultation event</i> • <i>Personal assistance</i> • <i>Interpreter</i> • <i>Induction loop system</i> • <i>Independent living equipment</i> • <i>Content of interview)</i> 			<p>easily attending at the council offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing telephone translation services should language be a barrier to communication • Use of a hearing loop in the city office reception for those hard of hearing • Providing letters in large font format
12b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Support can be offered to address obstacles they may face as a consequence of a disability. All DFG job posts have the requirement for a car and driving licence.		
13a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of sexual orientation differently in a negative way?	Y	N	There is no evidence to suggest that the strategy will have a potential impact on this characteristic.
13b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	DFG policies have been adopted since 2015, and the council has not received any complaints in respect of it negatively affecting individuals or communities on the basis of sexual orientation.		
14a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of age differently in a negative way?	Y	N	It is recognised that not all DFG applicants may have access to computers and are able to communicate electronically. This can be the case across all age groups but there is the potential for a proportion of persons in the older age group to be more greatly affected.
14b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	None, however, in line with the council's equality policy the offer of different communication methods will be offered as this helps ensure that the information and dialogue is encouraged with all applicants, regardless of their communication preference.		
15a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of religious belief differently in a negative way?	Y	N	It is acknowledged that some faiths / religions require worship on particular days and therefore may not be able to

				attend appointments / meetings due to this.
15b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	None, but due consideration will be given to this, and flexibility will be applied, if required, in order to mitigate any adverse impact.		
16a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of gender reassignment differently in a negative way?	Y	N	There is no evidence to suggest that the strategy will have a potential impact on this characteristic, but due consideration will be given to this, and flexibility will be applied, if required, in order to mitigate any adverse impact.
16b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	None, but it is not believed the strategy will have any negative impact on this characteristic		
17a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of marriage and civil partnership differently in a negative way?	Y	N	
17b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	None, but it is not believed the strategy will have any negative impact on this characteristic		
18a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of pregnancy and maternity differently in a negative way?	Y	N	
18b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	None, but it is not believed the strategy will have any negative impact on this characteristic		

19	Could any negative impacts that you identified in questions 10a to 15b create the potential for the policy to discriminate against certain groups on the basis of protected characteristics?	Y	N	Yes, but only based on the approach taken to engagement rather than the objective of the strategy itself.
20	Can this negative impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for certain groups on the basis of protected characteristics? Please provide your answer opposite against the relevant protected characteristic.	Y	N	Race: No
				Sex: No
				Disability: No
				Sexual orientation: No

				Age: No
				Gender reassignment: No
				Pregnancy and maternity: No
				Marriage and civil partnership: No
				Religious belief: No
21	How will you mitigate any potential discrimination that may be brought about by your policy or project that you have identified above?	No negative impacts identified.		
22	Do any negative impacts that you have identified above impact on your service plan?	Y	N	No negative impacts identified which could impact on the service plan.

Signed by completing officers	Amanda Cox (Housing OT) and Janet Ledingham (DFG Case Officer.)
Signed by lead officer	John Corrie – Senior Private Sector Housing Officer.