

Policy:

Grants and assistance regime for housing adaptations for Disabled Persons in Haringey

Effective from 1st April 2017

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines Haringey Council's approach to the delivery of its service to residents who require adaptations to their home. It sets out the framework by which the Council offers adaptations to residents living in public and private sector housing.

Haringey Council's Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The Council has in place its Corporate Plan 2015-18 and Strategies that includes its vision and the priorities for the borough. The Council's vision for all adults in Haringey places an emphasis on the values which promote and maximizes an individual's independence, dignity, choice and control, shifting away from institutional care towards community and home based solutions where this is appropriate for the individual. This approach is embodied by Priority 2 of the Corporate Plan, which seeks to 'empower all adults to live healthy long and fulfilling lives', and is underpinned by the following objectives: A borough where the healthier choice is the easier choice
- a. Strong communities where all residents are healthier and live independent fulfilling lives
 - b. Support will be provided at an earlier stage to residents who have difficulty in maintaining their health and wellbeing
 - c. Residents assessed as needing formal care and /or health support will receive responsive high quality services
 - d. All vulnerable adults will be safeguarded from abuse
- 1.3 The Council's vision for children and young people, as reflected in Priority 1 of the corporate plan, seeks to enable every child and young person to have the best start in life. Children and young people will be healthier, happier and more resilient and those who need extra help will get support at the right time.
- 1.4 Priority 5 of the corporate plan seeks to create homes and communities where people choose to live and are able to thrive. The objective, amongst others, is to drive up the quality of housing for residents in the borough.
- 1.5 In the context of these corporate priorities, Haringey Council is committed to assisting people who are registered, or eligible for registration as a disabled person, to help them in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling to help them remain in their own home whenever it is practicable to do so. Haringey Council recognise that poor housing can be a barrier for older and disabled people, contributing to immobility, social exclusion and ill health. This policy contributes to achieving our corporate priorities by, amongst others, facilitating hospital discharge, preventing hospitalisation, and by enabling people to live more independently in secure, safe, well maintained, warm and suitable housing.

- 1.6 This policy builds on existing practice and seeks to ensure that residents have a consistent experience in the service and an efficient service with a wider scope of services available.
- 1.7 This policy is aligned to the Better Care Fund (BCF) and it is expected that health needs and priorities will become more important in the way funds are spent. Therefore, delayed transfers of care and readmission to hospital, which are key health priorities, will be supported within this policy.
- 1.8 Having a policy will clearly set out and define what services we are able to provide and a clear pathway for accessing services, increase the range and scope of housing adaptation services the council are able to provide to maximise service user's independence. Thereby, providing clarity and consistency for all service users across Haringey regardless of tenure.

Haringey Council's Housing Strategy 2015-2020

- 1.9 Our vision for housing in Haringey is underpinned by the belief that housing is about people and communities, not just bricks and mortar. We want to make sure that our residents have access to high-quality homes that will support them in leading happy and fulfilling lives. Whether renting or buying, there is clear evidence that the quality of our home affects our health, our children's attainment at school and the quality of family relationships. To help our children to have the best start in life and our adults to fulfil their ambitions, it is crucial that our residents have access to high-quality homes at prices they can afford. The Housing Strategy 2015-2020 include the objective to drive up the quality of housing for all residents. The DFG policy is intended to contribute towards the delivery of the Council's housing strategy.

2. Key Principles

- 2.1 In addition to the Council's corporate priorities and housing strategy, the DFG policy is intended to meet the Council's statutory obligation under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and to set out how the Council intends to exercise its discretionary powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The principles of the policy are:
 - a) To ensure that all residents have access to accommodation that enables independent living, privacy and dignity for the individual and their families. This may include offers of alternative accommodation or modifying disabling environments;
 - b) To provide a service that seeks to best meet the needs experienced and identified by the disabled person;
 - c) To ensure that constraints on independent living are not imposed on disabled people by virtue of the construction, layout or design of their homes;

- d) The process utilises the skills and experience of a wide range of disciplines and includes consultation and choice for the disabled person;
 - e) The appropriateness and acceptability of the adaptation is measured by the extent to which it meets the needs of the individual; and
 - f) To examine all the options available to the individual before embarking on plans to adapt the current property where major adaptations are required.
- 2.2 The council is committed to assisting people who are registered, or eligible for registration as a disabled person, to help them in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling to help them remain in their own home whenever it is practicable to do so.
- 2.3 The council is committed to improving people's lives by giving people more choice and control in the services they use. Wherever possible, and to ensure that public money is properly spent the council will be seeking to carry out the most cost-effective adaptation to the property which adequately meets an applicant's assessed needs. Usually this means that an adaptation is carried out within the existing structure of a dwelling.
- 2.4 In accordance with the current legislation only one family room is necessary to meet the family's needs, as such the council will consider the use of one of any additional reception rooms in a property to provide adaptations. Where it is not possible to adapt a property or if there are likely to be excessive costs in adapting a property, the council will consider offering re-housing or in the case of owner occupiers a relocation grant (see below), this would be at the discretion of the Adaptations Panel.
- 2.5 Proposed schemes must be supported by a referral from the council's Occupational Therapy team or the designated OT Contractor working on their behalf, and enquiries arising without such support will be referred back to Adult Social Care team to arrange an assessment. The Occupational Therapists (OT's) work in collaboration with the surveyors to decide and agree upon a scheme. The OT must determine what is necessary and appropriate for the disabled person to meet their eligible assessed needs and the surveyor must consider what is reasonable and practical given the structural, planning and other restraints. The most modest solution is recommended and the OT and surveyor are required to differentiate between the 'needs' and 'wants' of the service user.
- 2.6 Wherever possible if the Council is funding personal care services for the disabled applicant, adaptations should aim to reduce the ongoing revenue cost by enabling the person to attain or regain more independence in daily living. The OT and Surveyor will consider this aspect before agreeing the capital allocation for the scheme and where this is likely to exceed £30 000 will be agreed by the Adaptations Panel.

3. Financial Assistance

3.1 The types of assistance available include:

- Minor adaptations such grab rails
- Major adaptations under the mandatory disabled facilities grant scheme for items such as level access showers, stair lifts etc
- Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations outside the scope of a mandatory grant,
- Assistance towards moving to more suitable accommodation

Minor Adaptations

3.2 The Council's policy is to provide simple adaptations i.e. those that cost under £1000 such as grab rails and stair rails, direct to the resident without the need to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

3.3 Where the minor adaptation is carried out in a Council property the adaptation belongs to the Council and will therefore be maintained as part of the maintenance contract.

3.4 Where the minor adaptation is carried out in a private sector property the adaptation belongs to the individual and therefore they will need to maintain it

Major Adaptations and Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

3.5 The Council is obliged under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to eligible applicants in order to carry out eligible adaptations to their homes to enable them to remain in their homes and live as independently as possible. DFGs are available to leaseholders, owner/occupiers and private sector tenants and Housing Association tenants. Whilst council tenants are eligible to apply for a DFG, the Council funds adaptations to its own properties from the housing revenue account. The application process for council tenants is dealt with in the same way to ensure they are treated fairly.

3.6 The proposed adaptation must be supported by a referral from the Council's Occupational Therapy (OT) team or the designated OT Contractor.

3.7 Mandatory DFGs are available to assist a disabled person in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling. They are subject to a Test of Financial Resources (which is strictly controlled by Government legislation), and are limited to a maximum. The amount limit changes from time to time and is currently £30,000 per application. Subject to all other qualifying criteria being met, the council *must* approve a mandatory DFG.

3.8 DFG is available to eligible applicants for adaptations for:

- i. Facilitating Access and Provision

This includes adaptations to remove any barriers preventing the service user from moving freely around the property:

- Facilitating access to and from the dwelling or building in which the dwelling is situated.
- Facilitating access to the garden.
- Facilitating access to a room used or useable as the principal family room.
- Facilitating access to and from a room used or useable for sleeping or alternatively providing such a room for the disabled occupant.
- Facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory, a bath or shower (or both) and a wash hand basin or providing a room in which there is such a facility or facilities.
- Facilities for the preparation and cooking of food.

ii. Making a dwelling or building safe

For example, minimising the risk of danger where a disabled person may have behavioural problems, which cause them to act in a boisterous or violent manner, damaging the house, themselves and perhaps other people. Examples include: an enhanced hearing system specialised lighting, toughened or shatterproof glass, installation of guards around particular facilities e.g. fires, radiators, reinforcement of floors, walls or ceilings, or cladding or exposed surfaces and corners to prevent self-injury.

iii. Room usable for sleeping

Providing a room is usually only considered when it isn't possible to adapt the service users existing bedroom e.g. because of access or size constraints. Where the service user shares a bedroom with another person, funding may be given to provide a room so that the normal sleeping arrangements can be maintained. This may be considered if a child has behavioural problems and is disturbing or disturbed by the person they share a room with.

iv. Facilitate access to the principal family room

This may include widening doorways, creating wheelchair circulation space, or possibly providing lift access to the room. A family room may not be the existing family room. The principal family room can be re-designated as part of the works.

Only one family room is necessary to meet the family's needs, as such the council will consider the use of one of the reception rooms in a property to provide adaptations.

v. Bathroom

A service user should have access to a wash hand basin, WC, shower and/or bath.

vi. Facilitation of preparation of food

Potential works: re-arrangement or enlargement of kitchen, modified/specially designed storage units, gas, electricity and plumbing installation etc. to enable the user to be independent.

vii. Improve any heating system in the dwelling or provide this if none exists
Potential works include: improvement of an existing heating system, or provision of a heating system where it is unsuitable or where there is no heating. Funding should not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms that are not normally used by the disabled person.

viii. Adapt heating, lighting or power controls to make them easier to use.
Works may include: relocation of power points or thermostat, provision of adapted controls, and installation of additional controls or sockets.

ix. Facilitate access and movement around the dwelling to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of care. This provides for works to enable a service user to access their child's bedroom or the bedroom of a parent whom they care for.

Wherever possible, and to ensure that public money is properly spent the council will be seeking to carry out the most cost-effective adaptation to the property which adequately meets an applicant's needs. Except in exceptional circumstances this means that an adaptation is carried out within the existing structure of a dwelling.

- 3.9 Stair lifts, through floor lifts and hoists installed under a Disabled Facilities Grant become the property of the grant applicant and, as such, it is the applicant's responsibility to pay for servicing and maintenance, although the council includes within the cost of a Disabled Facilities Grant, a servicing and maintenance contract for these items. Thereafter, the council recommends that equipment is serviced at intervals prescribed by the manufacturer and there are a number of private companies able to undertake this work although the installer of the equipment is usually also able to make such arrangements.

Housing Association Tenants

- 3.10 Housing association tenants can apply for a disabled facilities grant, however the council would expect the RSL to make a contribution towards the cost of the adaptation, this will be negotiated on a case by case basis and approved by the Adaptations panel.

Discretionary Grant

- 3.11 In addition to the Mandatory DFG, the Council is not obliged but may consider discretionary DFG depending on funding constraints, legislation and its current corporate policies and strategies. The Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) 2002, gives the Council the power to offer discretionary DFGs to residents.
- 3.12 The mandatory DFG will be the first priority for all available funding. The priority order subject to available resources is:
- Discretionary Disabled facilities grants to supplement £30k mandatory grant limit
 - Home Repair Grant
 - Home Safety Grant
- 3.13 The award of discretionary DFG is subject to available funding. Individuals affected by the decision to limit discretionary DFG assistance will be offered advice and support regarding other options, which may be available.
- 3.14 Where the costs of an adaptation scheme exceed the £30k statutory financial limits and falls outside of the discretionary grants limits below, the Council may in exceptional circumstances award such additional funds to meet the assessed needs of the disabled person. Any monies paid above the mandatory limit are subject to an interest-free charge on the property for owner-occupier applicants and become repayable, in full to the council in the event of a change of ownership or breach of occupation conditions.

Home Repair Grant

- 3.15 Home Repair Grants aim to cover the cost of minor repairs that present a serious health and safety risk to owner/occupiers on a low income. Eligible works are any item of disrepair that causes a serious health and safety risk. These grants also cover urgent repairs to specialist equipment installed under disabled facilities grants that are no longer covered by a warranty.
- 3.16 Grant assistance will be paid towards the cost of eligible works, on completion of the works. There is no limit to the number of grant applications that can be made but a total limit of £5,000 per dwelling over a three-year period applies.
- 3.17 In exceptional circumstances a larger grant of maximum £20,000 will be considered for cases of vulnerable adults referred by Adult Services, where larger repairs were deemed necessary to safeguard occupants or the general public. These grants are subject to available funding and at the discretion of the council after all other avenues of funding have been exhausted. In these cases, the costs remain as a permanent charge on the property.
- 3.18 Qualification for the Home Repair Grants is based on the following criteria:
- All applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit or will be subject to a means test

- All applicants must have savings of less than £10,000

3.19 All applicants must be either:

- Owner/occupiers of the property concerned. They must not have any non-dependants in employment living in the household. Note all joint owners must be in receipt of a means tested benefit or will be subject to a means test.
- Leaseholders, with a responsibility to undertake such works as a condition of their lease. They must not have any non-dependants in employment living in the household. Note all joint leaseholders must be in receipt of a means tested benefit or will be subject to a means test.
- In the event of the demand for assistance exceeding available funding, a waiting list will be operated, subject to the following priority rating.

Group 1 being the highest priority and 3 the lowest:

Group 1 Applicants who have previously received DFG with an item of specialist equipment that is in need of repair.

Group 2 Over 60 years of age or registered/registerable as disabled and vulnerable adults referred by Adult Services

Group 3 Over 18 years of age with a child in the household of under 16

Each case within each group will be processed in chronological order with respect to the date of enquiry.

3.20 The eligible work covered by the grant are:

General housing repairs (not including items of decoration) such as roof leaks, electrical faults, gas pipe work defects or repair of defective fixtures and fittings such as central heating boilers/systems and other repairs likely to have serious effects on the occupier's health or safety.

Home Safety Grant

3.21 This grant is available where the applicant, or the applicant's spouse or partner, is aged 60 years or over who are on a means tested benefit, or people identified as at risk or are clients referred from the councils Safeguarding Adults Team, Domestic Violence Unit or the Metropolitan Police Crime Reduction Unit regardless of age.

3.22 The total value of grant assistance that may be given in respect of any one application is £500.00. No further application for a Home Safety Grant will be eligible during a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion of the relevant works except where the client is referred from the councils Domestic Violence Unit or Crime Reduction Unit.

3.23 All applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit.

- The applicant for grant must certify that he or she has the power or duty to carry out the necessary works.
- The applicant must have been resident for a minimum period of residence of one year unless the referral is via the Councils Safeguarding Adults Team, Domestic Violence Unit or Crime Reduction Unit where there is no minimum residence.
- there is no repayment of grant required on sale of the dwelling.
- there is no certificate of future occupancy required in respect of owners or tenants.
- a minimum of one estimate is to be submitted from the appointed building contractor. This estimate must clearly show the contractor's name, address and telephone number. The estimate must be signed and dated by the contractor or someone authorised to do so on behalf of the Company. If the estimate submitted is considered unreasonable on any grounds by the council a second estimate will be required.
- final payment of grant monies will be made following an inspection of the dwelling and on receipt of the applicant's declaration of satisfactory completion of the relevant works. This declaration will also show the names of the contractor who carried out the work, date of estimate and the actual cost incurred.
- the applicant for grant must give prior written agreement to the works proposed.
- payment of grant will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory contractor's invoice or demand for payment.
- No grant can be paid in respect of works started or completed before the Council has given a Notice of Grant Approval.

Emergency Adaptations

- 3.24 The Council can allow at its discretion, in certain cases, an emergency adaptation. This will only be used in urgent cases for clients who for example:
- a. Cannot sustain living, or life, at home unless essential adaptations are undertaken.
 - b. Cannot access essential hospital appointments, dialysis or day care without adaptations.

- c. The current situation is placing the service user and their carers at considerable risk of injury e.g. from unsafe moving and handling property stair lifts where living on the ground floor is not possible.
 - d. Other works which in the opinion of the OT would facilitate hospital discharges or are needed urgently
- 3.25 For adaptations via the emergency adaptation process, the normal adaptation process will be bypassed in order to install the adaptations as speedily and efficiently as possible. However, the means test will still apply as with mandatory DFG for owner-occupiers or private sector tenants. As well as providing emergency adaptations this process will considerably reduce the time spent by Council officers processing full applications. There will also be funding available to RSL tenants to be used in the same circumstances.
- 3.26 The works will be ordered and overseen by the Adaptations Team in consultation with the OT. If the OT assesses a service user who meets the criteria for urgent adaptations, they will refer the case to the next scheduled Adaptations Panel for discussion and approval. However to ensure the adaptation is not delayed by the Panel an out of panel decision can be sought from the relevant Head of Service, if appropriate
- 3.27 The OT and/or surveyor must present cases at the Adaptations Panel for approval before proceeding. The upper limit for works under this scheme will be £5K. Clients must either prove ownership or be prepared to sign a declaration of ownership in order to allow works to proceed

Re-housing or Relocation Assistance Grant

- 3.28 Undertaking major adaptations may not always be recommended. Re-housing or re-locating the disabled person will be the preferred option in some circumstances:
- a. Where the existing property is not suitable for adaptation within the available resources to meet long term needs or
 - b. Where it is not economically viable to do so.
- Re-housing for council tenants or a relocation grant for owners or private tenants will be considered to address the housing needs of the whole household. The Adaptations Panel determines the decision of whether this option will be considered.
- 3.29 If the disabled person is a council or RSL tenant they will be asked to consider re-housing by the Adaptations Panel. If a tenant agrees to being re-housed their housing transfer application will be assessed in line with the council's Allocation Policy, which will take into consideration the effect their current accommodation, is having on their housing needs and health. The disabled

person and tenant can decline to move property and continue to pursue their mandatory DFG application.

3.30 In cases of tenant applications, the landlord's consent will be required for adaptations to be carried out. The Council in its capacity as landlord will only withhold its consent where it is reasonable to do so. The circumstances where it may be reasonable to withhold consent include the following:

- a. Where suitable alternative accommodation is or will become available within 6 months in an area where the disabled person's support needs can be fulfilled. Suitable alternative accommodation could include accommodation that can be adapted to meet the tenant's needs within 12 months;
- b. Where a tenant has submitted a Right to Buy application;
- c. Where a tenant is awaiting a transfer to alternative accommodation;
- d. Where a tenant is not a secure tenant e.g. Service occupancy, temporarily accommodated under homeless legislation

3.31 If the landlord consent is withheld, the Occupational Therapist will ensure all risks are reduced to the lowest possible level and their request for major adaptations will be cancelled. Minor emergency works will still be available if deemed necessary and appropriate.

3.32 If the disabled person is an owner occupier the relevant 'moving costs' that the re-location grant will include is:

For freehold owners and leaseholders:

- Estate agent fees
- Conveyance costs
- Mortgage cancellation fees (if arranged more than 12 months prior to application)
- Surveyor costs
- Home energy certificates

For freehold owners and council tenants:

- Removal costs including the disconnection and reconnection of appliances and aerials

For RSL Tenants

- We will negotiate with the RSL to establish a cost effective solution.

3.33 The OT and surveyor will view any prospective properties and identify whether they require any adaptations and whether these need to be done before the disabled person moves in or whether they can be done once they have

moved. Any adaptation work, which is required to the prospective property, must be brought back to the Adaptations Panel to be agreed. In most cases the costs relating to the work and the relocation must be less than the cost of adapting their existing accommodation, however, consideration will also be given to the best long term use of the council's housing stock.

- 3.34 A DFG of up to £15k may also be awarded for adaptations to the property to which you relocate and the relocation costs and any required adaptation to the new property will count as one application up to the £30k limit and is subject to the Council's test of the applicant's financial resources, which will be the same as the test applied for DFG eligibility. The grant will only be offered if there are no alternative sources of funding available and inspections of the existing and prospective properties by a surveyor and occupational therapist must be carried out before a relocation grant is agreed. In the case where the applicant moves outside of the borough, a paper check may be undertaken rather than a surveyor's visit.
- 3.35 Applicants will not be automatically awarded the full grant. The Relocation Grant will be considered based on fee estimates submitted up to a maximum of £15,000 to cover 'Moving Costs'. The applicant is not restricted to the area of the relocation, however it may affect the level of assistance the applicant is eligible for (as below).
- If the disabled person moves out of the Borough of Haringey s/he will only be eligible for a grant to cover the 'moving costs' and not towards adapting the new property.
 - If the applicant is relocated within the Borough of Haringey the disabled occupant will be considered for further grant to cover adaptation costs for the new property.

This is subject to a surveyors visit and determined by the Adaptations Panel.

- 3.36 The total grant payable including relocation 'moving costs' and adaptations to the new property must not exceed the mandatory DFG grant or the cost of the original proposed scheme, whichever is lower.

Enhanced Schemes

- 3.37 The Council understands that sometimes a service user may wish to have a scheme designed which goes over and above the approved eligible scheme (i.e. the scheme recommended by the adaptations surveyor and occupational therapist), the Council may allow this however in practice this can be quite complicated. Please see the procedure detailed below:
- i. The council will provide the applicant with the amount of allocation (either grant or council funding for Haringey tenants) they may receive for the eligible scheme; this is based on standard prices for similar schemes the council has approved in the past.

- ii. The applicant will need to appoint their own architect to design the full scheme including the eligible elements. The council will allow an amount for payment of the architect. This amount will be equal to 5% of the eligible schemes value if it is for design only, or 8% of the eligible schemes value if it is for the design and supervision of the works.
 - iii. The design must incorporate all of the Occupational Therapists specification, and any additional works proposed must not impinge on these specifications.
 - iv. Once confirmation has been received that the scheme meets the needs of the applicant, the proposed scheme must be submitted for planning and building control approval by the applicant and a detailed specification must be prepared for pricing purposes.
 - v. The client's architect/surveyor should send the drawing and specification to a minimum of two contractors for pricing.
 - vi. Once the appropriate planning and building control approvals and priced specifications are received by the council, they will be subject to the necessary checks by the team responsible for grants and the grant will be calculated taking into account any assessed contribution and approval notification issued.
 - vii. Once the approval is received by the applicant's works may commence on site.
 - viii. 'As we are awarding grants of public money, the council needs to ensure that the contractors/professionals employed are registered with HMRC. As such we will need to see evidence of either VAT registration or CIS registration and/or their unique tax reference number (UTR). You should therefore ensure that you have evidence of this before you authorise the contractor to undertake the works as without this, the authority will not consider releasing any monies'.
- 3.38 Delays in making the application may affect entitlement to a grant, with this in mind the council would expect to be in receipt of a valid application within 6 months of the original grant surveyor's visit. If not received by that deadline and no valid reason is provided the application will be cancelled and a new application will need to be made by the client or their surveyor/architect.
- 3.39 All applications for enhanced schemes will need to be approved by the Adaptations Panel and the decision will be based on the needs of the applicant and ongoing costs to the council, NHS, and other public bodies.

The Test of Resources

- 3.40 The test of resources will remain, and be the same, as that set down in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 and in the Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008 and any subsequent amendments for all grants where the assessed need exceed the mandatory maximum limit of £30 000.
- 3.41 For the period between 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2019, the Council will not means test for grants where the value of the adaptation based on the assessed need is less than £30 000.

- 3.43 In the case of families with a disabled child or young person there is no means test and 100% grant is awarded up to the maximum limit.
- 3.44 Where all relevant persons are in receipt of income support, income-based job seekers allowance, council tax benefit, housing benefit, working tax credit (where income is below £15,050) or guaranteed pension credit, 100% grant is awarded up to the maximum limit.

Non-means Tested adaptations

- 3.45 Where a simple adaptation which does not require major structural works, for example conversion of a bathroom into a shower room, a stair lift, hoist or ramp and can provide a fast and effective solution to reduce current or potential future care and NHS costs, the means test will not be applied.
- 3.46 A fast track adaptation can only be provided if the councils recommended scheme is agreed by the applicant/applicants representative and where the councils approved contractors carry out the works. The enhanced scheme cannot be used with a fast track adaptation.

4 Exclusions

- 4.1 Major adaptations will not be carried out at a property which has a Right to Buy application
- 4.2 Major adaptations will not be carried out at a property where the tenant is awaiting a transfer
- 4.3 Overcrowding is not taken in to account when determining the most appropriate scheme. Major adaptations, for example additional rooms, will not be recommended on the basis that the property is overcrowded. Overcrowding issues will be dealt with under the council's housing policies.

5 Delivering the Service

5.1 The Adaptations Panel

To ensure an equitable and transparent approach to decision making, value for money and the appropriateness of proposed adaptations the council has an Adaption Panel to review emergency and larger adaptations over £30k as well as to set guidance on general adaptation principles and standards e.g. whether the property is currently suitable for occupation, whether decanting is required and whether work should be completed before occupation etc.

5.2 The Panel is made up of the following senior managers:

- Adaptations Team Manager

- Short Term Team Manager and Lead OT
- Housing Allocations Manager

5.3 The Panel meets on a monthly basis. However, they can convene an extra meeting in the case of an emergency adaptation request in addition to the scheduled meetings. Appeals against the decisions of the Panel will be to the Head of Service for Access and Independence (HOS). The Appeals must be in writing within 2 weeks of the notification of the Panel's decision detailing the grounds for the appeal. The HOS will consider the appeal based on written representations and there is no right for applicants to make oral representations. The HOS can request additional information from applicants if it feels this will be relevant to their decision-making. Decisions of the HOS will be made within 4 weeks of receipt of the appeal, unless further information is required, in which case the applicant will be informed of the revised timescale for determination of the appeal.

Performance and Timescales

- 5.4 Our current performance for the processing of DFG's and major adaptations exceeds 52 weeks. We are aiming to reduce this down to an average of 12 weeks by 2019/20
- 5.5 All applicants will be kept informed of the progress of their application by letters on receipt of the initial application, following initial assessment and final approval.

6 Grant terms and conditions

Land Charges on Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

- 6.1 Where, in the Council's Adaptations Panel's view an adaptation given under a mandatory disabled facilities grant adds tangible value to a dwelling, then a 10-year charge will be placed on the property if:
- The applicant is the owner or joint owner of the premises on which the works were carried out.
 - The grant awarded is more than £5000.00.
- 6.2 For grants in excess of £1,000, applicants must sign a declaration of intent to occupy the property as their sole or main residence for a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion of the works.
- 6.3 The Council has the discretion as to whether or not to place a land charge on the property, or reclaim any or all of the grant paid, but it will consider the following: -
- the extent to which the recipient would suffer financial hardship if the grant was reclaimed;

- b) Whether the disposal of the property was to enable the recipient to take up employment, or change the location of their employment;
 - c) Whether the disposal of the property is made for reasons of the recipient's physical or mental health or wellbeing, or;
 - d) Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient to live with, or near any person who will provide care for the recipient by reason of their disability.
- 6.4 Interim payments for enhances schemes will not be made unless the services of more than one contractor are involved in the works, or circumstances arise which could result in excessive delays in payment for works that have already been satisfactorily completed.
- 6.5 The applicant must have occupied the subject property as their only or main residence for at least 3 years prior to the date of application. This 3-year period shall not apply where the works are necessary to meet the needs of the applicant on the grounds of ill health or disability.
- 6.6 For grants in excess of £1,000 applicants must sign a declaration of intent to occupy the property as their sole or main residence for a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion of the works. If the undertaking is breached without a valid reason as set out in section 2 of the mandatory DFG land charges policy. The Council reserves the right to recover the grant, together with compound interest.

*For further information, please refer to the **Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration act 1996 part 1 Chapter 1 51.***

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/section/51>

- 6.7 Assistance will not be given if:
- The works for which financial assistance is sought have already started, unless prior permission has been given at the discretion of the Grants team manager.
 - The applicant or a member of their family carries out the work, however grant aid may be given for materials only
 - All electrical works are to be carried out by a contractor registered to self-certify the installation with Building Control as compliant with Part P of the Building Regulations on completion e.g. NICEIC domestic installer. Works should also be covered by appropriate completion certificate.
 - All gas related works are to be carried out by a GAS SAFE registered fitter licensed to carry out the work and covered by the appropriate certificates on completion. All new gas boilers to be installed by company registered to self-certify the installation with Building Control.

- All replacement windows must be certified as complying by Building Control, or covered by a certificate from an installer registered to self-certify the job with building control e.g. FENSA registered.
- Unforeseen works arising during the course of the work will not be eligible for assistance unless permission is obtained from the grant surveyor dealing with the application prior to such works being carried out. Any costs exceeding the grant maximum under these circumstances will be the responsibility of the grant applicant.
- Where applicable, all works must have the relevant Building Control and/or Planning Permission.
- All works must be completed to a satisfactory standard within 12 months of approval of the grant.
- Final payments will only be released on satisfactory completion of all of the work. Building Control clearance and evidence of self-certification for building regulations compliance must be obtained if appropriate before payment can be made.

7 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 This Policy will be reviewed regularly to take account of any changes in legislation, statutory guidance, local priorities, capital funding or for any other reasons.

8 Complaints

- 8.1 Any complaints about this Policy and/or its implementation should be addressed through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.

9 Contact details

First Response Team Adult Social Care

Email: firstresponseteam@haringey.gov.uk
 Website: www.haringey.gov.uk
 Tel: 020 8489 1400

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