

Housing Regeneration and Investment

Disabled Facilities Grant Customer Information Guide

August 2019



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Introduction

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA) puts a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide grant aid to disabled people for a range of adaptations to their home.

Further information regarding Disabled Facilities Grants can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants>.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council **Disabled Facilities Grant Policy** provides the framework adopted for delivering help with home adaptations in the most effective, efficient and equitable ways.

There is widespread recognition that some simple changes to the home environment can completely transform the lives of older people, disabled people and children by enabling them to function more easily and safely in their own homes.

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission found that approximately 1.8 million disabled people require suitable housing and approximately 300,000 do not have the adaptations they need in their existing homes.

A growing body of evidence supports the view that home adaptations can prevent falls, reduce hospital admissions, reduce reliance on care, avoid the need to move into residential care and significantly improve quality of life and wellbeing for individuals, their families and carers.

This is particularly the case where the timely installation of an adaptation or a piece of equipment prevents or delays the development of more acute health and social care needs.

What adaptations does the grant apply to?

A Disabled Facilities Grant can be used for adaptations such as:

- Widening Doors
- Installing ramps
- Installing stairlifts
- Installing over bath or level entry showers
- Improving heating systems
- Adapting heating, lighter or power controls
- Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food. For example, re-arrangement or enlargement of the kitchen or modification of units and installations.
- Improving access to and movement around the home and access to the garden
- Making the home and access to the garden safe.

Who can apply for a grant

Anyone who is disabled and satisfies the eligibility criteria set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and lives in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

They must live in the property the grant is applied for as their main residence and intend to live in the property for the full grant period of five years. Owners will be required to provide proof of ownership and tenants will require consent from their landlord for any adaptations.

How much grant is available?

The maximum limit for a Disabled Facilities Grant is £30,000, subject to eligibility and assessed need.

The amount awarded is based on a financial assessment (means test) of the applicant (and partner where applicable), and the cost of the works.

There is no means test where the disabled occupant is a child or qualifying young person (as defined by the Housing Renewal Grants (Amended)(England) Regulations 2009).

The following incomes will enable the applicant to be “pass ported” through the means test process:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Guarantee Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Child Tax Credit (income below £15,050)
- Universal Credit

Where the applicant is assessed as requiring to make a contribution or pay the excess if the works are over the maximum grant limit the following options can be considered:

- Applicant funds excess through own resources.
- Contact the Home Improvement Agency for advice on accessing any other potential funding.
Contact details: Yorkshire Housing 01642 353529, Email: stocktonhia@yorkshirehousing.co.uk
- Contact any relevant charities for access to funding.
- Referral to the Council’s bespoke DFG Contribution and Top Up loans scheme.

What is the application process?

Written grant approval **must** be provided by the Council prior to any works being carried out.

Please Note: No grant will be paid on works started/ completed prior to grant approval.

Before any adaptations can be carried out, an assessment of your needs will be made by the Council's Occupational Therapy Department. To arrange for an assessment please contact: -

First Contact Team

Telephone: 01642 527764

Fax: 01642 527756

Minicom: 01642 527769

Email: FirstContactAdults@stockton.gov.uk

Where an urgent need for a ramp or stairlift is identified, eligible applicants may be referred to the Council's Equipment Loan Scheme. Further information regarding this service can be found in our **Equipment Loan Policy** and **Equipment Loan Charter**.

The Housing Regeneration and Investment team can provide an Agency Service to co-ordinate the grant application and works process. This includes:

- Help in completing the application form and supporting documentation
- Carrying out a technical or structural survey
- Submitting/ Liaising with the Planning Department
- Preparing a schedule of works
- Obtaining estimates
- Arranging asbestos survey and removal works where required
- Supervising the works
- Payment of contractors

The Council appoints single approved contractors to carry out adaptation works as follows:

- Ramps – Easiaccess
- Stairlifts and through Floor lifts - ThyssenKrupp Encasa Limited.
- All other works- Stockton Council Building Services Unit.

If you choose **not** to use our agency service and wish to make your own application, the process is as follows:

Application

Your application for grant assistance must be in the prescribed form (which we will issue with a copy of your referral from the Occupational Therapy Department) and contain:

1. A detailed schedule of works
2. A minimum of two estimates
3. Details of any preliminary or ancillary service and charges that are eligible for grant aid. These include:
 - Carrying out a Technical or Structural Survey
 - Preparing a detailed schedule of works
 - Help in completing the Application Form and Supporting Documentation
 - Obtaining Estimates
 - Supervising the works
 - Submission of planning/ building regulations where required
 - Payment of Contractors

Please Note: We would advise you to appoint a surveyor to assist with the technical aspects of the works required.

4. Certificate of Future Occupation (contained in the application form).
5. Proof of Title form completed by whoever holds the deeds e.g. bank, solicitor, **OR** a copy of the deeds if held by yourself.
6. Proof of all household income and savings. Unless the application is for a child.

Following Grant approval

When your application has been formally approved (the authority has 6 months to approve or refuse an application), and you have appointed a contractor, the following information will be required to ensure the contractor is competent to carry out the prescribed works.

- CDM 2015 Pre-Construction Information Pack
- Risk assessments
- Method Statements
- Copy of Insurances
- Copy of any Asbestos report
- Copy of Planning/ Building Control approval where required.
- Copy of any permits required
- Contact List

Following submission and approval of the above information you must confirm a start date for the works.

Works **must** be completed within 12 months of grant approval.

A pre-start meeting and work in progress visits will be carried out to ensure compliance with the grant approval and schedule of works.

Payment of the grant is conditional on work being carried out to the satisfaction of the Authority and a satisfactory invoice submitted.

Repairs and Maintenance

Adaptations provided through the agency service will come with a 12-month warranty.

Stairlifts are covered by a 5-year warranty and following expiry the Occupational Therapy Department have a contractual agreement with the provider to ensure lifts are serviced on annual basis and maintained as necessary.

Following the warranty period, it will become your responsibility to carry out any repairs or maintenance required.

Service Standards

We aim to achieve the following standards.

Receipt of referrals:	Acknowledged within 5 days of receipt
Grant Approval:	Within 6 months of receipt of valid application
Work Start:	Within 16 weeks of approval
Completion:	1 - 2 days for stairlifts
	2 - 3 days for ramps
	4 - 6 days for level entry showers
	12 - 14 weeks for extensions

Appeals

If you are refused a Disabled Facilities Grant or are unhappy at the amount awarded you can appeal the decision by contacting us.

Write to us at:

Housing Regeneration and Investment

16 Church Road

Stockton-on-Tees

TS18 1TX

Email: housingregenerationinvestment@stockton.gov.uk

Telephone: 01642 526537

Key Points

- Eligibility to apply for a DFG is based on current and future residency in the area.
- Any grant award will be dependent on individual circumstances and income.
- Maximum grant award is £30,000.
- A DFG must be applied for and written approval received prior to any works starting. No grant will be paid on work started/completed prior to approval.
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council can provide an agency service to make the process smoother.
- Repairs and maintenance become the responsibility of the applicant following any warranty period.