



Housing Assistance Policy 2025-2027

THIS SUPERSEDES ANY POLICIES DATED BEFORE ISSUE DATE.

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Contents

Introduction	page 2
The Legislation	page 2
Funding Sources for the Policy	page 2
Alignment with key Council Strategies and Plans	page 3
Equity & Diversity	page 3
Grant Assistance Available	page 4
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	page 4
Discretionary Assistance	page 4
Service Standards	page 5
Evaluating Outputs of the Policy	page 5
Consultation & Implementation	page 6
Appendix A- Applying for the mandatory DFG	page 7
Appendix B- Disabled Facilities Grant Legislation	page 10
Appendix C- Details of Discretionary Grants available	page 20
Appendix D- Clutter rating (applies to the Hoarding Grant)	page 29

Introduction

This housing assistance policy explains how Tewkesbury Borough Council (the 'Council') will provide financial help to people with disability to improve and adapt their homes in Tewkesbury Borough.

It also outlines the conditions and criteria for who can receive this assistance.

Our focus is on supporting disabled individuals, along with their caregivers, to live independently, confidently, and safely in their own homes. This policy aims to contribute towards Gloucestershire's Joint Health & Wellbeing strategy 2020-2030 to support Housing and Health of residents, and also contributes to our commitment to "Caring for People" as outlined in our Council Plan.

The Legislation

This policy sets out how the Council will implement the requirements of the Housing Grants, Construction, and Regeneration Act 1996, with amendments from the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008, to administer mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to adapt homes for disabled people. The policy also incorporates powers set out in the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. This allows the council to use its discretion and funding to provide adaptations for disabled individuals beyond the mandatory requirements.

Under section 343 of the Armed Forces Act 2006 (as amended by section 8 of the Armed Forces Act 2021), Tewkesbury Borough Council must consider the Armed Forces Covenant when allocating disabled facilities grants and may offer special consideration for veterans in certain situations.

Funding Sources for the Policy

The main source of funding to support the DFG is from the Annual Capital grant from Central Government through the Better Care Fund (BCF) which is managed by the ICB (Integrated Care Board) and Gloucestershire County Council. Decisions on financial allocations are made in strict accordance with the agreed BCF spending plan between the County Council and the ICB. The plan will follow the appropriate BCF Policy Framework and BCF Planning Guidance for the specified year (which includes guidance on Disabled Facilities Grants) and will go through the appropriate governance structure. Any necessary changes to financial assistance will be approved through the appropriate governance structures.

Alignment with Key Council Strategies and Plans

The Housing Assistance Policy aligns with several key Council strategies and plans, supporting their main priorities and goals. Here are the main documents it aligns with:

Council Plan 2024 – 2030

This plan outlines the Council's three priorities to meet the needs of its residents. One of the priorities is 'Caring for our People', with housing being an area of focus. This Housing Assistance policy highlights the importance of adaptations and disabled facilities grants in promoting the wellbeing of our communities.

Tewkesbury Borough Council Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2022 – 2026:

The Housing & Homelessness strategy aims to improve housing supply, quality, and support. This policy contributes to that strategy by effectively targeting disabled facilities grants to ensure that they benefit those who need them, and adopt a flexible and proactive approach to the use of Better Care Fund resources.

In addition to the key Council plans and strategies, this policy also acknowledges the **Gloucestershire County Council Disabled Facilities Grant Statement of Intent**. This document has been co-produced by all six Districts in Gloucestershire and sets out how we will coordinate the grant offer across Gloucestershire to ensure equity in this provision for people with disabilities, enabling innovation and flexibility in the discretionary use of the DFG. Each District will then create its own Housing Assistance or DFG Policy using the content in the statement as a framework, which it will regularly review.

The Council will review this policy at regular intervals and in conjunction with any wider reviews including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy or in response to changing policies at a national or local level or to reflect evidence concerning the conditions of housing within the area.

Equity and Diversity

We believe in treating everyone fairly and promoting equality while preventing discrimination on any basis. This policy will be applied consistently to all residents, taking into account the unique needs of individuals and communities. We will not discriminate against anyone, and we will take proactive measures to reduce discrimination and harassment.

The Policy complies with the law and addresses all the "protected characteristics" outlined in the Equalities Act 2010. Our aim is to ensure equal opportunities and fair treatment for everyone in our community.

Grant Assistance Available

This summary provides information on the mandatory disabled facilities grant and also the discretionary grants that Tewkesbury Borough Council can provide. Further information is provided in appendices to this Policy.

Please Note: All assistance provided through this policy is subject to funding availability. Discretionary funding is assessed on a case by case basis and may be withdrawn to ensure mandatory grants continue to be funded. Should there be a shortfall of funding for mandatory grants then cases will be prioritised on a clinical need basis.

The general terms and conditions of this policy are also applicable to the different types of discretionary assistance. For discretionary funding assistance, the Council reserves the right to make minor amendments to the eligibility criteria, level of grant or assistance if it can be demonstrated that any such changes will enable the Council to better meet its strategic housing objectives and Better Care Fund objectives.

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

The mandatory disabled facilities grant (Max £30,000) is a means tested grant that supports the provision of adaptations to promote independent living within the home, subject to the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Appendix A gives details on how to apply for a grant. Where the applicant is an owner occupier and the grant value is over £5000, a local land charge of up to £10,000 will apply for 10 years. Consideration will be given to waiving this land charge, upon sale of the property, where the resident is experiencing significant hardship (See Appendix B for more details relating to the legislation that applies to DFG applications).

Discretionary Assistance

The following is a summary of the discretionary forms of assistance to help older and disabled individuals live independently and safely in their homes. Full details of each of these grants and specific conditions that apply to each grant are included in Appendix C.

Any applications and awards of the following forms of assistance need to be linked to an ongoing DFG application. No stand-alone applications for these forms of assistance will be considered.

The Council will consider all requests for funding towards adaptations to a disabled persons home on a case by case basis. In exceptional cases this may result in discretionary assistance being offered which is outside the specific examples listed in the Housing Assistance Policy.

- **Client Contribution Support** - To increase the affordability of applications by offering up to a £10k waiver of disabled persons assessed contribution if the assessed contribution is up to £10k.
- **Extended Warranties** – To support those on lower incomes with new costs associated with servicing and maintaining specialist equipment provided through the DFG.
- **Dementia Friendly** - This assistance will provide aids and adaptations in the home designed to enable people with a diagnosis of dementia to manage their surroundings, live safely and retain their independence.
- **Discretionary Top-Up Grant** - enables top-up funding to a Disabled Facilities Grant scheme that exceeds the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant maximum where the additional costing is considered justifiable.
- **Hoarding Support Grant** – to carry out works required to enable eligible works under a mandatory DFG to be safely installed & used by a disabled person.
- **Professional Fees**- To allow for feasibility inspection and abortive fees prior to grant approval to determine if adaptation is possible.
- **Rapidly Progressing and / or Highly Debilitating Conditions** – To assist persons with a relevant diagnosis e.g. Motor Neurone Disease (MND), with specialised living aids to enable independent and safe living.
- **Relocation Grant** – A grant may be available to help the applicant to move if adaptations to their current home through DFG are determined not to be feasible or reasonable.
- **Adaptations Support Grant**- This grant is available to support or facilitate the completion of DFG works.

Service Standards

There are no national standard for the services provided through this policy except a statutory requirement for Councils to determine valid and fully made applications for mandatory disabled facilities grant within six months. This does not account for pre-application activities such as the screening process and the 'application support' and administration including occupational therapy assessment, means testing, producing specifications, finding contractors, etc.

In accordance with government guidance, the Council is aiming to reduce the timescales for the delivery stages of home adaptations funded by a disabled facilities grant. The timescales

for moving through these stages will depend upon the urgency and complexity of the adaptations required. More urgent cases will be prioritised for action, but larger and more complex schemes will take longer to complete. The following table sets out best practice targets:

Urgency and complexity	Compiling the application	Grant approvals	Carrying out the works	Total
Urgent & Simple	25	5	20	50 working days
Non-urgent & Simple	50	20	40	110 workings days
Urgent & Complex	45	5	60	110 working days
Non-urgent & Complex	55	20	80	155 working days

Evaluating outputs of the Policy

Data is submitted on a quarterly basis to Gloucestershire Integrated Commissioning Hub to enable analysis of the number of grant applications completed, progress against the timescale targets, and also to assess trends in adaptations provided and ages & ethnicity of applicants to ensure we identify areas of improvement.

An annual DELTA return to Central Government is also completed.

Consultation and Implementation

This policy has been developed through consultation at the Gloucestershire DFG Forum , a regular meeting in Gloucestershire of all the organisations involved in the delivery of the DFG – the six Districts along with the Occupational Therapy Service (Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust on behalf of Adult Social care), the Integrated commissioning team from Gloucestershire County Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) are all represented. The Chair of the DFG Forum reports to Gloucestershire’s Housing Partnership (formerly the Strategic Housing Partnership) on the DFG programme.

The formal endorsement of the policy took place at the full Tewkesbury Borough Council meeting on 14th May 2025. This policy will come into effect from 15th May 2025 and it will apply only to full applications received after this date. Please note that applications for discretionary assistance outlined in this policy cannot be made for past works; they must be applied for after the policy takes effect.

To ensure the policy remains effective and up-to-date, we will review it bi-annually or as needed based on available funding for assistance and any changes in legislation or identified best practice

Appendix A- Applying for the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

An application for a DFG will only be considered once the Council has received a referral from an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor. The referral will contain a list of works that are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person. Further information on this can be found at [Disabled Facilities Grants \(DFG\) | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

The Council will then contact the applicant to start the application process. This will involve completion of an application form which will either be mailed to the applicant, or can be completed with the help of an officer if the applicant requires support.

A means test will also be undertaken. This will identify whether the applicant will actually qualify for the grant, or will have a contribution to make towards the costs of the recommended works, or will have the works funded in full.

If the applicant is in receipt of certain benefits, or if the application is for a child, then these applications will be 'passported' for the amount of grant needed to complete the recommended works, up to a maximum of £30,000.

The benefits that currently provide a passport to a grant are: Income Support, Income based job seekers allowance, Income related ESA, Guaranteed pension Credit, Housing benefit, Working or child tax credit where the income is less than £15,050 and Universal Credit.

Circumstances when the Council may not be able to provide Assistance

There may be circumstances when the Council cannot provide grant funding. These include:

1. Where the applicant is not eligible for a DFG.
2. Where there is a dispute over property ownership.
3. If the property owner(s) have a legal obligation to carry out the necessary works and it is reasonable for them to do so.
4. Where the residence is temporary eg: an occupancy period of less than five years or no intention to stay at the adapted property for at least five years after works are completed.
5. Where works have been started before formal approval of the application.
6. Where works are covered by insurance.
7. If the properties age, condition and structural layout mean that it is not Reasonable & Practicable to achieve the required works.
8. Holiday residences, second homes, sheds or outbuildings.
9. For common parts of a dwelling, grant assistance will only cover the applicants reasonable share of the liability.
10. Where an application lacks the required information or supporting documentation.

If there are unique situations where individuals genuinely need urgent support but are precluded from accessing assistance due to specific aspects, the Council may consider

offering assistance in exceptional circumstances, especially if it helps meet strategic objectives.

Approval of an Application

Once the Council reviews the application, they will inform the applicant in writing if it has been approved or refused. The notification will be sent as soon as practically possible, but within six months of receiving a complete and valid application.

If the application for assistance is declined, the Council will provide reasons for the refusal and explain the process for appealing the decision.

If the application is approved, the notification will specify the eligible works, the amount of assistance provided, and the builder/contractor assigned to carry out the works. Other ancillary fees can also be included such as the costs of an agent (note: agents fees are currently capped at a maximum of £7500 plus VAT unless there are exceptional circumstances).

In certain situations where unforeseen circumstances cause the cost of the works to increase or decrease, the Council may review the financial assistance given. If deemed appropriate, they will confirm in writing the variation to the original approved costs.

In some cases the Council may defer payment for up to 12 months due to financial or operational reasons. This will be clearly stated in the approval notice.

Payment of Grant

The following conditions will apply:

1. The assisted works must be completed within 12 months of approval unless the delay was caused by the Council or an extension due to exceptional circumstances is agreed. Requests for extensions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
2. The assisted works must be carried out accordance to the specifications outlined in the formal approval and conditions or with prior agreement from the Council
3. If the client chooses a different or enhanced scheme or items of works, we will only provide financial assistance for the primary requirements identified by the Occupational Therapy Service and the Council. The applicant will be responsible for costs above the agreed amount.
4. The contract for works funded by Disabled Facilities Grants, along with associated assistance, will be between the applicant and the contractor, as specified in the legislation. While the Council's Standing Orders regarding Procurement do not directly apply since the Council is not entering into a contract, the Council will still follow the same principles when obtaining quotes on behalf of supported applicants to ensure appropriate services are provided.
5. The Council will assess the prices provided by contractors to ensure value for money. If we believe the price quoted to be too high we may require the applicant to provide an alternative quote.
6. The Council will expect the applicant to provide two quotes for the works, or three quotes if the works are over £30,000.

7. Where the works are urgent , or specialist, one quote may be acceptable but only with the clear agreement of the Council.

8. If the applicant wishes to have the works undertaken by a contractor who has supplied a higher quote, then the Council will only pay the amount provided in the lower quote, and the applicant will be expected to fund the difference.

9. Payment will only be made if the Council & applicant are satisfied with the completed works.

10. Invoices should be made out to the applicant but sent to the Council for payment. They should include details of works carried out, charges, and any previously agreed variations in amount. Applicants or family members should not produce the invoice.

11. The payment of assistance to the contractor will usually be made directly to the contractor engaged by the applicant. If requested in the original application it can be made via the applicant.

12. Any contribution that the applicant has to make towards the cost of the works must be paid before the Council will pay the balance.

13. The Council may make interim payments as the work progresses but only after a visit by an officer to ensure works that are claimed for have been completed.

14. Works to be done by a family member: If the family member trades as a limited company then he/she trades as a separate entity from family connections and can invoice for materials and labour. If the family member is a sole trader or partnership, then the Council will only accept a claim for materials and not labour.

15. The provision of assistance other than mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants is subject to the availability of funding. All applications will be evaluated based on the identified needs and circumstances of the applicant or household.

16. Any associated costs incurred during the application process, such as Architects' fees or Land Registry charges, will be included in the value of any awarded funding and will not be paid separately, except for exceptional circumstances where works cannot proceed, and such costs may be eligible for discretionary assistance.

17. The provision of grants will be subject to internal and external auditing to ensure proper procedures are in place and are followed to ensure public funds are appropriately managed.

Other Requirements

If specialised equipment is provided as part of the assistance, the Council or its appointed agent may reclaim the equipment when it is no longer needed.

Appeals

The Council will conduct a review of a decision to refuse an application on receipt of a written request from the applicant to the Council within 28 days of the applicant receiving a decision letter. The applicant will be informed of the results of the review in writing.

Should the applicant remain dissatisfied with the review decision they can go through the Councils Corporate Complaints procedure (<https://tewkesbury.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/Contact/Make%20a%20formal%20complaint/Complaints%20policy%202021.pdf>)

Appendix B- Disabled Facilities Grants Legislation

This section provides the context and information for how Tewkesbury Borough Council determine disabled facilities grants applications.

The Council will grant mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in accordance with the relevant legislation, mainly the 1996 Act, as well as subordinate Regulations and Orders (including any amendments) and non-statutory guidance issued by central Government.

The four main elements of a decision are:

- The Disabled Occupant
- The Eligible Works
- The Amount of Grant
- The Grant Conditions

Once a formal application has been properly submitted, the Council is under a duty to consider it.

The Disabled Occupant

A “disabled occupant” is a “disabled person” who needs adaptations to a dwelling, houseboat or caravan where they intend to live as their only or main residence for the next 5 years.

A disabled person

To be eligible for a DFG a person is disabled if:

- their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired,
- they have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind, or
- they have a substantial physical disability by illness, injury or impairment.

AND that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

A substantial effect on day-to-day activities means one that’s ‘more than minor or trivial’. The effect on their normal day-to-day activities might be substantial if the disabled person has more than one impairment. The effects might only be ‘minor or trivial’ if they have very little effect on their daily life like if the only effect on them is that they have to stop for a few minutes rest after walking for a mile at a normal pace.

A long-term effect means something that has affected them or is likely to affect them for at least a year. The impairment will also still be considered to be long-term if it’s likely to affect the disabled person for the rest of your life even if that’s going to be less than a year. A person is taken to be disabled if: they are an adult who is or could be registered under section 77 of the Care Act 2014, or they are a child or young person registered under paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 who is a disabled child as defined by section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Where they intend to live

A DFG is available to fund facilities for a disabled person in:

- dwellings,
- qualifying houseboats and caravans, and
- in the common parts of buildings containing one or more flats where they live.

A “dwelling” is defined as a building (or part of a building, e.g. a flat) occupied as separate premises. This includes dwellings where someone lives as part of their employment, like a farm cottage or a flat over a shop.

Where more than one disabled person lives at the same address, the Council can consider multiple applications based on individual needs.

Children living in dual residency arrangements

Where a disabled child has parents who are separated and the child lives for part of the time with each parent, a mandatory DFG is only available at the address, which is the main residence of the disabled child, usually the home of the parent in receipt of child benefit. However, it will often be in the best interests of the child to provide adaptations at both locations. Under these circumstances it is assumed that the one party will apply for a mandatory DFG at the main residence within Tewkesbury Borough.

The Council will use its discretionary powers in considering applications to adapt the other home of a disabled child, if it is situated within its boundary to ensure that they can maintain normal living arrangements. Considering the details of any court order and specifically the allocation of time spent with each parent in determining eligibility for assistance.

In determining the works that might be considered as eligible for assistance the Council will consider the suitability of the main residence for adaptation, the complexity and scope of the adaptations required and any observations or referral made by the Occupational Therapist.

Any assistance provided under this heading will be up to a combined maximum mandatory award of £30,000 and £40,000 of discretionary funding, inclusive of any fees, such as surveyors; but will not be subject to any form of means testing. The maximum amount of funding available for both the mandatory and discretionary elements will be distributed between the two grants at the discretion of the Council.

Any discretionary award will be repayable to the Council if the subject property is sold within 10 years of the certified date (the date the eligible works are completed). The award amount will be recorded as a local land registry charge and recovered on the same conditions applied to mandatory grant recovery.

Situations outside of these prescribed circumstances would be considered on their own merits following the receipt of written representations from the grant applicant.

The Council maintains the discretion to only consider discretionary awards whilst they have sufficient funds to sustain mandatory DFG approvals. The Council reserves the right not to approve any discretionary assistance.

Children in foster care

Foster carers are eligible to apply for a DFG on behalf of a foster child, but provision may depend on the type and length of placement, and the Council will consider shorter periods of intention to occupy.

The Applicant

A valid application can only be made by the owner, tenant or occupant of the property where the disabled person is going to live – so in many cases, this will not be the disabled person themselves.

An applications CAN NOT be made by:

- Anyone under 18 years of age
- Any public body like a Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group
- A “person from abroad”.

A valid application can be made by:

- someone who has an owner’s interest in the property (either an owner-occupier or a landlord);
- a tenant of a dwelling; or
- the occupant of a caravan or houseboat.

An owner’s application must be accompanied by a certificate which confirms that they:

- already have or propose to acquire an owner’s interest (the grant cannot be approved until they take ownership). intend that the disabled person will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence for the grant condition period (5 years).
- Leaseholders are owners if they have 5 or more years remaining
- A freehold landlord may also make an application.
- In addition, for common parts applications: we will require that

A copy of the lease covenant is provided to the local authority to ensure there are no restrictions on improvements/ adaptations to the common parts.

Proof that a consultation process with the other residents has been carried out by the person managing the premises and agreement in writing for the works to go ahead has been obtained from that person.

A tenant’s application must be accompanied by a certificate which confirms that they:

- are making a tenant’s application; and
- intend that the disabled person will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence for the grant condition period (5 years).

All tenant applications should also be accompanied by an owner’s certificate signed by the landlord unless the Council thinks it is unreasonable to do so in the circumstances. These

provisions do not apply to a protected tenancy under section 1 of the Rent Act 1977 or a statutory tenancy under section 2 of that Act or a secure tenancy under the Housing Act 1985.

An occupant's application must be accompanied by a certificate which confirms that they:

- are making an occupant's application; and
- intend that the disabled person will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence for the grant condition period (5 years).

Unless the local authority thinks it is unreasonable to do so in the circumstances, all occupant's applications should also be accompanied by a consent certificate signed by owners of the houseboat and mooring or the caravan and caravan park.

Each certificate confirms the intention of the applicant at the time of the application and so long as that was genuinely their intention, no repayment of grant is required if circumstances change and the disabled person can no longer occupy it as intended.

The grant condition period starts when the works are completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

What is a completed application

An application is deemed to be valid once completed. A complete application consists of:

- Completed and signed Application form by the property owner or tenant, including the financial information for means testing of the disabled person.
- Occupation certificate for either an owner occupier, tenant, landlord or occupant of houseboat or caravan.
- Proof of ownership e.g., proof of title or utility bill.
- Financial evidence of the disabled person for each of the incomes entered on to the form e.g., bank statements, pensions, benefits to ensure no fraud or abuse of public funds.
- Two or three quotes for the works (based upon an assessment of relevant works - Applicants may be supported to obtain these after completing the forms).
- Planning permission and Building Control Application, build over agreements (water), where applicable.
- Other permissions such as landlord consent to works.

Once the council is satisfied that they have received a complete application, they will validate the application.

Properties held in trust

These should be treated in the same way as applications by owner-occupiers, tenants or occupiers. A trustee or beneficiary applying for a grant must be able to fulfil all the normal grant conditions.

Persons from abroad

The applicant cannot be a 'person from abroad' within the meaning of regulation 10 of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 or as the case may be regulation 10 of the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006 (see regulation 3 of the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (S.I. 1996/2890))

The Council is also not allowed to pay a grant where a disabled person who could have applied for a grant is a "person from abroad", even though the applicant is not a "person from abroad".

The Armed Forces Community

For injured or disabled service personnel who live in Service Accommodation and continue to work in the Armed Forces, any adaptations for them or their dependents will be funded by the Ministry of Defence.

If the Council receive applications from serving Armed Forces personnel who live in their own accommodation, on behalf of themselves or family members. Applications might also be received from veterans of the Armed Forces. In these cases, the statutory Armed Forces Covenant Duty is likely to apply

The Eligible Works

The "relevant works" are those adaptations which may meet certain "purposes" and are included within an application as being "necessary and appropriate" and "reasonable and practicable" to meet the needs of the disabled occupant.

The purposes for which a grant can be are approved are:

1. Making it easier for the disabled person to access and leave the dwelling, houseboat, or park home.
2. Ensuring the dwelling, houseboat, or park home is safe for the disabled person and others living with them.
3. Improving access to a room used as the main family area.
4. Improving access to a room used for sleeping.
5. Improving access to a room with a lavatory or facilitating the use of such a facility for the disabled person.
6. Improving access to a room with a bath or shower, or facilitating the use of such a facility for the disabled person.
7. Improving access to a room with a wash hand basin, or facilitating the use of such a facility for the disabled person.
8. Making it easier for the disabled person to prepare and cook food.
9. Upgrading the heating system to meet the needs of the disabled person or providing a suitable heating system if none exists or the existing one is not suitable.

10. Making it easier for the disabled person to access and control sources of power, light, or heat.
11. Enhancing access and mobility around the dwelling, houseboat, or park home to enable the disabled person to care for another resident in need of assistance.
12. Improving access to and from a garden for the disabled person or making the garden accessible and safe for them.

These purposes cover a wide range of potential adaptations to cover most circumstances and to meet the adaptation needs of disabled people whose needs are less obvious, such as those with a sight or hearing impairment or a learning disability.

The Relevant Works

If one or more purposes have been identified, the Council will consider the “relevant works” to meet those purposes. For example:

- A ramp could be the relevant work to meet the purpose of improving access to the home
- A stairlift could be the relevant work to meet the purpose of accessing a room used for sleeping.

For each of the “relevant works” the Council consider whether they are needed and if a grant should be awarded by deciding if they are “necessary & appropriate” and “reasonable & practicable”.

Necessary and Appropriate

The Council must make the decision on whether relevant works are necessary and appropriate in consultation with the social services authority.

In all cases the assessment of whether relevant works are necessary and appropriate must be made against each applicable purpose individually. So, for example, if it is not possible to appropriately provide access to a room suitable for sleeping, that should not in itself prevent a grant being awarded to gain access to the home.

Where the disabled person has a limited life expectancy then it may be appropriate to consider funding adaptations that can be more easily removed when they are no longer required if that is considered the right approach in the circumstances.

There will be occasions when the need to address one or more purpose is significantly more urgent than others. The Council will consider the benefits of proceeding with assessing the urgent works and phased approvals if there would be undue delay in assessing for all.

Reasonable and Practicable

Where the relevant works have been judged to be necessary and appropriate, the Council will consider if it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having “regard to the age and condition” of the property.

If it is not a good use of resources to award a DFG to adapt an old, run-down building, the Council may consider that the relevant works are not reasonable and practicable.

In these cases, the applicant will be given information and advice on their housing options.

Other issues, such as whether the property is otherwise suitable for the disabled person are not relevant considerations.

The Council must also be mindful of achieving the best value for money. Where there are potential alternative options for the relevant works that could meet the required purposes, then the authority would usually choose the lower-cost option. For example, where the purpose is to provide access to a room suitable for sleeping, then a stairlift or utilising an existing ground floor room are likely to be preferred over building a new bedroom.

There will be some cases where the disabled person and the applicant elect for a higher-cost option. The housing authority will still need to ensure that the works meet the required purposes and are necessary and appropriate, but the grant amount will still be based on the lower-cost option.

Amount of Grant

The Council will consider the following when determining the amount of grant:

- The reasonable cost of carrying out the eligible works along with the cost of associated services and charges – the “estimated expense”; and
- The amount of grant they will pay, taking into account the estimated expense, the means test and the maximum amount of grant approved (including both mandatory and discretionary, where applicable).

Grant applications require at least two quotations from different contractors for the costs of the relevant works. Larger schemes of work over £30,000.00 will require a minimum of three quotes. The council will exercise discretion in some circumstances, allowing a single quotation for specialist equipment.

The contract for carrying out the works will be between the applicant and the contractor which means that public procurement rules do not apply.

Other services and charges

The Act allows the cost of certain services and charges to be included with the grant application. These are set out in The Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) Order 1996 and include costs associated with preparing the application and the carrying out of works:

1. confirming that the applicant has an owner's interest;
2. technical and structural surveys;
3. the design and preparation of plans and drawings;
4. the preparation of specifications of schedules of relevant works;

5. assistance in completing forms;
6. advice on financing the costs of the relevant works which are not met by grant;
7. making applications for building regulations approval (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
8. making applications for planning permission (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
9. making applications for listed building consent (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
10. making applications for conservation area consent (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
11. obtaining tenders/estimates;
12. providing advice on building contracts;
13. considering tenders;
14. supervising the relevant works; disconnecting and reconnecting electricity, gas, water or drainage utilities where this is necessitated by the relevant works; and paying contractors.
15. The services and charges of a private occupational therapist in relation to the relevant works can also be included.

The means test

An application for a Disabled Facilities Grant will be subject to a means test in accordance with the regulations made under the 1996 Act, including any local amendments within this policy. The maximum mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant award at the time of policy publication is £30,000 minus any contribution required by a 'means test' (test of financial resources).

If the maximum grant limit is changed by statute, then the maximum available Disabled Facilities Grant award by Tewkesbury Borough Council will reflect this.

If an applicant receives multiple grant awards over time, their assessed contribution to the first grant will be taken into account if it falls within the original contribution period (10 years for owner-occupiers and 5 years for tenants).

NOTE: where an applicant is in receipt of a recognised, qualifying, means-tested benefit they will not be further means-tested and they will have no calculated contribution to make. Where works are for the benefit of a child or young person up until their 19th birthday or younger at the date of application – they too will be exempt from a means test.

Grant conditions

The following conditions may apply to an award of a Disabled Facilities Grant:

Future occupation of the dwelling

It is a condition that for 5 years from the date of completion of the works, the dwelling is occupied in accordance with the intention stated in the certificate submitted as part of the application.

Local Land Charge

The Council will impose a local land charge on a dwelling, if it is sold or otherwise disposed of within ten years of the certified date.

The charge will only be placed on owner's applications where the amount of grant exceeds £5,000. The maximum charge is £10,000.

Where the applicant is a foster carer and the application is associated with a long-term placement, a charge will not usually be placed.

If a dwelling is sold or disposed of within ten years, the Council will consider whether or not it is reasonable to demand repayment or part repayment of the charge taking into account:

- (i) the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he to be required to repay all or any of the grant;
- (ii) whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment;
- (iii) whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well being of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
- (iv) whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity, is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment.

The demand contained above will be withdrawn where the recipient dies leaving a family member / partner in occupation.

If a grant is initially awarded for an amount of less than £5,000, an applicant will be consulted before the grant is revised if it would result in a charge being placed.

Deferred payment

In exceptional circumstances, we reserve the right to defer payment of a grant for up to 12 months after the date of approval.

Recovery of equipment

The Council will include a condition that specialist equipment, such as a stairlift, may be recovered where it is no longer required. Where it is clear that the equipment will not be reused because of age or condition the Council may decide to waive this right to recovery.

Use of contractors

The works must be performed by the contractor(s) whose estimate was submitted as part of the application. If a different contractor is to carry out the works, the Council's consent must be obtained beforehand, and a new estimate from the new contractor must be submitted. However, any additional costs resulting from the change in contractor must be covered separately by the applicant.

The Council will not accept an invoice, demand, or receipt if it is issued by the applicant or a family member. If the applicant or a family member carries out the work, only the cost of materials used will be eligible for financial assistance.

Completion of the works

Payment of the grant is conditional on the eligible works being completed within 12 months from the date of approval of the grant. The Council may extend this period if there is a valid reason, and such requests must be made in writing before the 12-month period ends.

The payment of the grant depends on the works being done to the Council's satisfaction and upon receiving a satisfactory invoice, demand, or receipt for the works and any related services or changes.

Usually, the Council will make payments directly to the contractor on behalf of the applicant, not to the applicant themselves. If there is any disagreement about a payment made to the contractor, no payment will be made until the dispute is resolved. However, the Council may make payment directly to the applicant if they have provided the necessary information before grant approval.

Appendix C- Details of Discretionary Grants available

1.Client Contribution Support

Purpose of Grant	This is a discretionary grant to support applicants who are assessed as having a means-tested contribution of up to £10,000.
Eligible Applicants	Those eligible for Mandatory DFG
Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	The full value of the assistance awarded would be placed as a land charge from the date of the completion of the works for a period of 10 years.
Maximum Value	Up to £10,000 (for assessed contributions of £0-£10,000).
Means Test	Mandatory DFG Means test
Eligible works	Available towards the cost of DFG-eligible works only.
Conditions	Means tested contributions will be fully funded by this grant for assessed contributions of up to £10,000. For any assessed contributions of over £10,000 there will be no discretionary grant awarded and the applicant will have to fund their full contribution prior to receiving any mandatory grant assistance.

2.Extended Warranties for certain items of equipment

Purpose of Assistance	To support those on lower incomes with the new costs arising from servicing and maintenance of specialist equipment provided through the DFG
Eligible Applicants	Those in receipt of a mandatory DFG.
Property Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	The full value of the assistance awarded would be placed as a land charge from the date of the completion of the works for a period of 10 years.
Maximum Value	none
Means Test	Mandatory DFG means test.
Eligible works	Up to a five year warranty on equipment such as stair lifts, through floor lifts, wash/dry toilets, and step lifts, funded at the point of purchase of this equipment through the DFG. This warranty will commence for a period of four years from the end of the usual 12 month warranty or after any extended warranty already offered by the supplier as standard.

In cases where a maintenance agreement of 5 years is not available from the manufacturer, the Council will fund the maximum warranty period that is available. If a reconditioned stair lift is being installed, any remaining warranty will be extended to the full 5 years if possible. The aim is to ensure that essential equipment remains in good working condition and well-maintained for an extended period after installation.

3.Dementia Friendly Grant

Purpose of Assistance	Works to make the home 'dementia' friendly or to meet sensory needs and to help the individual to live safely, manage their own surroundings, and retain/develop their independence
Eligible Applicants	Those eligible for a mandatory DFG with a clinical diagnosis of dementia and referred by an Occupational Therapist (Hospital O.T. or an O.T. from the Integrated Community Team).
Property Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	No Land charge.
Maximum Value	Up to £2500
Means Test	Mandatory DFG means test
Eligible works	<p>To give personal choice to a person about how and where to meet their future care needs and focusing on being able to remain living safely, independently, and well at home for as long as possible. Examples of work may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasting colour flooring, contrasting colour facilities, walls or doors • Replacement glass kitchen cupboard fronts • Lighting and door signage
Limitations	Funding will be reviewed on an individual case basis. Applications must be accompanied by an intention that the property remain their only or main residence for 5 years.

4. Discretionary Top-Up Grant

Purpose of Grant	This is discretionary grant to top up a DFG to carry out works that are above the current mandatory limit of £30,000 where the additional costs are considered justifiable.
Eligible Applicants	Those eligible for a mandatory DFG
Property Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	<p>For additional funding of up to £40,000 above the mandatory grant: The full value of the assistance awarded will be placed as a land charge on the property for 10 years. This is in addition to any Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant land charge.</p> <p>For additional funding over £40,000 above the mandatory grant: The full value of the assistance awarded will be placed as a land charge on the property for 15 years. This is in addition to any Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant land charge.</p>
Maximum Value	Up to an additional £40,000 (added to the mandatory grant amount) can be approved by Tewkesbury Borough Council. Amounts above £40,00 to be approved by the Council on a case by case basis after critical appraisal at the DFG forum. Due consideration will be given to the amount of funding available.
Means Test	Statutory DFG Means Test
Eligible works	Available towards the cost of DFG eligible works only. The grant is not available for equipment that isn't normally provided via the DFG.
Conditions	One application in relation to the property in any 5-year period

5. Hoarding Support Grant

Purpose of Assistance	This is a discretionary grant to top up a mandatory DFG to carry out works that are required to enable eligible works under a mandatory DFG to be safely installed and used by disabled person.
Eligible Applicants	Those eligible for a mandatory DFG. This grant will require a home assessment by a Housing Officer. The assessment needs to score a clutter rating of 5 or more (Appendix D)
Property Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	No land charge
Maximum Value	Up to £5000
Means Test	Statutory DFG means test
Eligible works	These are works that do not meet a need but are necessary for the mandatory/eligible works to be completed.

6. Professional Fees Grant

Purpose of Assistance	To pay incurred professional fees which were necessary as part of a mandatory DFG application that was unable to proceed through no fault of the applicant or the DFG Service. To ensure applicants are not left liable for fees that might place them in financial hardship.
Eligible Applicants	Those determined as eligible for Mandatory DFG
Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	No land charge would apply
Maximum Value	£7,500 plus VAT.
Means Test	Statutory DFG means test
Eligible works	Abortive fees prior to approval of the mandatory grant.
Limitations	Fees will not be eligible for payment under this scheme unless the application cannot proceed due to circumstances beyond the control of either the applicant or the Council's DFG Service. Fees paid will depend on how far the works have progressed- see <u>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) - professional services guidance (Gloucestershire) Gloucestershire County Council</u>

7. Rapidly progressing & Highly debilitating Conditions

Purpose of Assistance	To assist persons with rapidly progressing and /or highly debilitating conditions with specialised living aids to enable independent and safe living.
Eligible Applicants	Disabled persons with an Occupational Therapy referral stating a condition considered to be rapidly progressing and /or highly debilitating conditions such as Motor Neurone Disease (MND).
Property Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	Where the applicant is an owner-occupier and the grant value is over £5000 a local land charge of up to £10,000 will apply for 10 years.
Maximum Value	Up to £15,000
Means Test	Provisional test of resources
Eligible works	All those covered by a mandatory DFG.
Limitations	<p>In addition to standard grant conditions: -</p> <p>This element of discretionary funding recognises it is often the case people with MND want to continue to work during the early stages of the disease, where they may be assessed as having an excessive contribution which would lead to a NIL grant, compared to when they can no longer work and an un-adapted home can make day to day activities very difficult to manage. This funding is only available to those residents whose medical condition will significantly impact their financial circumstances and is most likely to benefit those still in work or with partners that work.</p> <p>Palliative conditions, where the appropriateness of the proposed work has been thoughtfully considered, can also be included, but may be subject to a revised grant limit.</p> <p>On receipt of a referral for a disabled person with a rapidly progressing and highly debilitating condition, their grant enquiry will be prioritised. If the disabled person is assessed as having a high contribution, which exceeds the eligible costs of a mandatory DFG, they will be offered discretionary funding for works up to £15,000. The grant applicant/disabled person will be required to privately fund the cost of any work exceeding the £15,000 limit. This includes any unforeseen/additional work identified after approval.</p> <p>Any professional fees will need to be included within the £15,000.</p> <p>A limit of £15,000 is expected to cover the cost of adaptations that can be delivered in the appropriate timeframe. Longer term adaptations, while beneficial, could not be completed in a short period of time.</p> <p>This grant is a “one-off” grant, but does not, prevent the disabled person making an application for mandatory grant assistance in the future.</p>

8.Relocation Grant

Purpose of Assistance	Where it is not possible, necessary, appropriate, practical, or reasonable to adapt someone's current home, a grant can be obtained to assist with the costs of relocating to a more suitable property.
Eligible Applicants	Those eligible for Mandatory DFG. Any applications for this assistance will be supported by the Council working with an occupational therapist who have determined that options regarding adaptations at the current dwelling are either unachievable or can be delivered more cost effectively in a new dwelling.
Property Tenure	All tenures
Land Charge (for owners applications)	No land charge
Maximum Value	May be above the mandatory grant limit if the move is within Tewkesbury Borough. Limited to £5000 for relocation costs if the applicant is moving outside of the Borough to a more suitable dwelling that is supported by the new Local Authority.
Means Test	Statutory DFG means test
Eligible works	The specific eligible relocation expenses are: Estate agent fees, Solicitor costs, Survey costs, Stamp duty, Removal expenses (lowest of at least two quotes), Disconnection/reconnection of appliances, Occupational therapy assessment costs for assessing properties, up to two months rent for one property to cover void payments for new landlord.
Limitations	Applicants must be moving from a property which is their main residence and is within the Tewkesbury Borough Council area to another property which will become their main residence. Assistance will not be given towards the purchase price of a property. Grants cannot be awarded retrospectively. If the move is aborted at the fault or choice of the applicant, costs will not be paid. All applicants will be required to complete the move within 12 months from the date of approval of their application.

9.Adaptation Support Grant

Purpose of Assistance	To support or facilitate the completion of DFG works. This grant is for necessary works that have been identified during the mandatory DFG adaptation.
Eligible Applicants	Those determined as eligible for Mandatory DFG
Tenure	This grant is for all tenures but is most likely to benefit owner occupiers and occupiers of mobile homes. If the property is occupied by a tenant any essential repairs would usually be considered to be the landlords responsibility.
Land Charge (for owners applications)	The full value of the assistance awarded would be placed as a land charge from the date of the completion of the works for a period of 10 years.
Maximum Value	£10,000
Means Test	Statutory DFG means test
Eligible works	Works required to support or facilitate the DFG works . For example- electrical upgrade works required for an electrical shower to be installed. This may ordinarily be classed as a repair but without which the identified adaptation cannot be completed.
Limitations	Only one application in relation to the property in any 5 year period.

Appendix D- Clutter Rating

Hoarding and squalor – a practical resource for service providers (June 2013)
Section 8.2 Clutter Image Rating Scale (CIRS)

Department of Health

Clutter Image Rating Scale (CIRS)*

The purpose of this tool is to gauge the impact of hoarding on the person with the hoarding behaviour.

Clutter Image Rating Scale: Part 1 of 3 – Kitchen

Please select the photo below that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

* Source: Frost RO, Steketee G 2006a, *Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring: Therapist Guide*. New York. Oxford University Press. The Clutter Image Rating (CIR) Tool, p. 188. Used with permission of Oxford University Press, USA.

Clutter Image Rating Scale: Part 2 of 3 – Bedroom

Please select the photo below that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Figure 9 Clutter Image Rating Scale (CIRS)

Clutter Image Rating Scale: Part 3 of 3 – Living room

Please select the photo below that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Figure 9 Clutter Image Rating Scale (CIRS)