

Disabled Facilities Grants after brain injury



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Introduction

A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) provides funding for essential adaptations to give a disabled person better freedom of movement into and around their home. DFGs are available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Local authorities and NHS Boards in Scotland can provide discretionary funding for equipment and adaptations.

This publication provides a brief guide to how DFGs work and how to obtain them.

First steps

You can get advice on DFGs from the housing, social services or environmental health departments of your local authority, your local Citizens Advice or Shelter (www.shelter.org.uk). Many areas also have Home Improvement Agencies and handyperson organisations which provide a range of services to help disabled people with housing problems. You can find out more and search for services in your area on the Foundations website at www.foundations.uk.com.

If you wish to carry out adaptations to your home you should contact the housing or environmental health department at your local authority before making any changes (a DFG will not usually be awarded for work completed before it was approved by the council).

Eligibility

In order to apply you must intend to live in the property during the grant period (currently five years) and you may need to provide proof of residency. A landlord may apply on behalf of a disabled tenant.

Before making an application you should find out how much work is needed and

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what it will cost. The council will usually require two written estimates from different contractors.

The council will check that the proposed works are:

- Necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs
- Reasonable and practicable depending on the property

The maximum grant at time of writing (2023) is £30,000 in England, £36,000 in Wales and £25,000 in Northern Ireland. DFGs are means tested, which means the council will consider the income and capital of the 'relevant person'. The 'relevant person' refers collectively to the disabled person and, if they have one, their spouse or partner.

The council calculates the average weekly income and savings of the relevant person and sets this against an assessment of basic needs. If the relevant person's resources are less than their assessed basic needs they will not usually need to contribute to the cost of the work. However, if the 'relevant person's' resources are in excess of their basic needs then money will be deducted from the total DFG.

Those in receipt of Universal Credit, Income Support, contributory Employment Support Allowance or Guaranteed Pension Credit will not usually have to make a contribution.

How to apply

You should contact your local authority's housing or environmental health department to request an application form which will set out the further documentation you need to supply. The local authority must give you its decision in writing within six months of receipt of a valid application.

Payment of grant

If the application is approved then the local authority could pay the grant in full on completion of the works. Alternatively, it may choose to pay in instalments over

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the period that the work is undertaken. The grant can be paid directly to the contractor or to the applicant themselves.

You should ensure that you are satisfied with the works which have been carried out and inform the council if you are not.

Minor adaptations and equipment

In England, minor adaptations and equipment worth under £1,000 can usually be provided free-of-charge by the local authority, without means testing.

Low cost loans or other discretionary grants may also be available from your local authority for adaptations or equipment. Additionally, your council may be able to offer alternative assistance, such as releasing equity on your home to pay for adaptations.

Useful organisations

Find your local authority's contact details at:

England - www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

Scotland - www.cosla.gov.uk/councils

Northern Ireland - www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland

Wales - www.gov.wales/find-your-local-authority

For information about government services across the UK visit:

England - www.gov.uk.

Scotland - www.scotland.gov.uk

Northern Ireland - www.nidirect.gov.uk/

Wales - www.wales.gov.uk

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Other organisations you may find useful include:

Citizens Advice - www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Foundations: The National Body for Home Improvement Agency and
Handyperson Services – wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com

Shelter - www.shelter.org.uk

Acknowledgements

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