

Private Sector Housing

GRANT FACTSHEET DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

HOUSING GRANTS, CONSTRUCTION AND REGENERATION ACT 1996
THE REGULATORY REFORM (HOUSING ASSISTANCE) ORDER 2002

INTRODUCTION

Disabled Facilities Grants are means tested grants available to persons who qualify to register as disabled with the County Council Social Services Department and are available to provide facilities or carry out adaptations in the home in order to improve accessibility, comfort and access and need.

REFERRAL

The above legislation cannot be enacted by MDC without a referral from Somerset County Council Social Services. **The first step for any potential applicant or their representative is to telephone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224.** They will advise the enquirer on the information required. Once the enquiry information is complete it will be passed to Social Services who will instruct an Occupational Therapist (O.T.) to make a visit and assess the applicants needs. If the request is justified a referral is then issued identifying the particular needs and assessing the priority on a points system.

MANDATORY GRANT AID

The maximum amount of grant aid available is £30,000 (including fees + VAT) and the works which can be carried out are detailed in the legislation which include:

- Improving access in the main rooms around the property/dwelling, e.g. provision of bathroom adaptations, ramps, door widening, stairlift, access to garden.
- Adaptations of kitchen facilities.
- Adaptations for lighting or power circuits.
- Improve existing heating system to eligible rooms
- Adaptations to allow a disabled person to care for another person in the household.

Home Improvement Agency

DFG Grants are usually administered in partnership with the countywide HIA who charge an administration fee for their services. However, applicants have the option of dealing direct with the Local Authority and employing their own surveyors/builders. Professional fees are eligible for inclusion in any grant assistance that may be approved.

MEANS TESTING

Grant applications for disabled children who are under the age of 20 on the date of approval are exempt from means testing.

Applicants in receipt of the following benefits are also exempt:

- Income Support.
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (**not** contribution-based ESA).
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (**not** Contribution-based JSA).
- Guaranteed Pension Credit (**not** Savings Pension Credit).
- Housing Benefit.
- Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit **provided that** the annual income for the purposes of assessing entitlement to the tax credit is **less than** £15,050.
- Universal Credit (this includes any amount of Universal Credit which is being introduced from 2013 onwards as a replacement for working age benefits and tax credits).

All other relevant persons are means tested in accordance with the legislation. For the purpose of a disabled facilities grant legislation a “relevant person” is

- the disabled occupant who the work is being carried out for; **or**
- the spouse or partner of the disabled occupant

The Means Test determines what contribution, if any, the applicant will be required to make towards the cost of the works. If the contribution is in excess of £1,000 a low interest loan may be available to fund it.

A low interest loan may be available to the applicant to fund all the works which may be a faster option for the applicant to consider.

For further information on low interest loans please contact Private Sector Housing on 01749 341490

PROPERTY CHARGES

On completion of DFG works a charge is placed on the property for a period of ten years. If the property is sold within this period repayment of any amount in excess of £5,000 up to a maximum of £10,000 will be required. (Set as at Dec 2009).

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Private Sector Housing at the address on the front page.