

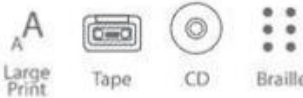
Disabled Facilities Grants

A guide to disabled facilities grants and grant conditions



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What is a Disabled Facilities Grant?

A Disabled Facilities Grant is money from the council to adapt the home of a person with a disability to enable them to continue to live there. A grant is offered when Lancashire County Council considers that the changes are necessary and appropriate to meet specific needs and that Rossendale Borough Council considers the work proposed is reasonable and practicable depending on the age and condition of the property.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants for essential adaptations to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and around their homes and to give access to essential facilities within the home.



Level Access Shower

The legislation governing DFGs in England and Wales is the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act.

What type of work does the grant cover?

The types of works that mandatory DFGs can cover include:

- Making it easier to get into and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors and installing ramps;
- Safe access to and from a garden by a disabled person and making a garden area safe.
- Ensuring the safety of the disabled person and other occupants by, for example, providing a specially adapted room in which it would be safe to leave a disabled person unattended or improve lighting to ensure better visibility;
- Making access easier to the living room;
- Providing or improving access to the bedroom, and kitchen toilet, washbasin and bath (and/or shower) facilities; for example, by installing a stair lift, providing a downstairs bathroom or replacing a bath with a level access shower.
- Improving or providing a heating system in the home which is suitable to the needs of the disabled person;
- Adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use.

Who can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant?

If you are disabled and you are an owner-occupier (live in and own your own home with or without a mortgage) or you are a tenant, including a Housing Association tenant, then you can apply for a grant. If you are a parent or guardian of a disabled child then you can apply for a grant and the means test will not apply.

If you have a disabled person living with you and you are an owner-occupier or a tenant, then you can apply for a grant on behalf of the disabled person.

If you are a landlord with a disabled tenant, then you may apply for a grant on behalf of your tenant. In all cases, the adaptation must be necessary and appropriate and the design or condition of the property must be such that the adaptation is reasonable and practicable. If it is not deemed reasonable and practicable by Rossendale Borough Council, then the Council may, at its discretion and subject to a means test, award a grant of up to £3000 to assist with the expenses incurred in moving to a more suitable home in addition to any adaptations required.

What is the maximum amount of grant?

The mandatory maximum amount the Council can pay is usually £30,000, however the Council under its policy from October 2018 had the ability to pay up to £60,000, and from the 1st January 2020 the Council will be able to pay up to £100,000 in special circumstances. Any award by the Council above £30,000 would be entirely at the discretion of the Council after consultation with health and/or social care professionals.

What will I have to pay?

The Disabled Facilities Grant may meet all, or part, of the cost of the adaptations. If the disabled person is 18 years of age or younger there is no charge or means test required.

From October 2018 Rossendale Borough Council has not required a means test for grant work that in total is not expected to cost more than £7,000 for applicants 19 and above, which is aimed at stream lining the process, and no contribution will be required for work up to this value. The majority of adaptations have been below the threshold for a means test.

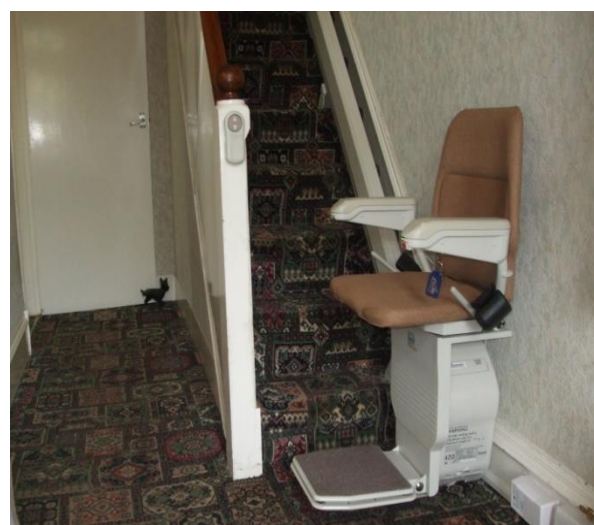
For adaptations expected to cost over £7,000 the grant is **means tested** to ensure that financial aid goes to those found to have the most need. The means test will take into account the income and capital (savings) of the disabled person and their spouse or partner.

If you are in receipt of one of the benefits below you will not be required to pay a contribution unless the cost exceeds the maximum grant or if you wish to pay privately for extra works.

- Income Support
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Guaranteed pension credit
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Joint claim job seekers allowance
- Housing benefit / Local housing allowance (tenants only)
- Working or child tax credit and earnings less than £15,050 per annum

If you have been assessed that you can afford a financial contribution towards the work, the grant will be the difference between your contribution and the cost of works.

If the cost of works exceeds the amount of the grant that the council is able to pay, you will be required to fund this difference yourself. If this is the case, we will discuss this with you and advise you of any available sources of additional funding.



Stairlift

Rossendale Borough Council has implemented repayment conditions in relation to mandatory disabled facilities grants. The aim of this is to assist the Council in recycling resources to meet the ever increasing demands.

In the case of grants in excess of £10,000 being paid to owner occupiers, if the property is disposed of within 10 years of the date of completion of works, then the Council may demand the repayment of such part of the grant that exceeds £10,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000). This condition is a local land charge and is registered against the property. In cases where discretion is shown and a grant is paid by the Council in excess of £30,000 then then a legal charge may be placed on the property for the whole additional amount for a period of 10 years.

How will I know if I am eligible?

There are four main organisations involved in providing an adaptation service and these are;

Social Services (provided by Lancashire County Council), Rossendale Borough Council, Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Primary Care Trust who provide the Occupational Therapy service for people over 18 years old and Lancashire Care Foundation who employ Paediatric Occupational Therapists for people up to the age of 18 years old.

1. Initially, all applicants over 18 years old are advised to contact Lancashire County Council Social Services on **0300 123 6720**, to speak with a customer service officer to request an Occupational Therapist assessment.
2. To make an initial enquiry for young people up to the age of 18 years old contact the Acorns Centre Accrington the Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust on **01254 612 600**.
3. Social Services will liaise with the Occupational Therapist or other appropriate professionals who will contact you to arrange to carry out an assessment to determine what equipment, adaptations or alterations are necessary and appropriate. This may also apply to adapting a home to improve the ability of the carer to look after the disabled person. If a person's needs can be met by the provision of equipment then no recommendation for a grant will be made. All minor adaptations under £1000 are not referred to the Council, but are dealt with by Lancashire County Council Social Services directly; these can include grab rails, stair rails and other small works, only if the necessary adaptation costs over £1000 would the matter be referred to the Council for DFG. Once agreement has been reached between the disabled person and carer, the Occupational Therapist will make recommendations to Social Services.
4. Depending on your needs, your Occupational Therapist will prioritise your case so that the budget can be targeted to the most urgent and needy cases. The Council currently directs 75% of its Disabled Facilities Grant budget to urgent referrals, the remaining 25% to referrals not classed as urgent.
5. Social Services will write to the Council with details of the adaptation recommended.



Height Adjustable Bath

What steps are there in making an application for a DFG?

After receiving the recommendation from Social Services, we will write to you within 5 working days to acknowledge that your request for a Disabled Facilities Grant has been received, you will also be sent a `Preliminary Test of Resources form` in order to give you the opportunity to have a means test carried out at an early stage, rather than wait for a long period of time and then possibly be told you were not eligible.

Please note; this is only a provisional indication of your contribution and you will be required to provide more detailed information when a full application is submitted.



Ceiling Mounted Hoist

The length of time before an officer visits you will be dependent on what priority (urgent or non-urgent) the Occupational Therapist has classified your case.

We aim to carry out visits for urgent cases within 4 weeks. Non urgent cases are placed on a waiting list and are visited in date order when the recommendation was received; these visits are subject to resources being available. We will write to you on a 6 monthly basis to keep you informed on the progress of your enquiry.

The grant officer will contact you to arrange a visit, they will assess whether the work to your home is reasonable and practicable, considering the age and condition of your property. The officer may also discuss other options with you and the Occupational Therapist to see if there are other ways of meeting your needs.

The grant officer will also assess your financial circumstances by carrying out a test of your financial resources, (except for applications in respect of children). You will need to provide details of your income and savings. The test of resources will determine whether or not you are eligible to receive a grant, and if you are eligible, it will determine the amount of grant you will receive.

If you are a private tenant or Housing Association tenant, the grant officer will ask your landlord for permission to carry out the work to your home.

If you are eligible for a grant, the grant officer will send you a letter which clearly lists the work that is needed. This is known as a schedule of works. If you need any help to understand this please contact the grants officer dealing with your case.

Rossendale Borough Council offers a service to assist you with the application forms, selecting a contractor and helping to ensure the works are completed properly. You should note that the contract for the works is between you and the contractor. If you choose to use this service, the Council will make a charge for this and we will include this in your grant. You do not have to use the service.



Through Floor Lift

You may decide to appoint your own architect or agent to look after the grant works on your behalf, if you choose this, then the cost can be included within the grant. All architects fees will have to be paid by yourself initially and you will be reimbursed when the grant and associated works are completed. If you do not go ahead with the work, this fee will not be recoverable from the Council.

After you have completed the application form, proof of ownership/tenancy, proof of income/savings, obtained a minimum of two estimates for the works, we will consider your application and issue an approval based on the lowest cost of works and any personal contribution resulting from the financial assessment. Approval will be subject to resources being available.

Additional Assistance from January 2020

A number of new flexibilities were added to the policy which applied from October 2018 such as introducing a minimum amount of £7,000 before a means test is applied, and discretion in some cases to pay up to £60,000 maximum grant. From 1st January 2020 the maximum grant amount can be up to £100,000 at the Council's discretion. Also a displacement grant has been added to the policy from January 2020, in addition to the other grants which were introduced in October 2018 listed below. The additional grants along with the means test waiver up to £7,000, and the possibility of funding over £30,000, will all be reviewed after 2 years and are all entirely at the discretion of the Council.

- Assistance with assessed contribution following a means test, where a customer may struggle to afford to contribution.
- A relocation grant up to £5000 if it is not practical to adapt the current property.

- A hospital discharge grant of up to £2,000 to ensure the customer's home is free of hazards and in a suitable condition for the customer to move into
- DFG fees grant to cover costs a customer may incur for preliminary DFG work, which covers up to £2,000, but must be agreed with the Council beforehand
- Safe Homes Grant of up to £5,000 to provide repairs to disability-related equipment
- Warm Homes Grant of up to £3,000 to provide repairs to boilers and heating systems
- A Displacement Grant with a limit of £55 per day/night, or £5,500, whichever is lowest, for circumstances where it is not possible for customers to remain in their home during the most intrusive adaptation work

All the above available grants would require the customer in the first instance to have a referral from an Occupational Therapist or similar healthcare professional, and customers are advised to go through the normal DFG process. The Council is unable to pay for any work the customer organises and/or pays for themselves. For a full explanation of the above grants, please see the DFG Policy on the Council's website.

So what do I do now?

The first step, if you are over 18 years old is to contact a customer service officer at Social Services and ask for an assessment. This will be carried out by an Occupational Therapist. The contact number is **0300 123 6720**.

If your enquiry is for a young person up to the age of 18 years old then contact the Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust on **01254 612 600**

Once the Occupational Therapist has made a recommendation you will receive a letter from Social Services to let you know what has been recommended and what will happen next. In most cases you will then be contacted by the Council to discuss the adaptation. However in certain cases where the cost of the adaptation is small, or is just for a piece of specialist equipment, this will be arranged without involving the Council or the need to apply for a grant. The Occupational Therapist will let you know if this is the case.

Things to remember

If you are thinking of applying, then do not carry out any adaptations or alterations until you have applied and had your grant approved in writing. If you do the work first without agreement from the Borough Council or Social Services, then you will not be eligible for financial assistance.

There is usually a high demand for grants, so you may have to wait sometime before your application is approved.

Only work which is considered to be necessary and appropriate by Social Services and reasonable and practicable by the Borough Council will be eligible for assistance.

Grants are based on the cost of adapting the property in the most economical way in accordance with the requirements of the Scheme. Applicants wishing to carry out works which are more extensive or to a higher standard than those allowed for may do so but the grant will be based on the notional cost of the basic scheme. General repairs to your home are not usually eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant assistance.



Ramp for easier and safe access

Take your time to think about your needs and what is best for you. You may decide that it would be more beneficial to move to a more suitable house or a ground floor flat to suit your long term needs. The Private Sector Renewal Team, Occupational Therapist or Social Services will be glad to discuss this option with you.

Further information about the grant, the procedure and what standards you can expect can be obtained from the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Team

Private Sector Housing Renewal Team
Room 203
Rossendale Borough Council
Futures Park
Bacup, Lancs OL13 0BB
Telephone (01706) 252408

For applicants over 18 years old contact:-

Social Services
Customer Service Officer
Telephone: 0300 123 6720

For applicants up to the age of 18 years old contact:-

Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Telephone: 01254 283 814

MSV Homecare and Repair

Operating in Rossendale, Pendle and Burnley, MSV are a 'not for profit' Home Improvement Agency, part of Mosscares St Vincent's Housing Group, supported by Lancashire County Council.

They offer services to repair or improve the homes of older, disabled, and vulnerable people to help them live in comfort and safety in their own home for as long as possible.

Their handyman service can deal with those smaller jobs (please see below). For bigger jobs they have a panel of trusted contractors providing a wide range of trades and services. These have been chosen because of good workmanship, value for money and reliability.

They can also source funding for essential repairs and improvements depending on your circumstances and offer technical advice.

Some of the things we can help with...

Supplier of Daily Living Aids

- Mobility aids
- Bathing aids
- ...and many more

Handyman Service for those small jobs such as:

- Home security measures such as door chains
- Bulb changing
- Fixing loose cables and carpets
- Flat pack furniture assembly
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Tap washer replacement
- Sealing baths and showers
- Replacement toilet seats

- Installing outside taps
- Fixing curtain rails
- Putting up pictures & photographs

Other jobs:

- Installing bannister rails
- Supplying and installing fabricated handrails
- Home Aids & Adaptations
- Property Repairs & Maintenance

Contact details:

MSV Homecare & Repair
41 Bury Road
Haslingden
BB4 5PG

01706 221 849

Email: hia@msvhousing.co.uk

Website: www.msvhousing.co.uk



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