

## **What is a Disabled Facilities Grant?**

Disabled Facilities Grants are a source of funding towards works that help people remain in their own home through adaptation of the property. Typical works might be a stairlift to access a first floor bathroom or a level access shower for a person of limited mobility and strength who cannot use a normal bath, even with a minor adaptation. The money for these DFG's come from a mix of local Council tax and Government funding through the local Council. With increasing demand over the last 10 years and as public money that is limited, the Councils will ensure that it is used only where there is a duty to meet the identified need. It cannot solve all need and there are some alternatives such as the County Council Social Care funds and social landlords will also provide funding for some works. The grant is means-tested and so there is sometimes a contribution that the applicant has to make to the cost of works. For owner-occupied properties the grant also has a repayable element. The cost above £5,000 being placed as a charge on the property, to be recovered upon sale. Tenanted properties will need the landlord's permission to have work undertaken.

## **How do I get a grant?**

In order to know if you are eligible the first step is an assessment of need through the Occupational Therapy Service who act for the County Council who have a general duty to assess need. You should see your doctor and ask for a referral to Occupational Therapy. Occupational Therapy will work with you to see what needs you have and consider appropriate solutions. If appropriate they will pass your details on through the County Council to the local District, City or Borough Council. Your local Council will then confirm to you that a referral from the OT has been received and pass your details to Care and Repair Worcestershire. The Council will review if they believe the works are necessary and appropriate and whether or not an alternative such as a move to a more suitable property would be better.

## **When can I expect the work to be done?**

If there are significant demand or capacity issues the Council will advise you if there are likely to be delays so that you are aware and can consider possible alternatives. In law the Council has until 6 months after a valid application to approve or refuse and up to 12 months from a valid application to pay for the costs. The process can be time consuming and the local Councils normally ask Care and Repair Worcestershire to deal with cases in priority order based upon the OT assessment.

## **What does Care and Repair Worcestershire do?**

They are an Agency that can help you through the process, including undertaking a means test to see if you have a contribution, organising builder's quotes and the paperwork required for application and payments. They may also be able to help arrange private works and look into alternatives. More details are available from Care and Repair Worcestershire tel: 01684 579456.

[www.careandrepairworcestershire.co.uk](http://www.careandrepairworcestershire.co.uk) .It is possible for you to apply directly to the Council for a grant but you would receive none of the assistance that Care and Repair can offer in completing what can be a complex process with many requirements and unfamiliarity with the application requirements may lead to delays in the Council being able to determine the application.

## What works are eligible or not eligible for grant?

### Typical DFGs are for the following :

- A ramp to access into the property and garden.
- Widened doors for wheelchair access through property
- A level access shower
- A stairlift
- The conversion of a downstairs room to provide ground floor toilet and/or shower room
- Lowered kitchen worktops for wheelchair user if main food preparer.

*It is important to remember that the above will only be eligible works if deemed appropriate. Local Councils will consider whether a move to a more appropriate property would be a better alternative. Whilst it is not possible to give a comprehensive list, there are certain perhaps desirable works that fall outside the scope of being eligible for a grant.*

### Works that may be desirable but are not eligible for Grant funding include:

- Dropped kerbs and parking facilities
- Provision of an extension for ground floor living/amenities where there is space available within the existing ground floor
- Storage, access routes or facilities for electric scooters

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