

Private Sector Housing Renewal Grants Policy 2018 - 2022

Consultation on the proposed changes to the 2016/18 Policy

<p>Summary of Present Policy</p> <p>Full details of policy conditions are set out in the policy document</p>	<p>Proposed Changes and reasons for the proposed changes</p>
<p>Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) - Owner-occupiers and Tenants</p> <p>The Council is committed to making Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants available to all eligible owner-occupiers and private sector tenants so that they can remain living independently in their own homes. A disabled owner-occupier or tenant may apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant for a number of purposes which will primarily improve access and comfort.</p> <p>Mandatory Disabled Facilities grants will continue to be available to eligible owner-occupiers and private sector tenants and the maximum mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant is £30,000.</p> <p>These grants are means tested except for the benefit for a disabled child under the age of 16 or and 16-19 years old who are receiving full time education and still in receipt of child benefit is 100% grant aided.</p> <p>Applications for discretionary disabled facilities over £30,000 will be considered on a case by case basis and will only be agreed if the owner occupier agrees to having a land charge to the value of the</p>	<p>Proposed Changes:</p> <p>It is proposed that the Council extends the current policy under the general powers enabled under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002. Since 2010 Councils can use DFG monies more flexibly as part of its strategy to keep people safe and well at home and reduce bureaucracy. It is therefore proposed that the following measures are introduced:</p> <p>Relocation Grants - Relocation grants would enable the Council to assist homeowners to move to a more suitable property. Grant could cover removal costs, reconnection fees and legal costs.</p> <p>Hospital discharge Grants – Bed blocking caused when a resident’s home is not suitable for them to return to is both expensive to the NHS and not in the patient’s interest. Using DFG grant for fast track works including deep</p>

additional grant being placed on the property
Current policy restricts spend to:

A disabled owner-occupier may apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant for the following purposes:

- Facilitating access to and from the dwelling by the disabled occupant *for example widening doorways and installing ramps*
- Making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant *for example* adapting a room in which it would be safe to leave a disabled person unattended or improved lighting to ensure better visibility
- Access to the principal family room by the disabled occupant
- Access to or providing a bedroom for the disabled occupant *for example installing a stairlift*
- Access to or providing a room containing a bath or shower for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility *for example providing a level access shower*
- Access to or providing a room containing a WC for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility
- Access to or providing a room containing a wash hand basin for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility
- Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled person
- Improving or providing a heating system for the disabled person
- Facilitating the use of power, light or heat by the disabled

cleaning, decluttering and minor repairs can speed up this process and potentially save the public purse thousands of pounds.

Dementia Grants – Dementia grants can be used to replace gas, electric cooking facilities with microwaves and specialist assistive technology such as GIS tracking devices where appropriate.

Assistive technology and equipment

The Council provides comprehensive assistive technology and equipment services including deaf/blind aids. DFG spend could be used to supplement this service where an unmet demand can be identified.

Abolish Means Test below £10k – Carrying out means testing to identify whether a householder should make a contribution towards DFGs is standard practice but is in most cases the applicant does not have to make a contribution. Between 2015 and 2017, the Council collected a total of 9 client contributions amounting to of £13,320. Having conducted 136 means tests. In line with most other Local Authorities it is recommended that the means test is abolished for cases costing less than £10k. This will reduce bureaucracy and speed up the process for the delivery of DFGs.

<p>person by altering same or providing additional means of control <i>for example lowering light switches or raising plug sockets</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating access and movement around the dwelling to enable a disabled person to care for someone <i>for example a spouse or child</i> • Facilitating access to an existing garden where feasible 	
<p>Private Landlords and Registered Providers</p> <p>A private landlord or a Registered Provider may apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant on behalf of a disabled tenant, or potential tenant for a number of purposes which will primarily improve access and comfort.</p> <p>The maximum mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant is currently £30,000. Applications for discretionary disabled facilities cannot be considered due to budget restrictions.</p> <p>Applications made by Registered Provider must also demonstrate that no other suitable accommodation is available to transfer the tenant to and that the tenant is not under-occupying the property.</p> <p>During 2013/14 officers will work with Registered Providers to agree a way of funding Mandatory DFGs for their tenants in 2014/15.</p>	<p>Proposed Changes: Recognise agreement with Disabled Facilities Grants contributions from Registered Providers acknowledging that it is currently suspended</p> <p>Reason for changes: Agreement was reached with Registered Providers that they will fund 50% of Disabled Facilities Grant up to a maximum of £5000 for their tenants.</p> <p>The agreement was approved by the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum Executive in 2014.</p> <p>The agreement was suspended in January 2016 following the increases in budget in 2015/16 and 2016/17.</p> <p>Incorporate the RRO changes as follows (for details see above):</p> <p>Hospital Discharge Grants</p> <p>Dementia Grants</p>

	<p>Assistive technology and equipment</p> <p>Abolish Means Test below £10k</p> <p>Relocation Grants</p>
<p>Home Repair Grants</p> <p>Small grants may be made available to eligible owner-occupiers to enable them to remain in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.</p> <p>Home Repair Grants may be made available to owner-occupiers who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over 60, or • disabled or infirm, or the parent or carer of a disabled child and • in receipt of an income related benefit or eligible tax credits. <p>These grants will be for the following types of works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of category 1 Hazards <p>Home Repair Grants will only be available if the applicant has owned and lived at the property as their only main residence for at least 3 years. The Home Repair Grant will be limited to a maximum of £6,000 per applicant in any five year period.</p> <p>The grant will not normally be available to part fund major works</p>	<p>Proposed Changes:</p> <p>Increase Grants up to £10k to recognise rise in building costs</p> <p>Relax the criteria for the grant enabling wider access but still to people on low incomes of any age range – e.g. Any owners who are on a qualifying benefit that have CAT hazards within their premises instead of all owners have to be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or be over 60 and in receipt of a qualifying benefit.</p>

costing over £6,000 .These grants are not repayable.										
<p>Empty Property Grants</p> <p>Empty Property Grants are available to owners of empty properties who wish to refurbish, demolish and rebuild their property or to convert it into a number of units and make it available for letting. The Empty Property Grant can contribute to the cost of the works needed to bring the home up to the decent homes standard and incorporate works to make the home safe, secure and affordable to keep warm.</p> <p>Only landlords who are accredited under the London Landlords' Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) will receive grants. The maximum amount of grant assistance would be dependent upon the size of the resultant units.</p> <p>The maximum amount of grant assistance would be dependent upon the size of the resultant units and the status of the landlord.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Accommodation</th> <th>Maximum Grant</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>One bedroom flat</td> <td>£20,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two bedroom flat or house</td> <td>£25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Three bedroom flat or house</td> <td>£30,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The owner of the empty property would be required to let out the property for a period of between 3 5 years to families nominated by the Council at a rent level below the Local Housing Allowance.</p> <p>The grant will be repayable if the property is sold or transferred within</p>		Type of Accommodation	Maximum Grant	One bedroom flat	£20,000	Two bedroom flat or house	£25,000	Three bedroom flat or house	£30,000	<p>Proposed Changes:</p> <p>None</p>
Type of Accommodation	Maximum Grant									
One bedroom flat	£20,000									
Two bedroom flat or house	£25,000									
Three bedroom flat or house	£30,000									

<p>a 5-year period, with interest.</p>	
<p>Priority will be given to larger 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom homes built to a high design standard situated in areas of high demand.</p>	