

Disabled Facilities Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply for a grant?

To apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant, you must be either the owner or the tenant of the property that is to be adapted. You do not necessarily have to be the disabled person to apply as you can make the application on behalf of another person. For example a landlord may apply on behalf of a disabled tenant, as long as you make it clear on whose behalf the application is being made.

What is a disabled facilities grant available for?

The grant is available for adaptations to assist with freedom of movement around the home and to access essential facilities within it.

Examples of the type of work that can be done through the grant are:

- widening doorways and installing ramps to make it easier to get into and out of the property
- installing a stairlift or through floor lift
- adapting a bathroom to make bathing easier, eg removing the bath and installing a level access shower
- improving or providing a suitable heating system which can be used by the disabled occupant
- improving or making suitable access from the home to the garden
- where necessary, alterations to a kitchen to allow the disabled occupant to prepare and cook food.

How will the grant be calculated?

You can get a grant of up to £30,000 per application minus 15% administration fees payable to Swale Home Improvement Agency. The council works with the Home Improvement Agency to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants to Hambleton residents. The amount of grant you receive will depend upon whether you can afford to make a contribution towards the cost of the work. If a contribution is required then this will be deducted from the amount of grant which would otherwise have been paid.

A contribution towards the work will be decided by a means test which looks at the income and capital of the disabled person and their spouse or partner. Where the application is for a disabled child or qualifying young person under the age of nineteen and in full time education, there is no means test.

If the disabled person is in receipt of certain income-related benefits then they will not be subject to a means test.

The grant allocation covers the fees of the Home Improvement Agency to enable the Disabled Facilities Grant, for example, it pays for technical drawings and specification of works, assistance with the application, financial assessment, and overseeing the work. The fees are currently set at 15%.

The council has taken the decision to remove the means test altogether for cases where the cost of the adaptation is less than £5,000. Examples of adaptations costing less than £5,000 include stairlifts, ramps, and some level access showers.



How do I apply?

Before you make an application for grant, you will need a referral from a medical professional, which will recommend the most appropriate adaptation to meet the needs of the disabled person. This is normally provided by an Occupational Therapist at North Yorkshire County Council. You can arrange for an assessment by an Occupational Therapist at North Yorkshire County Council by calling 01609 780780.



The Home Improvement Agency will help you with the application process, which includes completing the relevant forms and submitting the required information, selecting contractors to carry out the work and overseeing works from start to completion.

You can find out more about the services of the Home Improvement Agency by calling 0345 3664406 or by e-mailing swalehia@yorkshirehousing.co.uk

How long will I have to wait for the grant to be approved?

The council must give you a decision in writing within six months of receiving a completed valid application, although this is normally done within a much shorter period. You must not start any work before you receive your approval as this may affect your grant. The works must be completed within 12 months of the grant approval.

On grants of less than £5,000 the Home Improvement Agency's Technical Officer will visit within three weeks of receiving the Occupational Therapist's referral, the grant will be approved within ten days of being submitted, and works will be completed within four weeks of the grant approval.

What happens if the cost of the adaptation and the fees exceed £30,000?

In certain circumstances, the council can offer a 'top up' of up to £10,000 with some discretion. Where the property is owned by a Housing Association any top up is split 50/50 between the council and the Association. The council works together with the county council and charities where necessary to help secure any additional funding that might be needed. In some circumstances applicants may need to contribute towards the cost of the works.

Do I have to use a contractor appointed by the council?

You can use your own contractors to quote for the work. You have to get at least two quotes for the work and the council will only pay for the work once they are satisfied it has been completed to an adequate standard. When using your own contractor, you are responsible as an employer for ensuring that they have the correct insurances in place. You or a family member can do the work but are only eligible to claim for the cost of materials.

If you choose to use the Home Improvement Agency, they will appoint a contractor on your behalf from their list of approved contractors.

What if I don't want to use the Home Improvement Agency?

You are still eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant even if you do not want to use the Home Improvement Agency. The Home Improvement Agency fee is still applicable as the Agency still need to oversee the works and sign off key stages.

What if I want to do more work than the DFG assessment specification?

The Occupational Therapist and Home Improvement Agency will work up technical drawings and costings for works that are eligible under the Disabled Facilities Grant. This will determine the amount of grant required. Should you wish to commission work that exceeds the Occupational Therapist/Home Improvement Agency specification then the assessed Disabled Facilities Grant requirement will be offered to you, you can then put this towards the cost of your scheme of works provided that your scheme meets with the approval of the Occupational Therapist.

How will the grant be paid?

The grant will be paid once the council is satisfied that the work has been completed to a satisfactory standard. The council will normally make a payment direct to the contractor that has carried out the work on receipt of an acceptable invoice. On larger schemes staged payments may be agreed. The work must be completed within twelve months of the grant approval, unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this from happening. Grant cannot be claimed retrospectively for work already undertaken.

Will I have to pay the grant back?

If you own and live in the property, the council may register a local land charge on the property where the cost of the adaptation work is more than £5,000. This is repayable if the property is sold within ten years of the work being completed.

Where can I find more information?

Details of the council's Disabled Facilities Grants policy are available in its Private Sector Housing Assistance policy at Chapter 6 (Adaptations Assistance) hambleton.gov.uk/PSHApolicy. More information about Disabled Facilities Grants is also available at hambleton.gov.uk/dfg

You may find the following websites useful:

northyorks.gov.uk/disabled-people-specialist-equipment-home-adaptations-and-aids

northyorks.gov.uk/repairs-your-home

yorkshirehousing.co.uk/support/home-improvement/

gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants

foundations.uk.com/dfg-adaptations/

