



# **Eastleigh Borough Council**

## **Disabled Facility Grant Eligible Works Policy**

**April 2014**

# Works Eligible for a Grant

## General guidance on works considered mandatory for Disabled Facilities Grant

Source: Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

Eastleigh Borough Council who administer disabled facilities grants, have agreed that under section 23 (1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, the following adaptation works can generally be considered for mandatory grant, but only where the Local Authority consider them to be “necessary and appropriate” for the needs of the disabled person and it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the work in the disabled person’s home. The Hampshire County Council Adult and Children’s Services Departments will be consulted on medical need relating to their disability and what works they consider are necessary and appropriate:

### Mandatory works

1. Ramping and/or handrails to the front or rear external door. External stair lifts/platform lifts if reasonably practicable and not prone to vandalism
2. Widening the main entrance door and the doorways to the bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living room. Automatic door opening to main entrance will only be considered for persons who are otherwise unable to open the door. Door entry systems will be considered where the person has severe mobility problems and is unable to get to the door, or has considerable difficulty getting to the door within a reasonable time.
3. Alterations to facilitate wheelchair access to the bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living room. Access to additional rooms will be considered where the disabled person is a carer.
4. Alterations to the height and/or position of light switches and power points to make them accessible to the disabled person.
5. Adaptations to the facilities in the bathroom and toilet, for example the provision of flush floor showers, hydraulic lift baths, lever taps, specialist WC’s such as Clos-o-mat or Geberit, ceiling track hoists etc. The adaptation or provision of more than one bathroom to a house e.g. additional ground floor WC, will only be considered if the disabled person is unable to access the first floor and installation of a stair lift / through floor lift will not meet their needs or is impractical. Provision of an additional bathroom (See Additional Rooms and Extension Policy). Flush floor showers - tend to be recommended rather than baths but will consider a walk in bath or rise and fall lift bath if the client needs to soak in a bath for medical reasons. Where rest of family need a bath it may be considered with equipment options such as a hoist. An electric fan heater is usually allowed in addition to radiator
6. Other adaptations that are necessary to facilitate access to any of the relevant rooms by the disabled person, for example, stair lifts or vertical lifts in some cases. Breakdown of stair lifts - if stair lift is 5-10 years old manufacturer’s report needed to replace it. If over 10 years report may not be needed. It is considered good practice to include 5-year extended warranty/service

- contract. Replacement should also be considered if the client's needs have changed and they are no longer able to use the existing type/model of stair lift
7. Ceiling track hoists can only be considered for Bathrooms, Shower rooms and WCs.
  8. Provision of additional bedroom (See Additional Rooms and Extension Policy).
  9. Heating the rooms that are in everyday use by the disabled person where a medical need can be demonstrated. This does not include repair to existing systems. Changes to the type of heating system will only be considered if evidenced by medical need. If the heating system is inadequate this can often be dealt with through other types of grant.
  10. Possible upgrading/replacing boilers where property has to be extended and the existing boiler is inadequate. Sometimes it is more cost-effective to install extra insulation rather than a new boiler.
  11. Provision of laminated glass or specialist lighting or guards to fires and around radiators e.g. where disabled children with behavioural problems may harm themselves.
  12. Provision of enhanced fire alarm or doorbell systems for those with hearing difficulties.
  13. Provision of hard standings (3.6 x 4.8 max) and associated crossover for vehicle access where the disabled person is in a wheelchair or has extreme difficulty walking to the house, and is the driver. This will only be given where existing on-street parking is considered unsatisfactory and a marked disabled parking bay is not possible or where it affords a more economic solution than providing additional paths/ramping from the house to the roadside. It is cost effective to put a marked disabled parking bay outside a house than to construct a hard standing. Please note that being the holder of a blue badge does not give automatic eligibility.
  14. Carrying out structural alterations where necessary to provide fixings for disabled equipment provided by Adult Services e.g. fixing for tracking /overhead hoists.
  15. Additional works to comply with listed building law or the conditions attached to planning permission e.g. pitched roof instead of flat roof, special bricks, timber windows to match the period of the house, etc.
  16. Repairs that are essential to enable the builder to carry out works e.g. replacement of rotted or weak flooring as part of flush floor shower installation, electrical repairs to enable works to be carried out safely like new consumer unit or earth bonding. This will be increasingly required with part P of the Building Regulations. Full re-wiring will not be considered because this is a repair not an adaptation. Dealing with low water pressure may be eligible but replacing defective drainage would not be eligible.
  17. Kitchens. Where someone other than the disabled person does and will continue to do the cooking and preparation of meals, it will not normally be necessary to carry out full adaptations. However, it may be possible to carry out minor adaptations to allow the person to prepare light meals or hot drinks. Typically this may include a low-level worktop with power points for a kettle/microwave. Where duties are shared within the family, discussion may be necessary to decide the extent of the alterations wanted.

- Where the disabled person lives alone or is a carer for someone else and has to prepare all the meals, full adaptations to the kitchen may be considered as follows:
- Kitchen sink, including alteration to its height or position, bowl depth, or the type of taps fitted to it. Powered, adjustable height sinks will generally not be considered if the provision of a second sink is a more cost effective solution.
- Cooker point and oven-housing unit ensuring its height and position is appropriate for the disabled person's needs, together with the provision of worktops on either side, where possible.(an integral hob and oven can be considered to meet the clients needs)
- Work surfaces located beside the sink and on each side of the cooker having a total length of approximately 1.5m, all at a suitable height for the disabled person.
- Food storage in an accessible position, usually space for a refrigerator with power supply.
- Wheelchair access, if necessary, including wider doors, rearrangement of facilities etc.
- Alterations to the kitchen door, light switches and power points, but only if it is necessary.
- Extensions or enlargement to kitchens only where absolutely necessary in order to provide turning space and accessible facilities for wheelchair if suitable space cannot be achieved by rearrangement of existing facilities.
- The provision of accessible cupboard and storage units on an "essential" basis. (2x1m base units and baskets or equivalent).
- Mechanical ventilation where kitchen schemes require Building Regulation approval.

### **Access to Rear Garden**

In deciding the extent of providing access to the rear garden, the following will be taken into account.

Grant assistance will not be given where there is already suitable access to the garden but grant may be given to improve an existing access to make it safe for the disabled occupant to use. It does not include extending an existing access e.g. creating a side access so a person can also go around the side of a house. Generally, the most modest solution for providing access to both the house and the garden will be considered and this can mean that one access may be sufficient to access both the house and the garden. Where homes have communal gardens, eg, blocks of flats served by a single access, grants will not normally be provided for providing an individual access to the garden unless it can be demonstrated that because of the disabled persons condition the travel distance to the garden would be excessive and unreasonable.

The grant will simply be for providing immediate access to the garden and does not include landscaping gardens to make them more suitable for the disabled person to access. However, to assist a disabled person to live independently, an allowance of 4 m<sup>2</sup> of pathway, (which may include a turning circle for a wheelchair user), will be considered to assist access to any specific areas enjoyed by the disabled person.

See also the list of non-mandatory items in the next section relating to gardens etc.

## **Additional rooms and extension policy**

### **Introduction**

This document gives guidance on the circumstances when the Council will consider the provision of an extension or the conversion of an existing roof space rather than sanction adaptations within the existing footprint of the dwelling.

### **Needs and Aspirations**

All people expect to be able to use the normal range of household facilities irrespective of any impairment. Any solution should ensure that the environment in which they are living meets these reasonable needs and expectations.

In an ideal world, it may be nice to fully adapt a disabled person's home regardless of cost. However, the reality is that Councils have limited budgets and therefore in assessing the reasonableness of the proposed works consideration has to be made to the costs. Authorities are charged with the responsibility of differentiating between what is desirable - what may be perfectly legitimate aspirations on the part of the disabled person - and what is needed and for which the public purse is justified. They must ensure that a proposed scheme meets the required mandatory need to ensure that the DFG budget is spent to provide for the essential needs of disabled people

In assessing for the grant, the Council will look to the most cost effective solution to meet the person's need but will be prepared to consider any options especially where the additional costs will be met by the applicant. It will place particular importance to this when considering high-cost adaptation/extension proposals and will expect alternative options to be properly priced and evaluated before deciding whether to proceed. It would also want to be satisfied that other alternatives to adaptation, such as re-housing, have been considered and properly evaluated.

### **Decision Making**

The views of the disabled person will be taken into account and every case shall be considered on its merits and this policy will be used in that consideration.

A scheme to provide ground floor facilities can often incorporate the conversion of second reception rooms, storage areas, circulation areas and subdividing existing rooms where possible. The decision to build an extension will be seen as last resort and will only be made when it is not possible to provide the required facilities within the footprint of the dwelling.

An extension may be seen as a permanent, relatively low maintenance solution; however, it has five major disadvantages:

- It is costly;
- It is relatively slow to provide;
- It is very disruptive to normal daily living;
- It does not provide access to the whole house
- Permission will be required from the mortgage provider/ Housing Association
- There can be constraints with planning permission

A frequent debate revolves around the merits of installing a vertical lift against providing an extension. A number of considerations should be taken into account when making this decision.

**A through-floor vertical lift has some advantages:**

- It is still costly, but substantially less than an extension;
- It can be installed fairly quickly and with limited disruption to daily life;
- It has the advantage of giving access to the whole house and not limiting the person to the ground floor;
- It can often allow utilization of the existing first floor bathroom.

**But also has the following disadvantages:**

- It requires regular maintenance;
- It has a limited life, about ten years;
- It takes up a considerable amount of space from two rooms;
- The scheme may need the widening of doorways or movement of partitions to enable the wheelchair user to fully access the first floor areas they need to. If the first floor cannot achieve this level of accessibility it may be that an extension is more appropriate.
- Where an overcrowding issue overlaps with a disability issue, the overcrowding should be resolved first by the family. Issues of overcrowding will not be considered under grant.

## Rehousing Option

In reaching a decision on the most practical approach to providing accessible facilities, the option of re-housing should be considered. If a family is already in restricted accommodation then a larger house may not only facilitate an easier and more cost effective adaptation but it may also enable the family to have more appropriate housing.

Maintaining independence is a key objective for most people as they get older. Living in their own home for as long as possible is often seen as key to such independence and is the aim of the majority of older people. However, for some older people moving home may enhance their ability to live independently, especially if they are having problems with deteriorating health, reduced mobility, isolation or their home is too large for their needs and they face concerns about future costs and maintenance.

As well as assessing current needs, it is important to take into account how needs may evolve over time. It is good practice to compare the advantages of adaptation of the existing home to those of moving to a new home.

In the case of a private tenant or registered social landlord tenancy, it may be possible to locate suitable alternative accommodation within a reasonable timescale. This may depend on how far the client is willing to move. Some disabled people or their carers will be unable or unwilling to move for many complex reasons including such considerations as relatives nearby, social contacts, support networks, children's education, their investment in the property etc.

In the case of owner-occupiers fewer re-housing options are likely to be available. In some circumstances the client may be able to secure Council or Housing Association, especially if this is likely to be required for relatively short period, perhaps in the case of terminal illness.

Advice from the Housing Option Teams within the Council is available on possible housing solutions both within the private and public sector.

### **Alternative Works Option**

Where a decision has been made to provide facilities within the existing footprint of the dwelling and applicants request an extension, then the Council will consider an "applicant's alternative scheme". In such cases, the grant may be approved for the notional cost of installing a lift (or whatever works are identified) but the money may be put towards the actual cost of building the extension, provided the occupational therapist agrees that the extension will offer a scheme that meet the person's needs

### **Provision of Facilities**

Typical extensions for adaptations will be for the provision of accessible bedrooms, bath/shower rooms, wc compartments and kitchens for the disabled user. It is standard practice to utilise internal areas/rooms to reduce the size of the extension to be provided or even negate the need for an extension altogether. This should include utilising any rooms such as unused bedrooms, store rooms, integral garages (if convertible), secondary reception rooms etc.

The occupants of the house should always be left with a principal reception room of dimensions that would be reasonable for the number of occupants in the household. This room should allow the family members to relax and be of a size that enables the disabled person to integrate with family activities.

In designing the scheme, sufficient space must be allowed to enable safe and convenient movement around the rooms. This should allow for wheelchair access or access with a walking frame as applicable and appropriate. Any bed(s) should be fully accessible from both sides. Allowance should also be made for the accommodation of any specialised equipment which may be needed for the care of the disabled person. It is also reasonable that in designing a room there is sufficient space to house basic bedroom furniture such as drawers, shelves and clothes storage space etc.

Where all or part of an existing reception room is to be incorporated into the accommodation for the disabled person, the remaining space should be sufficient to allow adequate manoeuvring space for the disabled person and for the family to carry on normal family activities including relaxing and dining together.

## **Extensions for Children**

Children with disabilities and their families have particular needs which must be recognised. Unless a child is imminently terminally ill, allowance must be made for his/her future development including physical growth. The extension should therefore be sufficient to allow access for the disabled person as an adult and include for all necessary equipment for an adult. It may be reasonable to allow additional size to a bedroom where the disabled child is highly dependent and may need additional specialist equipment. This may also include the provision of extra services such as increased lighting or extra power sockets.

The extension must also allow for the needs of parents/carers. This may include space in which to wash and dress the child and also to provide all other care which may be needed. A room which is too small may present a health and safety risk to the carer because of difficulties with, for example, lifting.

Requests are sometimes received to provide separate bedrooms where a disabled child with behavioural difficulties shares a room with other siblings and disturbs their sleep. This will only be considered under mandatory grant where it can be demonstrated the child is prone to violent outbursts and there is risk of physical violence or safety to the other siblings.

Rehousing should also be considered as this may offer the best option to meet the child's long term needs.

## **Size of Extension Rooms**

The following bedroom sizes should be used as guidance when designing extensions. Sufficient space must be allowed to enable safe and convenient movement around the rooms. This should allow for wheelchair access or access with a walking frame as appropriate. It is not possible to give room size guidance for all the differing scenarios of occupancy. From the family discussions that have taken place, the OT will normally indicate whether the disabled person sleeps with their partner and as such a double bedroom would be required. The sizes in the tables below are guidance figures and should be used as such.

Bedrooms	Measurements in square metres
Single	<p>Ambulant - 6.50 - 7.50m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Bedroom with specialist bed - 12.50m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Wheelchair user - 7.28 - 12.00m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Electric Wheelchair user - 7.28 - 12.50m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Wheelchair user with carers bed - 14.70m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Bed / bathroom with H frame tracking - 20.00m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Bed / bathroom with H frame tracking + carers bed - 22.00m<sup>2</sup></p>
Double	<p>Both ambulant - 10.20m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Ambulant and one wheelchair user - 10.20 - 14.70m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Both wheelchair users - 14.5 - 15.50m<sup>2</sup></p>

### Non-mandatory items

1. Generally, more extensive adaptations to the kitchen than those described previously.
2. The provision of cupboards, storage units, breakfast bars, generally above and beyond the standard that applies for mandatory grants.
3. Free Standing cookers and hobs, refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines and waste disposal units.
4. Replacement of rooms or parts of rooms which have been "lost" by carrying out adaptations (by way of explanation, where a ground floor living room or dining room is converted into a bedroom with en suite shower room for a disabled person, the construction of a "replacement" living room or dining room for use by the rest of the family could not be grant aided on a mandatory basis).
5. Fitments in rooms, for example built-in cupboards, wardrobes, storage units etc.
6. Extensions to living rooms.
7. Formation of patios, walkways to and from garages or scooter areas.
8. Storage areas and charging points for wheelchair/scooters.
9. Service contracts for lifts and other equipment.

10. Provision of treatment rooms.
11. Provision of pager systems linked to doorbells or telephones for the profoundly deaf.
12. Floor coverings (except thermo-plastic tiles or similar permanent floor finish to bathroom area).
13. Wall tiling (except splash backs and immediate shower areas).
14. Provision of disabled aids and equipment that can be fitted with no or little structural alterations. These are likely to be able to be removed fairly easily and re-used if the disabled person should decide to move in the future.
15. Hoists to bedrooms , living rooms or communal areas.
16. Non-fixed aids, e.g. bath hoists may be funded by HCC
17. Sliding doors/two way doors - not needed - can turn door round or use flexi care 2 way hinges in special cases if likely to fall.
18. Hard standings (as a Planning Condition).
19. Air conditioning.
20. CCTV.
21. Creating a safe play area and/or fences.
22. Storage areas for example scooters, wheelchairs, children's equipment.
23. Formation of bin store areas.
24. Provision of clothes drying facilities.
25. General provision of external lighting.
26. Portable/non-fixed items.
27. Drop kerbs, vehicle hard standings and ramps for non-wheelchair users also for non-drivers.
28. Minor adaptations up to the value of £1,000 which may be provided by Adult Services. Funding may also be available from Children's services

## **Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant**

A Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) with a maximum top up on any grant of £5000.00 per grant this may though be repayable in certain circumstances. In 2014/2015 there is an agreed budget of around £25,000 for Discretionary DFGs.

## **Funding of non-mandatory Items**

Eastleigh Borough Council can help to facilitate the non-mandatory items through low cost loans where the clients are eligible, sign posting the clients to suitable charitable funding for the client to apply for; however no Disabled facilities grant funding will be available for these works.

## **Complaints**

All complaints must be made in writing and will be dealt with in accordance with Eastleigh Borough Councils corporate complaints procedures

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

**Eastleigh Borough Council**

### **Equal Opportunities Assessment**

*All questions should be answered with any / all of the equality areas in mind*

*Race / gender / disability / religion or beliefs / sexual orientation / age*

1. Name and aim(s) of policy / procedure / practice / function being reviewed

#### **Disabled Facilities Grant Policy**

Eastleigh Borough Council administers disabled facilities grants as per section 23 (1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, where adaptations are “necessary and appropriate” for the needs of the disabled person and it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the work in the disabled person’s home. This policy sets out the works that will be eligible for grant funding.

2. Is there any evidence of the policy/procedure/practice impacting on specific identified groups (**and is this a positive or negative impact**) – please provide details?

*(Evidence may be available from the following sources: complaints / customer feedback / stakeholder consultation / employee or member feedback / public data e.g. BVPI's)*

As the majority of the documents relate to the funding of adaptations for people with disabilities, they have a major positive impact on this group. Specific needs due to

religion can be considered during the design process. There is a legal requirement that all children's' DFGs are fully funded, whereas adult DFGs are means tested. The policy makes it clear that DFGs must be partly repaid if the property is sold within 5 years of completion of the DFG. Loans are given based on financial circumstances and rules and are targeted at people who would otherwise be unable to afford to improve their properties so has a positive impact.

3. On the evidence you have, if there is **adverse impact**, what steps will be taken to remove / minimise it?

No adverse impact identified.

4. On the evidence you have, does it show any **unmet needs** or **requirements** of specific groups?

Currently we do not feel that any customer is disadvantaged by the service we provide but consultation with minority groups may dispute this. Occasionally there will be disputes as to the level of work that will be grant funded, but we will always try to fund what is required by the Occupational Therapist in the most cost effective way.

6. If **unmet needs** or **requirements** have been identified, what steps will be taken to meet the needs or requirements?

N/A

7. If there is insufficient evidence to answer the above, do you think additional information needs to be sought (if `no`, please explain why) and what steps / timescales are to be taken to collect additional data?

We are carrying out a consultation on the updated policies.

8. What consultation has taken place and what were the results

Currently undertaking.

9. Summary of agreed actions to be taken (identified in 6 & 7 above).

This will be completed post consultation

Action

Date EIA completed

Lead Officer: Matt Blythe

Review Date