

Adapting your home

Making your home safer, more comfortable,
and accessible.



Introduction

If you are disabled, or someone living with you is disabled, a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) may help pay for your home to be adapted.

This leaflet gives you some general information about the grant process and describes the main steps involved when you apply for a DFG in Stockport. It also provides you with space to record the progress of your grant application.

Grants for a range of work are mandatory. This means that the Council must offer you a grant if you qualify for it. However, because the grants are means-tested, you should not assume that you will automatically be offered one.

If you are a tenant of Stockport Homes your adaptation will be funded in another way and you should refer to the leaflet "Equipment and Adaptations Service" which explains the process used.

The Disabled Facilities Grant

Stockport have a Home Improvement Agency who can provide you with a dedicated Case Worker to guide you through the application process and a surveyor to help with the contractor side of the work. The grant process pays for this charge. You may be happy to also apply for a Disabled Facilities grant and arrange the adaptations yourself.

The HIA will:

- ▶ Help you complete the grant application forms.
- ▶ Help you find alternative funding to pay for the adaptations if the grant will not meet the full cost.
- ▶ Advise you about other services you could benefit from.
- ▶ Help you maximise your income.
- ▶ Obtain quotes for the necessary work from reputable contractors.
- ▶ Make a building surveyor available to offer advice about how to resolve any technical problems to ensure that your adaptation is safe and fit for purpose.
- ▶ Arrange for a building surveyor to supervise complex works (E.G. an extension) from start to finish to ensure it is completed properly and to a high standard.



If you prefer, you may use your own professional adviser, but you must declare this on the grant application form, especially if they will want to charge for their services.

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Whether you decide to use the HIA or not, your right to apply for a grant is not affected.

Step 1

Assessment of your needs

Firstly, you will have had an assessment of your needs conducted by either an Occupation Therapist (OT) or Equipment and Adaptations Officer (EAO) from SMBC and they have determined that your home should be adapted.

Your OT/EAO will have told you how urgent your case is considered to be. This is determined by a priority points system and priority will be given to people at highest risk.

Your case will then be passed to the HIA at Stockport Homes who administer the SFG on behalf of SMBC. You will be told by the HIA if there will be any delay in progressing your application for a DFG.

Step 2

The DFG application process

The grant process can be complex, and timescales often depend on how quickly you can provide the information required. On average it takes about three months to process a grant application for a small adaptation.

For larger adaptations which require planning permission the application process can take over 12 months.

The Grant Application is the first half of the process. Once the grant has been approved, arrangements can then be made for the work to be carried out. Please refer to Step Four – Work in Progress for other timescales.

Please note: if you carry out any work before the grant offer is made, you will be responsible for the cost of that work, and you may not be offered any grant at all.



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The financial test

The DFG is a contributory grant. This means that depending on your financial situation, you may be asked to contribute towards the cost of the adaptation(s) you need. You will be asked to complete a 'Test of Resources Form' which requires you to give full details of your income and savings and those of your partner, if relevant. You will be offered help to complete this form and will be told as soon as possible if you will need to pay anything.

Parents or guardians applying for a DFG on behalf of a disabled child under the age of 19 do not need to go through the financial test.

Test of resources form completed

Notified of contribution

Agreed to pay contribution

If you are asked to make a contribution you can't afford to pay, and you have chosen to use the HIA, officers will be able to discuss various options with you such as taking out a loan, or approaching charities.

Other grant application forms

Apart from the 'Test of Resources Form' there are other grant application papers which officers from Stockport Homes will help you complete.

Obtaining Quotes

This is part of the grant application process. Generally, quotes must be obtained using a details list of the work required based on the specification received from your OT/EAO. If specialist equipment is needed (e.g. a through floor lift or hoist) a quote from the manufacturer will be accepted.

In the most complex cases such as building an extension, formal plans will be required, usually supported with building control and planning permission. In these circumstances we strongly advise that you employ either your own professional agent or the HIA.

If you choose to use the HIA, the contractor(s) will be chosen for you, however if you decide to arrange work yourself or have your own agent, you will choose the contractor.

The HIA have a framework of vetted contractors that they use. Unfortunately we are no longer permitted to recommend a contractor for you if you chose to arrange the work yourself. Please be aware that in more complex cases contractors will probably ask for staged payments. Our surveyors can agree this with you and will perform inspections at stages through the build to ensure the work is compliant and so they can release payments.



Step 3

Grant Approval

Once all the grant application papers are provided, they will be passed to the HIA Coordinator who will check them. If everything is in order a grant will be offered for the reasonable costs of providing the adaptations needed, less any contribution that you are required to make. If you are using your own contractor and the HIA Coordinator thinks the contractors quote is too high, they will only offer a grant for a proportion of the quote.

The law states that you must be given a decision on your grant application within six months of completing your grant application. However, a decision is usually given much faster – usually within four weeks of the HIA receiving the complete grant application. A completed grant application is one in which all application papers have been fully completed and all supporting documentation including contractor quotes have been provided.

The grant offer is valid for 12 months so work must be completed within this timescale. If you are employing your own contractors and don't think you can meet this time scale, you should contact the HIA Coordinator immediately.



Step 4

Work in Progress

If you are using the HIA they will agree with you and the contractor when work will start. How long it takes depends on how busy the contractor is, but for a straightforward adaptation such as a stairlift or a level access shower, work should be finished one to two months after a grant approval has been issued. For more complex work such as an extension, it could be six to twelve months.

If you have chosen to arrange the adaptation yourself, the timescales will be determined by you and your contractor. Please tell the HIA when work is due to start as a surveyor will need to check the work.

Always tell the HIA immediately if you are unhappy with the start of work.

Step 5

Payment for work.

If you have used the HIA, when work is finished, payment will be made on your behalf, and you will be sent an invoice for any contribution that you agreed to pay towards the cost.

If you have used your own contractor, you must provide the HIA with a copy of the contractors' invoice along with a statement for the bank account that you wish the payment to be made to. The grant will then be paid. If there is a shortfall of money payable to the contractor, you must pay it.

Future maintenance of the adaptation(s)

When any guarantee for the work has expired you will be responsible for the upkeep of the adaptation. For a lift or hoist adaptation, your OT/EAO will be able to give you advice on setting up servicing and maintenance arrangements. This is to ensure that the adaptation stays in good working order and is safe to use.



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