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HOME ADAPTATIONS AND ASSISTANCE POLICY

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Section 1: Home Adaptations and Assistance Policy 2017- 2020

1.1 Introduction

This policy succeeds the interim housing renewal policy October to March 2016 made under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 and sets out policy guidance for home adaptations and assistance in Herefordshire for 2017-2020. Following the cancellation of Circular 05/2003 by the Department of Communities and Local Government on 16th January 2015 local housing authorities no longer need to provide a housing renewal policy. This policy is now focussed on home adaptations and assistance, making reference to the remaining statutory duties and recommended practice in the area of home adaptations and assistance to disabled people who wish to remain living independently in their own homes.

The legislative framework governing disabled facilities grants (DFGs) is provided by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, and Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996. Since 1990 housing authorities have been under a statutory duty to provide grant aid to disabled people (adults and children) for a range of adaptations to their homes.

The regulations, statutory instruments and orders around this legislation have been supplemented and amended in England regularly since 1996 to reflect changes in disabled facilities grant provision and other areas of wider national policy.

Latest amendments and orders include: the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008, which prescribes the current maximum grant amount, The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008 which allowed authorities to request repayment of part of the grant in certain situations, the Housing Renewal Grants (Prescribed Form and Particulars) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2010 which removed the need for authorities to use a prescribed form for DFGs, and yearly amendments to the Housing Renewal Grants (England) Regulations to keep up with welfare & other changes affecting means testing.

Within Herefordshire council both the “housing authority” and “social services authority” as referred to within legislation lie within the adults and wellbeing department of the council. Disabled facilities grants and related assistance are administered by the in-house home improvement agency (HIA) “You at Home”, which undertakes the council’s housing authority function in this regard.

The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 introduced a wider discretionary power to allow local authorities to provide a range of financial and other assistance for repairs, improvements and adaptations. The intention was to allow greater flexibility and discretion in delivering housing renewal to address local needs. These flexibilities are reflected in the review of this policy.

The Housing Act 2004 provided local authorities with duties and powers to tackle poor housing conditions. The idea behind the act was that local authorities would look at the condition of properties using a risk assessment approach called the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Local authorities would then give priority to dealing with the greatest risks to health and safety in dwellings. Officers use the formal scoring system within HHSRS to demonstrate the seriousness of hazards that can cause harm in dwellings.

If the officer finds a serious hazard (i.e. one in the higher scoring bands A – C, called a category 1 hazard in the act) the local authority is under a duty to take action. The home improvement agency team works in liaison with Herefordshire council's environmental health team to give advice and support to private owners and tenants when a category 1 hazard is identified during site surveys for works within the remit of the home adaptations and assistance policy. In addition the home improvement agency works with housing commissioning colleagues to ensure that stock conditions surveys and other appropriate housing research & developments can help inform appropriate forms of assistance within this policy.

The Care Act 2014 came into effect from April 2015 and housing is extensively referenced throughout the associated guidance which specifically acknowledges the importance of suitable living accommodation in enabling people to live independently. Housing is included in the key definitions of wellbeing, prevention and integration. To achieve the main aims of the Care Act practical help must be available to help the residents of Herefordshire live independently at home, including the provision of adaptations and community equipment, alongside integrated information and advice about housing, care and related financial options.

Social service authorities are required to provide community equipment and adaptations costing £1,000 or less without charge¹. Within this policy adaptations costing £1,000 or less are referred to as minor adaptations and as such are procured separately to adaptations arranged under the disabled facilities grants process, which applies to adaptations costing in excess of £1,000, referred to as major adaptations.

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 Section 2 continues to apply to children and places a strong duty on social services in relation to adaptations, along with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

1.2 National and Local Policy

The home adaptations and assistance policy is compiled with reference to the legislation referred to above and the following guidance and local policies:

- Home Adaptations for Disabled People : “A detailed guide to related legislation, guidance and good practice”, Home Adaptations Consortium, Care & Repair England 2015
- Home Adaptations: the Care Act 2014 and related provision across the United Kingdom. Michael Mandelstam October 2015. College of Occupational Therapists.
- Herefordshire Prevention & Early Intervention Strategy 2013-2016 (Draft)
- Final Report October 2012 in relation to the Healthy Housing Survey 2011
- Herefordshire Older People's Housing Strategy and Pathway (2015)
- Herefordshire Council Interim Housing Strategy 2016-2020
- Herefordshire Council Homelessness Review and Prevention Strategy 2016-2020
- “Understanding Herefordshire” Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2017, Herefordshire Council

¹ The Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014, regulation 3

- Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Adults Wellbeing Plan 2017-2020

1.3 Key Issues

In Herefordshire the key issues that must be addressed by the home adaptations and assistance policy are as follows:

- Statutory legislative duties and government guidance
- The challenges presented in the Care Act 2014 to offer practical help to the residents of Herefordshire to live independently at home including the provision of adaptations and community equipment, preventing, delaying or reducing the need for care and support.
- Adaptations to aid independent living for older persons in their own homes rather than moving to care homes
- Improve the quality of life by providing adaptations to the homes of disabled people.
- Reduce difficulties faced by vulnerable groups living in rural isolation in Herefordshire in accessing services.
- Assisting with hospital discharge to return home
- Improving housing safety and security
- Reducing the risk of falls at home
- Linking with other agencies to help reduce fuel poverty
- Supporting disabled children, young people and their families

1.4 Working with local partners

It is recognised that the council does not have the resources to address all housing adaptation issues, and so in order to meet needs, and deliver an effective policy, the principals of partnership and collaborative working will continue to be strengthened and developed between our existing partners. This includes registered providers, energy efficiency partnerships, internal departments and directorates, health partners and voluntary sector organisations.

From 2008/09 the “ring fence” around DFG funding was widened and later removed to give scope for use of the funding to support expenditure incurred under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002. The purpose of this was to enable authorities to use DFG funding for wider purposes and to bring opportunities for pooling resources with other funding streams to deal with adaptations in a holistic way.

Whilst any individual, regardless of tenure, is entitled to apply for a disabled facilities grant; in the case of tenants of registered providers good practice points towards

the development of an adaptations agreement with the local registered providers, including strategies for making best use of adapted properties through allocations practice and policy. To this end prior to DFG funding being released landlords, including registered providers, in Herefordshire are required to sign a certificate agreeing to future re-letting of the property to tenants on the basis of their needs for the adaptation wherever possible.

1.5 Types of assistance

To address these key issues for the period of this policy the following types of assistance, which are expanded upon later in this section, will be available:

1. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants
2. Professional and Technical advice
3. Emergency Repayable Grant
4. Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant
5. Discretionary Fast Track Adaptations Scheme
6. Relocation Grant
7. Minor Adaptations & Handyperson Scheme
8. Technology Enabled Care Services

This policy will be reviewed towards the end of the policy period or sooner if prompted by central government legislative or significant funding changes, or significant local or council policy developments which may have impact on this policy. This policy framework clearly directs resources to the priority client groups at this time.

1.6 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

This means tested assistance is provided in accordance with statute, and is subject to a maximum grant limit of £30,000², for adaptations to facilitate access into and around the home and for essential provisions within it for the disabled applicant and his or her family. This maximum grant will be reduced by the assessed client financial contribution under the means test.

An applicant must be:

- A private owner or tenant of the dwelling requiring adaptation. A registered provider or landlord may apply on behalf of a tenant.

or

- The owner or tenant of a houseboat or caravan requiring adaptation. A landlord may apply on behalf of a tenant.

² Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008

A “dwelling” means a building or part of a building occupied or intended to be occupied as a separate dwelling, together with any yard, garden, outhouses and appurtenances belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it.

“Ownership” is defined under the legislation, and where the property is jointly owned all owners should be agreeable to the works and sign the relevant documentation.

In accordance with Care Act requirements adaptations costing less than £1,000 will not normally be considered for a disabled facilities grant but instead be funded as a minor adaptation in private properties or directed to the relevant registered provider (see section below).

“Necessary and appropriate”

Section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a duty on housing authorities that are not themselves a social care authority to consult the relevant social care authority on the adaptation needs of disabled people seeking help via a disabled facilities grant. In Herefordshire the occupational therapy team in the adults and wellbeing directorate will normally perform this function, along with colleagues in children’s services. In some circumstances recommendations are considered from occupational therapy staff in Wye Valley Trust, private occupational therapists, or other sources at the home improvement agency manager’s discretion.

Non-standard adaptations and adaptations exceeding £5,000 are subject to a panel discussion between occupational therapy and home improvement agency colleagues.

“Reasonable and practicable”

Section 24(3)(b) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 requires housing authorities to satisfy themselves whether it is “reasonable” and “practicable” to carry out the relevant works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling. There is no definition provided for this, so this needs to be considered in the light of all the circumstances of the case.

Tenure & Means Testing

In the case of an application by an owner occupier or tenant, the disabled person (and, where applicable, their partner or other person) will be subject to the government prescribed means test for the disabled facilities grant.

Where the disabled occupant is a child or qualifying young person³ there is no means test.

Any contributions made by the applicant towards the cost of works under this type of grant will be taken into account with regard to any future application within a 10 year period in accordance with the Housing Regeneration Grants Regulations 1996.

Research into the outcomes of means testing registered provider tenants in Herefordshire compared to the costs of processing the means tests identified that it was more cost effective not to apply a means test for these tenants. This is still the current local policy

³ As defined within The Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009

decision for 2017-2020 and landlord's applications are therefore currently used. Tenants of registered providers should be advised to contact their landlord in the first instance so that the landlord can consider funding the work prior to any grant consideration.

In accordance with legislation⁴ local authorities may impose conditions around repayment of the disabled facilities grant for owner occupiers in certain circumstances. Herefordshire Council applies this power, by placing a local land charge on the property, subject to a condition period of 10 years from the certified date, in either or both of the following circumstances:

- Where the grant exceeds £5,000 the Council will apply a local land charge where it considers it reasonable to do so. Repayment may be required where the property is disposed of by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise. Where the cost of the DFG exceeds £5,000 the limit of the maximum charge will be £10,000. The authority will use its discretion as to whether a land charge will be placed for amounts under £500.
- Where works for which a grant are paid are also the subject of an insurance claim or legal claim against another person. In this case the applicant is required to take reasonable steps to pursue that claim and repay the grant out of the proceeds. In the event of a breach, the Council may demand repayment of the appropriate part of the grant with compound interest.

A local land charge will not be considered for properties owned by a landlord.

Appendix 1 details the council's schedule of fees and land charges.

Where an adaptation is required on council owned property, such as a travellers' site, the home improvement agency team will liaise with relevant teams to clarify appropriate funding routes for the required adaptations.

Government guidance makes it clear that access to assistance in the provision of adaptations should not depend upon the tenure of the disabled person. A local authority may determine that it will fund adaptations to council-owned property other than through the DFG mechanism. However this should not result in a worse service to the occupants than that received by applicants living in other tenures.

Warranties and Recycling

Applicants are required to notify the council if, and as soon as, any specialised equipment provided under the grant is no longer needed. The council may choose to recover the unwanted specialised equipment by prior written notice and will make good any damage caused to the property by recovery.

⁴ The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008

In some circumstances, and if funding permits, the cost of extended warranties may be included within the disabled facilities grant for larger items such as through floor lifts, step lifts, specialist WCs.

Technical Support

Herefordshire council home improvement agency team is able to provide professional & technical advice to DFG applicants for a fee set as a percentage of the total cost of the works – as described in the section below, and as detailed in Appendix 1.

1.7 Professional and Technical Advice

The home improvement agency offers an advocacy style service to help people stay warm, safe and independent in their own homes by arranging repairs, improvements of adaptations.

The advice, guidance and practical support that the agency may be able to offer can range from small repairs and minor adaptations such as fitting a new lock or grab rail, to guiding the client through large adaptations schemes or an emergency repayable grant, or helping to find and manage a reputable contractor to carry out the necessary work.

Where the council is unable to provide financial assistance such as loans or grants the property owner or tenant will be offered impartial free advice about:

- Liaison with other council teams including environmental health to identify and prioritise emergency repairs using the housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) (see below)
- Signposting to the trader register.
- Signposting to First Stop an independent impartial and free service offering financial advice for older people.
- Signposting for advice regarding charitable funding options.
- Signposting as appropriate to other agencies or services, e.g. affordable warmth, Herefordshire fire & rescue service, falls team etc.

In addition the home improvement agency offers the following support to other teams within the council's prevention services:

- Feasibility visits to support occupational therapists with complex cases.
- Attending joint visits with housing solutions colleagues and occupational therapists processing the adaptation of existing properties on the accessible homes register.

Fees

The agency does not charge for advice only. In accordance with legislation⁵ certain services and charges may be included within a disabled facilities grant. The home improvement agency will charge a fee to cover these services and charges where agency support is provided for a disabled facilities grant application or where an owner occupier or tenant decides to go ahead with other grant assisted works within this policy or on a private basis supported by the agency. See appendix 1 for the schedule of fees and land charges.

Housing, Health and Safety Rating System

This is an evidence based risk assessment procedure introduced in the Housing Act 2004 for residential properties. It replaced the housing fitness standard from 6th April 2006 in England. Local authorities will base enforcement decisions in respect of all residential properties on assessments under the housing, health and safety rating system (HHSRS). This assessment process is designed to enable local authorities to address more effectively the hazards to health and safety present in the home.

The home improvement agency will work with private owners and tenants and the environmental health department to give advice and support with category 1 hazards (identified under the HHSRS) identified in the home. In addition the home improvement agency will give advice regarding eligibility for an emergency repayable grant – see below.

Trader Register

Whilst the local authority does not recommend contractors or specific products, a register⁶ of vetted traders is maintained by the trading standards team. This can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.traderregister.org.uk/herefordshire/index.php>

Charitable Funding

Most charitable organisations will only contribute towards the cost of an adaptation in very specific circumstances for particular groups of beneficiaries.

In some circumstances, the home improvement agency caseworker can help clients by supporting individual applications to relevant organisations. These circumstances will mainly be where the test of resources has resulted in an assessed financial contribution by the applicant that they cannot afford but is less than the total amount of the works. Additionally where the upper limit of the grant has been exceeded charitable funding may be sought if applicable.

1.8 Emergency Repayable Grant

This is a discretionary grant for emergency and essential works of repair that remedy a serious hazard that could adversely affect health or safety, determined using the housing health and safety rating system. It is intended to provide a safety net for urgent repairs for

⁵ Statutory instrument No 2889

⁶ under review at the time of writing this policy

those most vulnerable in the community. The grant is repaid when the ownership of the property changes, or on transfer of the property to family members.

Eligible works include items such as:

- securing the fabric of the property against dangerous wind and rain penetration;
- works to defective electrical installation where there is immediate risk of electric shock or fire;
- remedial works where there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Such works will be limited to removal of the defective appliance not its replacement; and
- the repair of a domestic water heating appliance.

The emergency grant will be available subject to the following conditions:

- The works required must address an immediate risk of serious harm or injury to the occupants. It is intended that the grant will normally only be available for works identified to 'make safe' serious hazards, or provide assurance that the person is safe eg category 1 hazards.
- The essential work cannot be carried out through other schemes.
- The same works have not been grant funded within the last 5 years, unless required now under exceptional circumstances.
- The grant amount available will normally be up to a maximum of £15,000 within any 10 year period. Any grant in excess of this will require authorisation by the head of prevention services.
- The grant amount required will only be provided after all other financial routes have been considered, including the ability of occupiers and owners of the dwelling to pay for the work or find alternative housing.

The applicant or their partner, at the time of the completed application, must:

- be aged 18 or over
- agree to the payment of an administration fee of a set percentage of the cost of the works. See appendix 1.
- undertake a means test to calculate any contribution they may need to make, based on income and assets,
- live in the property as their only residence;
- be the sole owner-occupier of the property or joint owner-occupier of the property with their partner, for at least three years prior to application.
- be vulnerable and normally in receipt of, or have an entitlement to, disability benefit or a means tested benefit.

Works must not have commenced before the application is approved, and must be completed within 6 months of the approval date.

The repayable grant, (enforced through local land charges), must be repaid to the local authority in full when the grant recipient disposes of the property in respect of which the grant was given. The applicant, together with any joint owner will be required to agree to a legal charge being taken on the property to ensure repayment of the grant.

Where the amount of grant required is less than £500 the local authority will use its discretion as to whether or not a land charge will be imposed.

Appendix 1 gives details of fees and local land charges.

Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the home improvement agency manager following recommendation by an officer of Herefordshire council.

1.9 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant

The council may consider offering a discretionary disabled facilities grant in the following circumstances:

1. Where the cost of eligible works under a mandatory disabled facilities grant are higher than the grant limit, or where the payment of a means tested contribution will cause undue hardship, and where other financial routes have been explored and ruled out.
2. Where there are works required that cannot be considered for mandatory grants (as set out in subsection 1 of section 23 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act). For example:
 - Works to provide more satisfactory internal living arrangements for a disabled occupant where the works are not of a mandatory nature and where they would be of direct benefit to the disabled occupant rather than other members of the household. Such works might include extending or enlarging a dwelling that is already suitable for the disabled occupant in all other respects.
 - Adapting or providing a room to be used for a disabled person who is housebound but nevertheless able to work from home.

The offer of such assistance will be subject to assessment by and the support of an occupational therapist.

The disabled person (and, where applicable, their partner or other relevant person) will be subject to a means test. In the case of an application for a disabled child, the parents or owner of the property will be subject to a means test equivalent to that used for a disabled facilities grant.

The discretionary disabled facilities grant will incur a local land charge which must be repaid to the local authority in full when the grant recipient disposes of the property in respect of which the grant was given. The applicant, together with any joint owner, will be required to agree to the charge being taken on the property. Where the amount of grant required is

less than £500 the local authority will use its discretion as to whether or not a local land charge will be imposed. See Appendix 1.

The assistance will normally be subject to a maximum limit of £15,000 within any 10 year period. Any grant in excess of this will require authorisation by the head of prevention services.

The grant amount required will only be provided after all other financial routes have been considered, including the ability of occupiers and owners of the dwelling to pay for the work or find suitable alternative housing.

1.10 Discretionary Fast Track Adaptations Scheme

This assistance will be considered to cover the installation cost of specific adaptations in private properties which may be installed on a rental or re-use scheme. Maintenance costs may also be included where considered necessary.

This may include adaptations such as a straight stair-lift, refurbished specialist WC, ceiling track hoist installation or metal ramping and will follow a council occupational therapist referral to allow timely hospital discharge, reduce urgent risks to carers, reduce costs of social care support package, provide essential access to or from the property, or to enable a person with severely life limiting conditions to remain in his/her own home. Criteria for this scheme apply as follows:

- The adaptation meets the DFG criteria as being considered “necessary and appropriate” to meet identified needs.
- The service user has an evidenced urgent need as identified above.
- The adaptation is possible to provide via a rental or re-use scheme.

Adaptations provided under this scheme will not be means tested but a monthly rental charge may apply to some adaptations provided under this scheme.

1.11 Discretionary Assistance

It is recognised that whilst most circumstances relating to home adaptations provision are covered within the other types of assistance available in this policy, one off circumstances cannot be predicted and may hinder the completion of an adaptation scheme or be required in addition to other assistance to meet wider family or carer needs rather than the needs of the disabled occupant.

This discretionary assistance will normally be subject to both a means test equivalent to that used for the disabled facilities grant, and have maximum limit of £5,000. The assistance will require authorisation by the head of prevention services. The grant amount required will only be provided after all other financial routes have been considered, including the ability of occupiers and owners of the dwelling to pay for the work or find suitable alternative housing.

The discretionary assistance will incur a local land charge which must be repaid to the local authority in full when the grant recipient disposes of the property in respect of which the grant was given. The applicant, together with any joint owner, will be required to agree to the charge being taken on the property. Where the amount of grant required is less than £500 the local authority will use its discretion as to whether or not a local land charge will be imposed. See Appendix 1.

1.12 Relocation Assistance

This assistance may be available to owner-occupiers where relocation is considered the most cost effective or practical option and where the existing home is unsuitable for improvement, repair or adaptation.

The council must have inspected the new property prior to an offer being made, although no guarantee of assistance following purchase can be given.

The maximum amount of financial assistance will be £10,000 and will cover costs including estate agents fees, solicitor's fees, stamp duty, difference in purchase price.

Persons eligible will be limited to those who have not previously received relocation assistance, and are eligible financially for a mandatory disabled facility grant but it has been considered not reasonable or practicable by the council to adapt the property.

Where the applicant is a disabled child living in family owned property the property owner will be subject to a means test equivalent to that used for a disabled facilities grant, for the relocation assistance.

The relocation assistance will incur a local land charge which must be repaid to the local authority in full when the grant recipient disposes of the property in respect of which the grant was given. The applicant together with any joint owner will be required to agree to a charge being taken on the property. Where the amount of grant required is less than £500 the local authority will use its discretion as to whether or not a local land charge will be imposed. See Appendix 1.

An occupational therapist will usually be involved in assessing the suitability of proposed new properties identified by the applicant.

1.13 Minor Adaptations & Handyperson Assistance

The home improvement agency technicians provide a range of minor adaptations and handyperson assistance.

Minor Adaptations (ICES) are those minor adaptations that meet eligible needs of disabled people and their carers under the Care Act in private properties. These are funded by Herefordshire council as part of the integrated community equipment services (ICES) where equipment and minor adaptations (costing £1,000 or less) are provided free of charge to those with eligible needs and installed by the home improvement agency technicians. These will normally be a range of adaptations such as:

- Grab rails
- Stair rails
- Half steps
- Wooden ramps for short term use.

The target timescale for installation of these adaptations is within 7 working days of receipt of referral.

A Minor Adaptations Rapid Response Service is also provided by the HIA technicians to prevent delayed discharge from hospital. These works will normally be of a minor and emergency nature and possibly prior to more extensive future works. Typically these works will include:

- Keysafe
- Grab rails

The target timescale for provision of these works is within 2 working days from receipt of referral.

Telecare Hospital Discharge Service – The HIA technicians will provide the urgent installation of emergency community alarms required to facilitate a hospital discharge. This will include:

- Installation of lifeline alarm
- Keysafe

The target timescale for installation is within 2 working days of referral.

The Handyperson Service offers a quick and effective solution to housing problems, at low cost, that is carried out by the experienced HIA Technicians. The service can carry out subsidised home repairs, improvements and maintenance such as:

- Keysafe installation

- Door chains
- Grab rails
- Very small plumbing jobs
- Changing tap washers
- Changing batteries (smoke detectors)
- Changing heating timers
- Providing portable equipment (heaters)
- Security measures (door and window locks)
- Curtain rails
- Half steps
- Stair rails (using mop-stick)
- Small Key-clamp type rails

This service is available to owner occupiers, private tenants, or tenants of registered providers. Consent for the work will be required from the property owner, and will be sought if required by the Home Improvement Agency. Target timescale for completion of these works is within 28 calendar days. An hourly charge applies to this service. The charge will be at the director of adults and wellbeing discretion but will be at a rate equivalent to the local rates charged by voluntary agencies for similar services.

1.14 Technology Enabled Care Services

The council also operates an in-house technology team which helps support vulnerable people to remain living in their own homes with appropriate equipment and technology to summon assistance where required, or to control their home environment and activities within the home safely and appropriately. In addition the service offers advice and installations to help facilitate effective assessment of people's needs to support them to remain living at home.

The telecare hospital discharge service will be involved where required to facilitate timely hospital discharge as indicated in section 1.13.

The technology team provides assessment and advice to ensure appropriate equipment and installations are identified, makes appropriate orders for provision of relevant items through the integrated community equipment service or HIA technicians, procures and oversees the installation of other specialist technology, and sets up links with appropriate finance and monitoring services.

The Telecare monitoring service is free for the first 6 weeks of the service and thereafter a weekly charge applies. See Appendix 1.

1.15 Procurement Frameworks

The home improvement agency works with the council's procurement team to ensure that financial procedures are followed in accordance with the financial procedure rules of the constitution of Herefordshire Council. Housing related procurement frameworks can sometimes help make efficiency savings whilst ensuring quality housing and adaptations services. Herefordshire council will join such schemes where there is evidence that the schemes will provide appropriate quality and levels of service within the county.

1.16 Enquiries for Adaptations or Assistance

Enquires for occupational therapy assessment, disabled facilities grants, relocation assistance & minor adaptations should be made to:

Herefordshire Council
Adults & Wellbeing
Access and Referral Team
Tel: 01432 260101

Enquiries for professional & technical advice, emergency repayable grant, & handyperson assistance should be made to:

Herefordshire Council
Home Improvement Agency (You at Home)
Tel: 01432 260757
Email: yahreferrals@herefordshire.gov.uk

Terms and Conditions

The council will not approve an application for assistance if any of the assisted works have been carried out before the application is approved. The council may, subject to means testing, pay ancillary fees and charges associated with eligible works, for example;

- Home improvement agency fees (a set percentage of the net cost of adaptation works associated with assisting vulnerable client's accessing grants, loans and services).
- Planning and building regulation fees,
- Survey fees, completion of forms and certificates.
- Other specialist contractor/consultant fees

The council will inspect the completed works prior to payments being made. Interim payments will be paid on application at the discretion of the council.

Upon satisfactory completion the repayment conditions agreed are attached to the approval for the assistance to come into force and will be registered as a local land charge.

1.17 Equality of Service

Herefordshire council ensures that adaptation services are equally accessible to all in line with the Equality Act 2010.

1.18 Compliments, complaints and appeals

All applicants have the right to make comment to the council using the formal compliments and complaints procedure about any aspect of the service received.

Full details of how to make a compliment or complaint can be found on the Council's website.

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0.01	Draft	November 2017	Creation of document		
0.02	Draft	February 2018	Additional legislative regulations & orders inserted Additional clarification of charges & means testing	advice from legal team	3,4,8,9,13,14