

Appendix 2

Home Adaptations and Assistance Policy Review

Summary of changes made from 2018 version 1.1 Oct 22

(Plus additional changes following further consultation Jan 2023)

The main changes and additions in each section to the previous policy are detailed as below.

1.1 Introduction

- Deletion of older information no longer needing to be highlighted
- Information added about BCF and DFG budget allocation
- Update on new guidance documents as indicated
- Information about 2020 High Court Ruling and how Herefordshire Council interprets this ruling

1.2 National and Local Policy

- Links to local policies have been updated

1.3 Key Issues

- Addition of end of life care

1.4 Working with Local Partners

- Additional information added about role of strategic housing
- Information added about Council properties
- Information added about Housing OT liaison with Strategic Housing round new build properties
- Information added about joint working with Environmental Health

1.5 Types of Assistance

- Addition of information about the Housing Occupational Therapist

1.6 Disabled Facilities Grants

- Small wording change with regards to necessary and appropriate definition

- Small wording change with regards to adaptations panel
- Small wording change to give example of reasonable and practicable
- Addition of DFGs for council owned properties
- Addition of information about successive or concurrent applications
- Information added about current warranties included
- More information included to give greater clarity about when the placing of, or repayment of, the land charge may be waived in accordance with government guidelines

1.7 Professional and Technical Advice

- Small wording changes on current signposting options
- Small wording changes on advice to other teams
- Small wording changes to clarify fee arrangements
- Removal of information about Trader Register (no longer in operation)

1.8 Emergency Repayable Grant

- Increased from £15k to £25k to reflect the increasing costs within the building trade for materials and labour, and reflecting the extent of works required to remedy some of the Category 1 hazards now being identified.
- Clarification added with regards to recommendation by a HIA surveyor
- Additional flexibility added to allow other essential repair works that may not be rated as Category 1 Hazards but pose risks caused by the structural condition of the property and are essential to facilitate works by other partner agencies to enable the person to remain living safely at home.
- Clarification of procedure where land charge not possible to be placed

1.9 Discretionary DFG

- Clarification of how undue hardship will be determined
- Clarification of which Occupational Therapist may be involved
- Change to wording around land charges reflecting increased grant availability
- Clarification of when land charge may not be applied.

- Change in how much land charge may be applied, up to £30k due to increased funding available
- Increased assistance level from £15k to £50k. This large increase reflects the current greatly inflated costs of extensions or other large structural alterations, and the Government’s decision not to increase the current mandatory grant level of £30k. Without increasing this discretionary assistance it will not be possible to provide access to essential facilities for some disabled children and adults without them being required to move.
- More information included to give greater clarity about when the placing of, or repayment of, the land charge may be waived in accordance with government guidelines

1.10 Discretionary Fast track Adaptations Scheme

- Change of assistance to ensure equity across tenures and financial circumstances.
- Focus on “end of life”, with definition for clarification, and facilitation of urgent hospital discharge.

1.11 Discretionary Assistance

- Increased assistance from £5k to £10k to reflect increased materials and labour costs.
- Clarification of procedure where land charge cannot be applied
- Greater clarity included as per Mandatory DFG as to when the placing of the land charge may be placed or waived for the Discretionary DFG.

1.12 Relocation Grant

- Clarification around wording of means test
- Reduction of the term of land charges for the Relocation Grant to 5 years from the certified date, with an aim of encouraging greater take up of this option, to reduce costs of adapting unsuitable properties. Additional conditions added to ensure this assistance is robust with the shorter term of land charge application.
- Clarification of procedure where land charge cannot be applied

1.13 Housing Occupational Therapist

- Clarification of inclusion of this service within the RRO options provided by the Council

1.14 Minor Adaptations and Handyperson’s Assistance

- Removal of information about telecare hospital discharge service as this is now provided in a timely fashion by the Integrated Community Equipment Service.

1.15 Technology Enabled Care Services

- Small wording changes

1.16 Procurement Frameworks

- Addition of use of dynamic purchasing system.