

Newport City Council

Independent Living Team

*Adaptations to support
independent living*

Policy



NEWPORT

CITY COUNCIL

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Contents

Page

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Legislation
3.0	Grant Assistance
3.1	Disabled Facilities Grant
3.1.1	Eligibility
3.1.2	Test of Resources
3.1.3	Conditions of Grant
3.1.4	Priority
3.1.5	Administering Grant
3.2	Safety at Home Grant
3.3	Relocation Grant
3.3.1	Eligibility
3.3.2	Conditions of Grant
3.4	Fast Track Stairlift Grant
3.5	Welsh Government Enable
3.6	Disabled Car Parking Bay
4.0	Applying for Grant Funding

Appendix A – Purpose of which a DFG may be given

Appendix B – List of Safety at Home Grant adaptations

1.0 Introduction

Newport City Council Corporate Plan 2022-27 has four Well-being Objectives to support its mission to deliver an Ambitious, Fairer and Greener Newport for Everyone, and contribute towards Wales' Well-being Goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Wellbeing objective three of the Councils Corporate Plan is to deliver quality social care and community services. To achieve this the Council will support individuals and carers to maintain their independence and support them on issues that matter to them when they need it. Providing equitable access to early intervention and preventative support is instrumental in achieving this. The Council is committed to ensuring independence is maintained for residents of Newport and provide a range of home adaptations to deliver upon this wellbeing objective.

The Prevention and Inclusion service area is part of the Council's Social Services directorate, responsible for delivering a range of early intervention and preventative services. Prevention and Inclusion demonstrates Newport City Councils commitment to delivering preventative support, one of the core principles of the Social Service and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

This policy sets out assistance provided by Newport City Council to provide adaptations in the homes of eligible applicants to meet their needs. Assistance is available for applicants that are owner-occupiers and tenants who rent from private landlords, provided that eligibility criteria is met. The following policy provides Newport City Councils' interpretation of relevant legislation and regulation for grant recipients.

2.0 Legislation

Newport City Council provide mandatory grant assistance for adaptations via The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act (1996) and The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order (2002). Discretionary grant assistance is also available.

Local Authorities have a statutory obligation to provide mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) under The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act (1996) that offers adaptation for eligible applicants. Further Discretionary powers are provided to Local Authorities under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order (2002) which allows adaptation assistance to be provided in a more flexible way.

3.0 Grant Assistance

Newport City Council offer several forms of adaptation grant assistance for eligible applicants to meet their needs.

When determining the provision of an adaptation, the Council can only consider the most cost-effective solution to meet the need of an applicant. Unfortunately, cultural and/or religious beliefs of an applicant are unable to be considered when determining the most cost-effective solution.

Grant assistance will be subject to the availability of funding and consists of:

- **Mandatory Assistance**
 - Disabled Facilities Grant

- **Discretionary Assistance**
 - Safety at Home Grant
 - Relocation Grant
 - Fast Track Stairlift Grant
 - Welsh Government Enable
 - Disabled Car Parking Bay

3.1 Disabled Facilities Grant

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a mandatory means tested grant available for owner-occupiers, or tenants, that rent from private landlords to adapt their property to meet their support needs. The maximum funding available is £36,000 subject to eligibility.

Section 23 (1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act (1996) sets out the nature of works that will be considered when determining an application. Nature of works that will be considered is detailed in **Appendix A**.

3.1.1 Eligibility

Eligibility for a DFG must be viewed as **necessary and appropriate**, and **reasonable and practicable**. If both cannot be met, an individual will not be eligible for a DFG.

The Council's Community Occupational Therapy Department are able to undertake an assessment to confirm what is **necessary and appropriate** to meet the needs of an applicant.

Assessments from a private Occupational Therapist can be accepted by the Council but must be registered with the Health and Care Profession. Private assessments will not be accepted unless the Council's Community Occupational Therapy team confirm the recommendations are necessary and appropriate, ensuring there is a consistency in approach.

Following submission of an assessment from Occupational Therapy to the Independent Living Team, it will be determined if it is **reasonable and practicable** to proceed with the proposed works. A Surveyor assessment will be based on the condition and age of the property which will need to be free of category one hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (Housing Act 2004).

Further eligibility criteria is set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

3.1.2 Test of Resources

A DFG is subject to a test of resources where the financial circumstance of the occupant and their spouse/partner are taken into account.

The test of resources may lead to the requirement of a financial contribution to facilitate the proposed works.

A child under the age of 16, or for a dependant young person under the age of 20, who is eligible for child benefit will not be subject to a test of resources.

Newport City Council has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Subsequently, income received from an Armed Forces Compensation Scheme will be disregarded in any test of resources required.

3.1.3 Conditions of Grant

The following condition must be complied with once a DFG approval is issued:

1. Grant works must be completed within 12 months from the date of the formal grant approval.
2. It must be the grant recipients' intention to remain in the adapted property for 10 years from the date of the Completion Certificate (the Certified date).
3. The Council must be informed of any intention to dispose of the property that has been the subject of DFG financial assistance and is within the grant condition period.
4. DFG financial assistance in excess of £5,000 at an owner occupier property will be registered as a local land charge (up to a maximum charge of £10,000) under the Housing Grants Construction Regeneration Act 1996: General Consent 2008.

Newport City Council will require repayment when one or more of the following occurs:

1. Disposal of the property takes place,
2. There is a breach of the grant conditions in respect of the provision of grant aid,
3. There is a breach of grant conditions that apply throughout the period of 10 years from the date of the Completion certificate (the Certified date).

Newport City Council may wish to consider non-repayment when:

1. The extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he/she be required to repay all or any of the grant. Whole house income will be taken into account.
2. Whether the disposal of the property is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his/her employment.
3. Whether the disposal is made for the reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of an occupant of the premises with an impairment. (Death of the recipient of the grant won't be considered)
4. Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live nearer or with family to provide additional care needed.

Head of Service or Service Manager will consider requests of non-repayment of grant.

DFG grant conditions may be subject to change and will be notified if there are any variations before a subsequent grant is approved.

3.1.4 Priority

The Council's Occupational Therapy team will determine the urgency of an adaptation following an assessment.

A visit will be undertaken by an Independent Living Team officer, based firstly on urgency and then date order in which an assessment was received.

3.1.5 Administering Grant

The Council will adapt a property under a DFG in the most cost-effective way to meet the applicants needs and will be provided within the existing footprint of the property where reasonably possible.

The Independent Living Team provides an agency service to manage a DFG application on behalf of an applicant. This includes:

1. Completion of application forms and test of resources where necessary.
2. Property survey to understand the most cost-effective way to meet the needs identified as necessary and appropriate.
3. Procurement and management of builder who are part of the councils approved list of contractors.
4. Inspection of completed works to ensure it has been completed to a satisfactory standard.

If the applicant does not agree with the proposal offered, they are able to undertake enhanced works provided the alternative meets their needs following consultation with Occupational Therapy.

In this scenario, the applicant will dispense the use of the agency service and will be responsible for providing all documentation prior to approval of the DFG. Approval of contractor will be subject to receipt of appropriate insurance and accreditations. Funding available for the original scheme proposed by the Council will be awarded and paid upon completion of the enhanced scheme.

3.2 Safety at Home Grant

Discretionary Safety at Home grant funding to a maximum of £1,000 is available for small adaptations.

List of adaptations considered under the scheme are listed in **Appendix B**.

An applicant must meet the following criteria to be considered for funding:

1. An owner-occupier or tenant that rents from a private landlord.
2. A minimum of sixty years of age and over or has an impairment that affects independence.

In addition to the criteria, the adaptation must meet one of the following aims:

1. Discharge from hospital
2. Prevention of admission into hospital
3. Prevention of admission into long term care

3.3 Relocation Grant

In certain situations, it will not be possible to adapt a property via a DFG application and alternative housing may need to be considered. This decision would be made following an assessment of the property by a Surveyor and Occupational Therapist who will determine if the property is unsuitable for adaptations.

The Council can offer a Discretionary Relocation Grant to the maximum of £36,000 and is subject to a test of resources where the financial circumstance of the applicant and their spouse/partner or parents are taken into account. The grant can fund the shortfall between the sale price of the applicant's existing home and the dwelling they intend to purchase. Associated moving and conveyancing costs are not eligible.

3.3.1 Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria must be met:

1. Must be owner-occupiers.
2. Must have lived in current property for at least two years
3. DFG Test of resources will be undertaken on the applicant and their spouse/partner or parents

4. Intended property must be more suitable for proposed adaptations which will be confirmed by a Surveyor and Occupational Therapist

3.3.2 Conditions of Grant

The following conditions of grant will apply:

1. It must be the grant recipients' intention to remain in the adapted property for 10 years from the date of the Completion Certificate (the Certified date)
2. The Council must be informed of any intention to dispose of the property during the grant condition period.
3. Financial assistance received will be registered as a local land charge

Newport City Council will require full repayment of the financial assistance received when the following occurs:

1. There is a breach of grant conditions that apply throughout the period of 10 years from the date of the Completion certificate (the Certified date)

Newport City Council may wish to consider non-repayment where there is exceptional circumstance. Head of Service or Service Manager will consider requests of non-repayment of grant.

Conditions may be subject to change and will be notified if there are any variations before a subsequent grant is approved.

3.4 Fast Track Stairlift Grant

In the event that an applicant has been diagnosed with a palliative condition, it may be possible to receive Discretionary funding for a fast track stairlift to be installed (subject to property suitability)

Eligibility will be subject to a Community Occupational Therapist referral. The adaptations provided will be the property of Newport City Council and must be notified when no longer required. Once notified, removal of the stairlift will be arranged.

3.5 Welsh Government Enable

Newport City Council receives Welsh Government Enable grant funding to provide adaptations that are not eligible under all other grant streams provided. Enable adaptations are subject to continuation of the grant funding from Welsh Government.

Proposed adaptations that are not eligible under all other grant streams will be considered under Enable on a case by case basis. Adaptation may be subject to Occupational Therapy support. It will be subject to an assessment of whether the proposal is acceptable.

3.6 Disabled Car Parking Bay

The Independent Living Team in partnership with colleagues in Occupational Therapy and Infrastructure, provide discretionary funding for disabled car parking bays on the public highway. This does not include dropped kerbs or off-road parking.

Requests will be collated annually and an eligibility assessment is undertaken. If an individual is eligible, a bay will be awarded on a priority basis. Infrastructure will manage installation of car parking bay if feasible.

4.0 Grant Enquiries

Grant enquiries can be made by contacting Newport City Council on 01633 656656 or emailing ILT@newport.gov.uk

Appendix A – Purpose of which a DFG may be given

Section 23 Disabled facilities grants: purposes for which grant must or may be given.

(1) The purposes for which an application for a grant must be approved, subject to the provisions of this Chapter, are the following—

(a) Facilitating access by the Disabled occupant to and from

(i) The dwelling, qualifying houseboat or [caravan], or

(ii) The building in which the dwelling or, as the case may be, flat is situated;

(b) Making

(i) The dwelling, qualifying houseboat or [caravan], or

(ii) The building,

Safe for the Disabled occupant and other persons residing with him;

(c) Facilitating access by the Disabled occupant to a room used or usable as the principal family room;

(d) Facilitating access by the Disabled occupant to, or providing for the Disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping;

(e) Facilitating access by the Disabled occupant to, or providing for the Disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating the use by the Disabled occupant of such a facility;

(f) facilitating access by the Disabled occupant to, or providing for the Disabled occupant, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating the use by the Disabled occupant of such a facility;

(g) facilitating access by the Disabled occupant to, or providing for the Disabled occupant, a room in which there is a washhand basin, or facilitating the use by the Disabled occupant of such a facility;

(h) facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the Disabled occupant;

(i) improving any heating system in the dwelling [F6, qualifying houseboat or [F7caravan]] to meet the needs of the Disabled occupant or, if there is no existing heating system [F8there] or any such system is unsuitable for use by the Disabled occupant, providing a heating system suitable to meet his needs;

(j) facilitating the use by the Disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control;

(k) facilitating access and movement by the Disabled occupant around the dwelling [F6, qualifying houseboat or [F9caravan]] in order to enable him to care for a person who is normally resident [F8there] and is in need of such care;

(l) such other purposes as may be specified by order of the Secretary of State.

Appendix B – List of Safety at Home Grant adaptations

Adaptations provided under a Safety at Home Grants are as follows:

- Works to ensure safe access to and from the home e.g. provision of adapted door handles, locks and/or latches.
- Provision of a door entry system (provided in exceptional circumstances only and Provision is subject to a referral from a healthcare professional or similar).
- Internal hand rails, grab rails, drop-down rails, stair rails.
- Floor to ceiling poles.
- External grab rails and handrails.
- Small fixed, permanent ramps.
- Levelling paths; repairing / adjusting steps.
- Provision of additional electrical sockets (where these are required to support essential medical equipment, telecare and telehealth).
- Provision of additional heating for medical reasons (in exceptional circumstances only).
- Provision of a high rise WC (where a WC riser is unsuitable).
- Additional lighting (limited to the visually impaired).
- Enhancing floor safety e.g. provision of non-slip flooring, securing loose floorboards.
- Flashing doorbell (limited to the hearing impaired).
- Provision of a keysafe (available where required to support the community alarm service and/or to provide essential access by care/health workers).
- Making cooking facilities safe e.g. the provision of an isolation box.
- Provision of a shower seat.
- Or any other adaptation to improve safety of a resident on a case by case basis