



Disabled Facilities Grants Policy & Guidance

Version 2.3

**Castle Point Borough Council
Council Offices
Kiln Road
Benfleet
Essex
SS7 1TF**

- **Strategy or policy:** Disabled Facilities Grants Policy
- **Date adopted:** 15th November 2023 (CPBC Cabinet Approved.)
- **Date last revised and reasons for revision:** Original Policy approved by Cabinet April 2014. Revision 2.0 contains significant expansion of guidance for customers and other stakeholders, expansion of the ability to approve discretionary works and various amendments to reflect changes in practice and procedure since 2014.
Revision 2.1 – April 2019 for addition of amendment allowing means tests and property charging to be waived for trial period of OT in Housing Scheme. (CPBC Cabinet approved)
Revision 2.2 – November 2021 to amend document to allow for discretionary grants to be paid towards means tested contributions, where this would cause difficulty /hardship for the customer (section 4.5.10) (CPBC Cabinet approved)
Revision 2.3 – November 2023, amendment to allow ‘fast track’ discretionary grants to be paid without a means test and be considered the ‘default option’ (subject to available funding,) where it has been assessed as necessary and appropriate by an Occupational Therapist and covers eligible works defined in this policy. General reduction in quotes required from 3 to 2 to speed up processes. Job title amendments to reflect new structure, other minor changes.

- **Links to Council priorities:**

Council priority	Linked?
Economy and Growth	No
People	Yes
Place	Yes
Environment	No

- **Links to other strategies and policies:**
- **Name of lead officer responsible for implementing the action plan:**

Simon Llewellyn, Environmental Health Operational Manager
Phone: 01268 882200
E-mail: sllewellyn@castlepoint.gov.uk

1 Introduction

- 1.1) Perfectly good homes can be quite unsuitable for occupants with mobility needs, to the extent that they can actually be dangerous and isolating. Adaptations are needed by many disabled people so that they can remain safe and independent in their own home. They can be needed by people of all ages, but as our population ages and life expectancy increases, the number of people needing assistance to adapt their homes is expected to grow.
- 1.2) Castle Point Borough Council is committed to helping disabled residents and will administer Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) (and other forms of assistance such as discretionary grants, where available) to help them achieve a home which meets their needs.
- 1.3) The Council has only finite resources and as the number of people seeking adaptations and the cost of providing them grows, its finite resources are likely to mean that it cannot provide immediate help to all those needing assistance.
- 1.4) Following the regulatory reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 it is a requirement for any updates or revisions of the Council's policies in respect of the allocation of housing grants to be formally adopted.
- 1.5) This policy document sets out how the Council will use its resources to help those who need disabled adaptations and how decisions will be made about the help that it gives and to provide guidance for applicants, stakeholders, and other users of our services.

2 DFG Summary

- 2.1) Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) were introduced in 1990 but the principle legal provisions are now contained in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA) and regulations made there under.
- 2.2) DFGs are mandatory grants available to disabled people when works to adapt their home are judged necessary and appropriate to meet their needs and when it is reasonable and practicable to carry them out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building. Occupational Therapists working with Essex County Council assess whether any works are necessary and discuss the best available options with the Environmental Health Service at Castle Point Borough Council.
- 2.3) DFGs are generally subject to a means test (with the exception of discretionary grants) which means that the applicant's income and savings have to be assessed to determine whether any contributions are required to be made by them towards the costs of the required work. The way in which the means test is carried out is governed by regulations and the Council does not have any discretion in applying it. Applicants in receipt of certain specified benefits are "passported" through the means testing process and children are exempt from the means test.
- 2.4) Subject to all the eligibility criteria being met, the Council must 'determine' (i.e. approve) properly made applications 'as soon as reasonably practicable' but no later than 6 months from the application date.

- 2.5) The maximum amount of DFG is currently set by statute at £30,000. However, the Council will consider payment of an additional discretionary grant in some circumstances.
- 2.6) The DFG grant will be recovered following the sale of the property within ten years of payment of the grant, provided the Council “is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment”. Grants below £5,000 are excluded from repayment, and the maximum amount recoverable in any one case is limited to £10,000. Where the grant is more than £5000, only the amount in excess of £5000 is recoverable up to the maximum of £10,000.

In the case of discretionary grants, the Council will seek to recover the value of the grant in full following the sale or transfer of the property, with the exception of ‘fast track’ assistance which shall be repayable on terms equivalent to mandatory grants.

- 2.7) In the event of an applicant’s death before works are complete, the Council has the discretion to pay a grant towards any fees incurred, any works already carried out or any ‘other relevant works.’

3 Regulatory Framework

There are a number of legal provisions governing DFGs and the application process including:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (“The Act”) (as amended)
- Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) order 1996
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to Approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 (“The Order”)
- The Housing Renewals Grants (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2008
- The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008
- Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People – A good practice guide (June 2006)
- The Equalities Act 2010

4 Definition of a Disabled Person

- 4.1.1) For the purposes of the legislation relating to DFG’s a person is defined as being disabled if:

- Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired;
- They have a mental disorder to impairment of any kind; or
- They are physically disabled by illness or impairment present since birth or otherwise

- 4.1.2) A person aged 18 or over is considered disabled if:

- They are registered as a result of arrangements made under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948; or
- They are a person for whom welfare arrangements have been made under that section

or might be made under it.

4.1.3) A person aged under 18 is considered disabled if:

- They are registered in a register of disabled children maintained under the Children Act 1989; or
- In the opinion of the Social Services Authority (Essex County Council) they are a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989.

4.2 Responsibility

4.2.1 The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 gives the statutory duty to Castle Point Borough Council as a local housing authority, responsibility for providing DFGs. The Council cannot, by law, refuse to process a properly made DFG application that it receives from an owner-occupier or tenant. If the eligibility criteria and proper process are satisfied, the Council must approve the appropriate grant.

4.2.2 The Council is given a sum of money each year by the government, via the Better Care Fund, which is specifically used for providing grants to help disabled people adapt their home.

4.3 Eligibility and Amount of DFG grant assistance available to applicant

4.3.1) DFGs are available to homeowners, owners of qualifying houseboats, owners of qualifying park homes, tenants of private landlords and tenants of Housing Associations. Grants are available for adaptations to the common parts of buildings containing one or more flats.

4.3.2) Registered Social Housing Providers (RSHP) are also eligible to apply for a mandatory DFG, but in these situations the Council will firstly investigate the RSHP's ability to carry out and fund the adaptation work themselves and the individual merits of the case. In all such cases, the Council will request that the RSHP contributes towards the cost of the adaptation works before processing the application, which may be in the form of an upfront or deferred payment.

4.3.3) Each case must be supported by a recommendation from an occupational therapist working with Essex County Council Social Services. Should an applicant provide an independent Occupational Therapists recommendation, the Council will consult with the Occupational Therapy Service at Essex County Council, before processing the application.

4.3.4) The Council reserves the right to refuse grant assistance where the works are not necessary, appropriate, reasonable, practicable, are excessively expensive and/or where the property is not suitable for adaptation. The Council may offer a discretionary DFG, in the form of a relocation grant to help the disabled person move to a more suitable dwelling.

4.3.5) There is no restriction on multiple DFG's for the same property and depending on the time lapse between applications, there is provision for any means tested contribution made on the first grant not to be considered on subsequent application. This is five years for a tenant's application and 10 years for an owner occupier's application.

4.3.6) The maximum amount of grant is set by statutory instrument. The current statutory limit

on the maximum amount of mandatory DFG is £30,000.

4.4 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant assistance – General

- 4.4.1) There are a number of circumstances where it may be appropriate to offer help by way of a discretionary grant. For instance, a discretionary grant may be considered where:
- The existing home is unsuitable for adaptations and the grant will enable the occupant to relocate to a more suitable property and this is a more cost-effective solution.
 - The grant awarded to an applicant is insufficient to carry out the works recommended by the Occupational Therapist i.e. the required works are in excess of £30,000 and the applicant is unable to raise the money required. For instance, where a property extension is required, and relocation is not a suitable or cost-effective option.
 - It has been decided that a fast-track approach is to be taken, by the use of discretionary grants in preference to mandatory grants as preferred approach.

4.4.2) Five types of discretionary assistance are available from Castle Point Council

- a) Top up assistance
- b) Special assistance
- c) Relocation assistance
- d) Means test contribution assistance.
- e) 'Fast track' assistance

4.4.3) Whilst the Council do not have to provide discretionary assistance it will consider applications on a case-by-case basis, or on a more general basis where appropriate for fast track assistance.

4.4.4) Any discretionary award will only be considered having regard to the amount of resources the Council has available at the time. If the Council does not have sufficient resources to deal with other mandatory referrals, the Council reserves the right not to approve any discretionary assistance.

4.4.5) All discretionary grants to homeowners (excluding owners of park homes, where sited on a plot owned by a third party and located on a site licensed by Castle Point Borough Council,) will be recorded as a charge on the land registry and will remain indefinitely. The grant will be repayable in full where a dwelling is disposed of whether by sale, assignment, and transfer of the title or otherwise for any reason. The exception to this will be for those benefiting from 'fast track assistance' where the amount repayable will be equivalent to that demanded under the mandatory grant system (see section 25 for further details.)

4.5 (a) Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants Assistance – “Top Up Assistance”

- 4.5.1) The maximum amount of mandatory DFG was set by statute in 2008 at £30000. Since this time there has been a general increase in build costs for major adaptations such that in some instances £30000 is insufficient to provide adaptations to meet the needs of the disabled person and their family.

- 4.5.2) To be eligible for consideration of a discretionary top up grant in cases where the cost of the proposed adaptation works exceed the maximum mandatory DFG limit of £30000, the grant applicant must meet the criteria for a mandatory DFG.
- 4.5.3) The discretionary DFG top-up grant will be subject to the same financial means test as a mandatory DFG unless the relocation is for a disabled child, in which case no such test will be applied.
- 4.5.4) The Environmental Health Operational Manager (or other suitably delegated officer) in consultation with one of Assistant Director (EH) & Licensing), Director (Place and Communities) or the S151 Officer, is authorised to agree a discretionary grant of up to £15,000, subject to budget availability. Discretionary top-up grants more than £15,000 up to a maximum of £30,000 will be determined by Cabinet.
- 4.5.5) Before approving a top-up grant, the Council will have expected the applicant to have exhausted other reasonable options with which to raise the required funds for any works over and above the £30000 mandatory limit.
This is to ensure a fair allocation of funding between the many applications received by the Council every year. Examples of these include, but are not restricted to:
- Equity release for owner occupied property.
 - Bank loans
 - Charity Grants / Contributions
 - Sale of certain discretionary assets, i.e., if multiple vehicles are owned by the applicant, above and beyond those required for normal day-to-day activities.
- 4.5.6) The Council reserves the right to decline any request for top up assistance if sufficient written evidence of the above is not provided.

4.6) (b) Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants Assistance – Special assistance

- 4.6.1) The purpose of a Discretionary Disabled Facilities “Special assistance” grant is to help applicants to pay for the cost of adapting their home to meet the needs of the disabled person where they are not covered by the mandatory DFG.
- 4.6.2) In order to be eligible for Discretionary Disabled Facilities Special Assistance Grant, an applicant must meet the qualifying criteria for a mandatory DFG
- 4.6.3) Each case must be supported by a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist working with Essex County Council. The Council reserves the right to refuse grant assistance where the works are not necessary, reasonable, practicable, or are excessively expensive or where the property is not suitable for adaptation.
- 4.6.4) Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants Assistance is available to fund the following adaptations to enable a disabled person to remain living in their own homes:

4.6.5) To make the dwelling suitable for the disabled person. Examples include:

- The provision of a safe play space for a disabled child
- The provision of more satisfactory internal arrangements which would directly benefit the disabled person.
- To make the dwelling suitable for the employment of the disabled person within the existing footprint of the dwelling (examples include the provision or adaptation of a room for the disabled person to use as a work area). Any such assistance would be subject to the applicant obtaining any relevant planning permission that may be required for working/running a business from the dwelling.
- To provide an area for specialist care of treatment (e.g. provision of a dialysis room).
- The provision and installation of ceiling track hoists.
- The provision and installation of a dropped kerb to facilitate access to a hard standing located within the curtilage of the disabled person's dwelling.
- The provision and installation of an appropriate storage facility for a mobility scooter with a fixed charging point.
- Provision of facilities for a child in foster care, where the likely length of care at a dwelling is likely to be years, rather than months.
- Provision of additional facilities in a second property in circumstances where a disabled child is living under a dual residency arrangement, where residency is split between the parents (or another designated guardian.)
- This list is not exhaustive and other works may be considered subject to an Occupational Therapists recommendation being received by the Council.

4.6.6) Any discretionary award will only be considered having regard to the amount of resources the Council has available at that time. If the Council does not have sufficient resources left to deal with other mandatory referrals that have been passed to them by the Occupational Therapy Service at the time, the Council reserves the right not to approve any discretionary assistance.

4.6.7) A Discretionary Disabled Facilities "Special Assistance" grant may be authorised by the Environmental Health Operational Manager (or other suitably delegated officer) in consultation with one of Assistant Director (EH & Licensing), Director (Place and Communities) or the S151 Officer.

4.7) (c) Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants Assistance – Relocation Grant

- 4.7.1) A discretionary relocation grant may be available to an applicant who owns or privately rents their dwelling if adaptation of their current home through a mandatory DFG is determined not to be a feasible or reasonable option and they are considering relocating to a suitable property they intend to purchase.
- 4.7.2) Applicants must be aged 18 or over on the date that the application is made and in the case of a disabled child, the parents would make the application.
- 4.7.3) Any such application must be supported by a recommendation from the Occupational Therapy Service at Essex County Council.
- 4.7.4) The Council and the Occupational Therapist must both be satisfied that the proposed dwelling already meets the needs of the disabled person without further adaptation or are satisfied that it can be adapted at a reasonable cost.
- 4.7.5) Applicants must be relocating within the Castle Point Borough. Consideration may be given to a move in Essex but this would require:
- The approval of the relevant district/borough council
 - Whether or not adaptations are required to the new dwelling
 - The scale of any adaptations before a relocation grant can be considered.
- 4.7.6) A discretionary relocation grant of up to £10000 may be made available towards specific relocation expenses which includes estate agent fees, legal costs and removal costs.
- 4.7.7) The cost of the discretionary relocation grant together with the cost of any adaptations required to the new dwelling must demonstrate value for money, whether the move is within the Castle Point Borough or another district / borough within Essex.
- 4.7.8) Applications must be submitted prior to relocation, grants cannot be paid retrospectively.
- 4.7.9) Assistance will not be made available towards the purchase price of a new dwelling.
- 4.7.10) The Council will normally require two quotations from independent contractors that realistically reflect the cost of the works / service being provided. In some circumstances, one estimate may be accepted if the Council is satisfied that the cost is reasonable.
- 4.7.11) All applicants will be required to complete the move within 12 months from the date of approval of their application. Any payments made will be made either directly to the service / work provider, or to the grant applicant. In either case, valid invoices or receipts must be provided prior to the payment.
- 4.7.12) If on sale of the applicants existing dwelling, a net equity of more than £10000 is released, the discretionary relocation grant will only fund the physical removal costs.
- 4.7.13) Net equity refers to any equity released when the purchase price of the new

dwelling is less than the existing dwellings selling price.

- 4.7.14) If the move is aborted through the fault of the applicant, then the grant will not be paid and any monies already paid will be reclaimed from the applicant. If the reason for the move falling through is, in the opinion of the Council, not the fault of the applicant, then the Council will cover the full costs.
- 4.7.15) The new dwelling must be the disabled person's main residence and no applicant will be awarded a discretionary relocation grant on more than one occasion.
- 4.7.16) If the disabled occupant moves from the new dwelling within 5 years or if the dwelling is disposed of whether by sale, assignment, transfer of the title or otherwise, for any reason within a period of 5 years, the grant must be paid back in full to the Council unless there are exceptional circumstances. The discretionary relocation grant will be recorded on the Local Land Charges Register for a period of 5 years from the date that the new dwelling is occupied by the disabled occupant.
- 4.7.17) The discretionary relocation grant will be subject to the same financial means test as a mandatory DFG unless the relocation is for a disabled child in which case no means test will be applied.
- 4.7.18) Any discretionary award will only be considered having regards to the amount of resources the Council has available at that time. If the Council does not have sufficient resources left to deal with other mandatory referrals that have been passed to them by the OT service, the Council reserves the right not to approve any discretionary assistance.
- 4.7.19) A discretionary disabled facility "relocation assistance" grant may be authorised by the Environmental Health Operational Manager (or other suitably delegated officer) in consultation with one of Assistant Director (EH & Licensing), Director (Place and Communities) or the S151 Officer.

4.8) (d) Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants Assistance – Means Test Contribution Assistance

- 4.8.1) The purpose of a discretionary 'Means Test Contribution Assistance' grant is to aid customers who have difficulty in meeting the means tested contribution which forms a standard part of the DFG application process.
- 4.8.2) While under most circumstances, the means tested contribution is seen as a fair way for those with the ability to pay, to contribute towards the cost of their adaptation and to reduce the burden on the limited grants budget, the one size fits all equation does on occasion, result in a contribution figure that would cause some difficulties or hardship for the customer.
- 4.8.3) The Environmental Health Operational Manager (or other suitably delegated officer) in consultation with one of Assistant Director (EH & Licensing), Director (Place and Communities) or the S151 Officer subject to budget availability.
- 4.8.4) The Council will have expected the applicant to have exhausted other reasonable options with which to raise the means tested contribution for any works. This is to ensure a fair allocation of funding between the many applications received by the Council every year.

Examples of these include, but are not restricted to:

- Equity release for owner occupied property.
- Bank loans
- Charity Grants / Contributions
- Sale of certain discretionary assets, i.e., if multiple vehicles are owned by the applicant, above and beyond those required for normal day-to-day activities.

4.8.5) The Council reserves the right to decline any request for top up assistance if sufficient written evidence of the above is not provided.

4.9) (e) Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Assistance – ‘Fast Track’

- 4.9.1) A discretionary grant enabling any adaptation works costing £15000 or less (excluding HIA fees, which can be added on / paid in addition this total) to be provided without means test if it has been assessed as necessary and appropriate by an Occupational Therapist, subject to sufficient funds being available to the Council.
- 4.9.2) To ensure that cases are processed with minimum delay, ‘fast track’ grants shall be considered the ‘default’ option for adaptations costing less than £15,000, in preference to a mandatory DFG, where funding allows.
- 4.9.3) The amount repayable from ‘fast track’ grants will be equivalent to that demanded under the mandatory grant system (see section 25 for further details) to ensure that the customer is not financially disadvantaged.
- 4.9.4) ‘Fast Track’ grants can be approved by any officer with delegated budgetary responsibility for approval of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.

5 Use of Home Improvement Agencies (HIA’s)

- 5.1) Castle Point Borough Council offers customers the option of using a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to provide services as part of the grants process. Basildon Borough Council and Epping Forest District Council (or an HIA of the customers choosing) are able to act on behalf of the applicants in all administrative and legal respects for the provision of the disabled facilities grant. The HIA is also able to act as the Council’s agent in certain aspects of the DFG process, described later in this document.
- 5.2) The Services provided by the HIA to the applicant include: completing the application form with the client; preparing any plans which need to be submitted with the application; confirming the work specifications; seeking tenders; obtaining any specific permissions to undertake works, supervising the works and liaising with all parties in respect of completion and payment of the grant. For these Services, the HIA will charge no more than 17.5% of the costs of the tendered works, which is added to the grant amount.
- 5.3) The applicant is not required to use the services of a HIA to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant, and may choose to administer the process themselves. However, all applicants are advised of the complexity of the grant process at the outset and this course of action would only be recommended for those persons confident with this

type of role.

5.4) Provision of stairlifts under Procurement for Housing Framework agreement

- 5.4.1) A Procurement for Housing Framework with Stannah Lift Services Ltd (Stannah.) Applicants who choose to use the services of a HIA will have the option of utilising this agreement for the procurement a stairlift.
- 5.4.2) Users of the agreement will benefit from an expedited installation process and a 5 year warranty provided on the equipment.
- 5.4.3) The arrangement allows for the provision and installation of straight flight and curved track stairlifts which are installed and maintained for a period of 5 years by Stannah. The stairlifts remain the property of the Council during this 5 year warranty and maintenance period.
- 5.4.4) Should circumstances arise within this period where the stairlift is no longer required, Stannah will remove the lift and store it on behalf of the Council until such time that it can be re-used by another applicant.
- 5.4.5) Re-cycled stairlifts will be provided and installed at a reduced cost to the Council but will be installed in the new dwelling with the same 5 year warranty and maintenance period for the new DFG applicant.
- 5.4.6) At the end of the 5 year period, the Council will gift the stairlift to the DFG applicant who will then be responsible for all future servicing and maintenance of their stairlift. Stannah will contact the DFG applicant towards the end of the 5 year period regarding the future servicing and maintenance of the stairlift.
- 5.4.7) NOTE: This PFH arrangement enables the Council to re-cycle perfectly good stairlifts at a reduced cost, thus making better use of DFG funding and will provide value for money.
- 5.4.8) The DFG applicant is under no obligation to use Stannah; all applicants are free to obtain quotations for the supply, installation, and maintenance of their stairlift from any other provider who can meet the specification provided by the Occupational Therapist. However, in these instances only the manufacturer's standard warranty and maintenance terms (usually 12 months) will be provided, as it will fall outside of the provisions of the framework agreement.

6 The Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant Eligibility Criteria

- 6.1) DFGs are available to fund adaptations to the homes of elderly or disabled residents to enable them to live independently at home or be cared for at home. Grants are dependent on;
- The works being necessary and appropriate;
 - The works being reasonable and practicable; and
 - A financial assessment of the applicant's ability to fund the work themselves.

- 6.2) Eligibility criteria for DFGs are laid out in Section 23 of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration (As Amended) Act 1996 and primarily relate to accessing principal rooms within the home and accessing and using essential facilities including access to gardens and outside areas of a property.
- 6.3) The Occupational Therapists working with Essex County Council and Environmental Health Officers at Castle Point Borough Council seek to support all applicants but by the nature of grant funding this process.

6.4) Works that are eligible for a mandatory disabled facility grant

6.4.1) *Facilitating Access*

- a) A grant may be given for works to remove or help overcome any obstacles that prevent the disabled person from moving freely into and around the dwelling.
- b) Access to the garden or yard (front, side or rear) means immediate access from the dwelling and does not include landscaping. This would be fulfilled by either improving existing access or by providing a suitable outdoor space that can be accessed safely from inside the dwelling to allow appreciation of the outdoor area by the disabled person.

6.4.2) *Making a Dwelling or Building Safe*

- a) A grant may be given for certain adaptations to the dwelling or building to make it safe for the disabled person and other persons living with them. This may include the provision of lighting where safety is an issue, or for adaptations designed to minimise the risk of danger where a disabled person has behavioural problems.

6.4.3) *Access to a Family Room*

- a) A grant may be given to ensure the disabled person has access to a room used for or usable as the principal family room (i.e. living room or lounge).

6.4.4) *Access to a Room usable for Sleeping*

- a) A grant may be given for the provision of a room usable for sleeping where the adaptation of an existing room in the dwelling (upstairs or downstairs) or the access to that room is unsuitable in the particular circumstances. Where the disabled person shares a room with a spouse or partner a grant may be given to provide a room of sufficient size so that normal sleeping arrangements can be maintained.

6.4.5) *Access to a Bathroom*

- a) A grant may be given for the provision of, or access to, a WC, washing, bathing and/or showering facilities.

6.4.6) *Facilitating Preparation of and Cooking of Food*

- a) A grant may be given to re-arrange or enlarge a kitchen to improve the access for a wheelchair and to provide specially modified or designed storage units, work top area etc. Where most of the cooking and preparation of meals is done by another household

member, it would not normally be appropriate to carry out full adaptations to the kitchen. However, it might be appropriate that certain adaptations be carried out to enable the disabled person to perform minor functions in the kitchen, such as preparing light meals or hot drinks.

6.4.7) Heating, Light and Power

- a) A grant may be given to provide or improve the existing heating system in the dwelling to meet the disabled person's needs. A grant will not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms which are not normally used by the disabled person. The installation of central heating to the dwelling will only be considered where the well-being and mobility of the disabled person would otherwise be adversely affected.
- b) Provision is also made under this category for the adaptation of heating, lighting and power to make them suitable for use by the disabled person.

6.4.8) Dependent Residents

- a) A grant may be given for works to enable a disabled occupant better access around the dwelling in order to care for another person who normally resides there whether or not they are related to the disabled person. Importantly, the dependent being cared for need not be disabled.
- b) Such works could include adaptations to a part of the dwelling to which the disabled person would not normally need access but which is used by a person to whom they are providing care and therefore it is reasonable for such works to be carried out.

6.4.9) Common Parts

- a) A grant may be given for works to facilitate access to a dwelling through the common parts of a building.

6.5 Deciding on the suitability and feasibility of an adaptation for a customer

Necessary and Appropriate

- 6.5.1) Necessary and Appropriate works are determined through an assessment of the client and their home environment by an Occupational Therapist from Essex County Council. This concentrates on the client's ability to remain living independently in their own home and must distinguish between works which are desirable, and those, which are necessary and appropriate.
- 6.5.2) Occupational Therapists from Essex County Council and Environmental Health Officers from Castle Point Borough Council liaise to:
 - a) Discuss proposed applications;
 - b) Determine whether applications meet the necessary and appropriate criteria with reference to the legislation;
 - c) Determine if the works are likely to be reasonable and practicable.

6.5.3) When identifying and agreeing adaptations we will ensure that:

- They are the simplest, least disruptive and most cost-effective adaptation to meet the needs;
- They are designed to fit within the existing structure of the home; this may involve using the home in a different way i.e. sleeping in a ground floor room or subdividing space and that;
- Providing additional space within a home is only considered if all other options have been fully exhausted and if it is practicable to provide additional space.

6.6 Reasonable and Practicable

6.6.1) There are times when it is simply not reasonable and practicable to adapt a property, for instance where there are excessive changes in level; where there are space constraints; or where moving existing services is prohibitively expensive. Rather than investing funding to poorly adapt a property, grants may be declined because the works are not reasonable and practicable.

6.6.2) If works are not considered reasonable and practicable within the home this will involve asking clients to seriously consider if they are currently in the most appropriate housing or if moving to more readily adaptable level access accommodation would be a better option.

6.6.3) In owner occupied premises where work is not considered reasonable and practicable, Disabled Facility Grant aid may be available to help with some of the basic costs of moving home. This would be dependent on the Means Test and each case would be judged individually on its merits.

6.6.4) In registered social housing provider (RSHP) accommodation (for instance homes provided via housing associations,) they are often happy to work with clients to identify alternative suitable housing. Where clients may be under occupying a home this has an added advantage of freeing up much needed family housing and there are monetary incentives available from the housing association for this.

7 The Disabled Facilities Grant Process_

Occupational Therapist Referrals and prioritisation

- 7.1) The Occupational Therapy Service at Essex County Council submits recommendations for Disabled Facilities adaptations to the Council for all tenures.
- 7.2) All recommendations received from the Occupational Therapists at Essex County Council are no longer ranked according to priority on a routine basis.
- 7.3) Prioritisation of cases is most often based on date of receipt of referral of a report from the Occupational Therapist. Where an Occupational Therapist makes additional requests for urgent / emergency assistance, this additional information will usually be taken into account, when deciding on a prioritisation for an individual case. Referred cases will be held on a priority-based list until such time as the Council is able to begin working on a case.
- 7.4) All appropriate steps will be taken to minimise the waiting time before a grant case can be worked on and approved. The prioritisation mechanism is kept under review to ensure it is operating as intended and as circumstances require.
- 7.5) The length of time someone has to wait on the priority list will depend on the size of the grant budget available to the Council, staff workload and the number of cases with a higher priority. Applicants will be notified in writing if there is likely to be a prolonged delay in progressing their case.
- 7.6) The Council however reserves the right to start processing some cases out of strict priority order in exceptional cases (as determined by the Head of Environment or Environmental Health Operational Manager) for instance, where it is determined that it is necessary to ensure efficient allocation of staff resources, or budget allocation and spend.
- 7.7) In the event that changes are required to the prioritisation mechanism, they will be determined by the Environmental Health Operational Manager in consultation with the Head of Environment.

Application

- 7.8) Should the proposed recommendations require a pre application feasibility study this will involve the Occupational Therapists at Essex County Council and Environmental Health Officers from the Council meeting to discuss this matter. The Council, as a Statutory Regulator of the Housing Act 2004 is unable to allow works to take place which will result in the creation of Housing Health and Safety Rating System Hazards.
- 7.9) When sufficient financial resources are available to the Council to pay for these works, the applicant is informed by letter and asked whether they would like to use a HIA partner to act on their behalf in all administrative and legal respects for the provision of the disabled facilities grant, or whether they want to administer and make arrangements for the preparation of an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant themselves.
- 7.10) If the disabled person is the tenant of a private landlord or Housing Association, the landlord/owner must give permission for the work to be carried out. Fixed items such as level access showers will usually become the property of the owner.

7.11) Should the applicant choose to use our HIA partner, the customer will be referred to Basildon Borough Council Building Consultancy, who will get in touch with the customer directly.

7.12) Section left intentionally blank.

7.13) Section left intentionally blank.

7.14) Financial Assessment (The Means Test)

7.14.1) Applications for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are generally subject to a Means Test.

7.14.2) The way in which the Council carries out the Means Test is governed by regulations and the Council does not have any discretion in applying it. Once the applicant's income and savings have been recorded on the application form, this information is used to calculate whether any contributions are required to be made by them towards the costs of the required work.

7.14.3) As part of an application for a mandatory DFG, a test of resources (financial means test) must be carried out in order to assess the amount, if any, that the applicant must contribute towards the cost of the proposed adaptation works.

7.14.4) The means test applies to the disabled applicant and any spouse or partner. The applicant is required to provide information about all sources of income and all savings to provide evidence to support information given in the application form.

7.14.5) Specifically, the Council will require the disabled applicant to provide the following:

- a) 3 months' payslips (where monthly paid) or 6 weeks' payslips (where weekly paid)
- b) Copies of most recent state pension letters
- c) Copies of most recent private/occupational/other pensions in payment
- d) Copies of any disability benefit letters (attendance allowance, Disabled Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, and Employment Support Allowance etc.) where in payment
- e) 3 months bank statements (immediately prior to the application date)
- f) Up to date statements/balances of all savings accounts and ISA's
- g) Copy of a recent utility bill (dated within 6 months of the DFG application)
- h) Up to date statements/balances of all other savings and investments such as premium bonds, stocks and shares
- i) Details of any other capital and property owned

7.14.6) Applicants who are in receipt of one of the following types of income will be "passported" through the means testing process and will not be required to make a contribution towards the cost of the proposed adaptation works:

- a) Income Support
- b) Income Based Job Seekers Allowance

- c) Guarantee Pension Credit
 - d) Housing Benefit
 - e) Working/Child Tax Credit (if income for tax credit is below a specified amount)
- This list is prescribed by central government and may be amended from time to time.

- 7.14.7) Where the result of the means test is a 'nil' contribution, it is accepted that the applicant will automatically wish to proceed with the application. Where the result of the means test is such that the client's contribution is likely to be less than the total cost of the works the client will be required to confirm in writing their intention to proceed with their application on this basis.
- 7.14.8) Where the result of the means test is such that the client's contribution is equal to or likely to exceed the cost of the works the client can request the Council to approve a 'nil' grant. This will enable the cost of these works to be deducted from any future application for a DFG so long as any subsequent OT recommendation is received within 10 years from the approval of the 'nil' grant (5 years for a tenant's application).
- 7.14.9) Where an applicant is unable to meet their assessed financial contribution under the means-test for a mandatory DFG and in the absence of any suitable affordable alternative, the Council may in exceptional circumstances provide the applicant with Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Assistance to enable the works to proceed, subject to the exhaustion of alternative funding options.
- 7.14.10) Any Discretionary DFG Assistance will only be considered having regard to the amount of resources the Council has available at that time. If the Council does not have sufficient resources left to deal with other mandatory referrals that have been passed to them by the Occupational Therapy Service at the time, the Council reserves the right not to approve any discretionary assistance.
- 7.14.11) All Discretionary DFG Assistance will be recorded on the Local Land Charges Register indefinitely. The assistance will be repayable in full where the applicant disposes of the dwelling whether by sale, assignment, transfer of the title or otherwise for any reason. 'Fast track' discretionary assistance will be repaid and recorded using the equivalent rules as the mandatory DFG (s25) to ensure that those on 'fast track' are not financially disadvantaged.

8. DFG Application Conditions

- 8.1) All applications for assistance must be made on the appropriate Council application forms and shall be accompanied by all relevant supporting documents. The minimum age for applicants is 18 years of age at the date of application and in the case of joint applications, at least one person must be over 18 years of age at the date of the application.
- 8.2) In making an application the applicant shall give the Council permission to share such given information with other Council services and departments or other statutory agencies.

- 8.3) Private sector tenants may make applications where they are eligible for assistance, but the Council will require written consent from the owner of the property before approving the DFG. Tenants of a Registered Social Housing Provider (RSHP) may make applications where they are eligible for assistance, but the Council will require written consent from the relevant RSHP, will make an assessment of the RSHP's ability to pay for the works in full and will in all cases, seek a financial contribution from them towards the cost of the works before approving the DFG.
- 8.4) CPBC tenants in all cases should approach CPBC Housing in the first instance as the Council has funds set aside for disabled facility adaptation works in their own properties.
- 8.5) The adaptation works must be carried out in accordance with any plans, specifications and schedules provided by the Council.
- 8.6) Quotations for adaptation works must be provided on the specifications and schedules provided by the Council for this purpose and must be itemised and totalled on each page. Provisional sums are not acceptable except in cases where for example scaffolding *may* be required or where exploratory works *may* be required. Works covered by insurance claims or work that should have been covered by such, will not be eligible for DFG assistance of any kind.
- 8.7) The following number of quotations will be required by the Council when procuring adaptation works:

Works	Number of quotations required*
Stairlifts procured under the PFH Stannah agreement.	1
All other works*	2

*The Council reserves the right to request additional quotations as necessary if it considers predicted costs to be excessive or inadequate, or at its discretion.

- 8.8) The Council will not normally approve any DFG application if the relevant works have started before the application is approved. One exception to this rule is where an authorised officer has already carried out an inspection of the dwelling and has agreed in writing that the works may commence, due to particular risks to the health and safety of the disabled applicant.
- 8.9) DFG assistance will only be approved for the benefit of the disabled applicant where they are able to provide evidence of a valid National Insurance Number.

9. Decision Making Criteria

- 9.1) Once the Council is satisfied that the proposed adaptation works are necessary and appropriate, reasonable and practicable, the following specific expectations and presumptions are taken into account:
- a) The DFG works should fully and properly meet the applicants assessed needs. DFGs that only partially meet those needs will only be considered in exceptional cases (e.g. where the disabled person's condition is deteriorating and independent living is unlikely to be sustained for very much longer).
 - b) The works funded by the DFG will be the simplest and most cost-effective adaptations that will meet the need of the applicant's assessed needs (this includes any equipment provided).
 - c) Wherever practicable and realistic, the change of use of existing rooms or the re-ordering of rooms will be the preferred solution and will take precedence over both the construction of extensions and the installation of specialist equipment.
 - d) Generally, the DFG will only fund one facility to a dwelling e.g. only one external door will be provided with a ramped access to the outdoors.

10. Alternative Scheme of Works

- 10.1) In certain circumstances a grant up to the value of the estimated cost of providing an adaptation can be used to contribute towards an alternative scheme. For example, where a through-floor lift would meet the needs of the disabled person but the preference of that person is for the construction of a ground floor extension, a DFG equal to the cost of the lift could be approved. In any such case the following criteria must be met:
- a) The proposed alternative scheme shall meet the applicant's needs as assessed by the Occupational Therapist and put forward in the original recommendation.
 - b) The Council must be satisfied that the applicant has sufficient financial resources to complete the alternative scheme, including a contingency sum of 10% of the total cost of works to account for any unforeseen works.
 - c) The applicant must provide the Council with a minimum number of estimates listed in table 8.8 from competent contractors for the proposed works. The Council reserves the right to seek an alternative estimate where those provided by the applicant seem either excessive or inadequate.

- d) An experienced agent shall design/control the works and shall certify their satisfactory completion. The applicant is responsible for any additional costs of designing the alternative scheme and for obtaining building regulation approval and/or planning permission where necessary.
- e) The Council will only pay an amount equal to the cost of the works originally recommended by the Occupational Therapist. The Council will not pay for the DFG approved works until all works have been completed and certified as satisfactory by the Council or its agent.
- f) The Council's payment shall be the final part payment made towards completion of the alternative scheme and will not be paid until the Council receives confirmation from the contractor that all other monies owing have been paid in full by the applicant. Payment will be subject to the Council or its agent inspecting the works and certifying the scheme as fully completed to its satisfaction (inside and out).
- g) The alternative scheme must be completed within 12 months of the DFG being approved, unless a written request for an extension to the time limit is received within 6 weeks of the 12 month period expiring. Extension to the mandatory time limit for completion of the works will be at the discretion of the Council and the applicant should not assume that such a request will be agreed.
- h) Where the alternative works are not completed within the 12 month time period allowed and where the Council has not received a written request to extend this period, the DFG will be void.
- i) No variation of the approved DFG will be made for any additional unforeseen works; all such costs are to be borne by the applicant.
- j) If, for whatever reason, during the course of the works, the need for them ceases, the DFG will not be paid in full.

11. Two Disabled Occupiers in the same Household

- 11.1) Where two disabled people occupy the same dwelling as their main residence and both have individually assessed needs by an Occupational Therapist, depending on the adaptations, there may be a case for considering two separate DFG applications (for example, this is more likely to affect families with more than one disabled child.)

12. Approval of a DFG

- 12.1) Although the Council is statutorily obliged to approve valid applications within 6 months, where possible, the Council will aim to approve applications within 30 days of them being determined as complete and valid. If information is missing from the application, the applicant will be contacted and notified as to what they need to provide before the application can be considered complete.

- 12.2) Though the Council aim to approve all grants in less than 30 days in some cases and at certain times it may take longer to determine an application. This is particularly relevant where discretionary cases are concerned as the Council must make the best use of its financial resources. It is important to note that where mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are concerned, the Council must determine applications within 6 months of receiving a complete and valid application so these cases may take priority over discretionary DFG assistance.
- 12.3) The DFG approval notice will set out:
- a) The amount of assistance approved and the name of the successful contractor upon whose estimate the grant has been calculated.
 - b) The applicants contribution (where relevant) towards the cost of the works as determined by the financial means test.
 - c) The conditions applied to the approval of the grant.
- 12.4) The Council or its agent will notify the winning contractor that the grant has been approved and will forward them a contract that is to be signed by the applicant and the contractor and returned to the Council prior to the commencement of the adaptation works.
- 12.5) The Council will not normally approve a Disabled Facilities Grant application where the relevant work has already begun. However, in exceptional circumstances it can approve such a grant if it is satisfied that there were good reasons for beginning the works before the application was approved. Any such grant approval may be reduced to reflect the works undertaken prior to approval of the DFG.
- 12.6) The Council will not approve an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant if the relevant works have already been completed.

13. Works on Site

- 13.1) Though the DFG is an agreement made between the grant applicant and the Council, all works relating to the Disabled Facilities Grant are a contractual agreement made between the grant applicant and the contractor. The contractor is working for the grant applicant and not the Council.
- 13.2) The Council will not be responsible for supervising the work or the contractor. The grant applicant and/or the contractor must notify the Council or its agent of the date that they agree the works shall commence.
- 13.3) The applicant must ensure that they receive from the contractor any instruction manuals for equipment that they have installed; this includes warranties for any specialist equipment, such as a stairlift, through floor lift, ceiling track hoist and wash/dry toilets.
- 13.4) Once the adaptation works are complete applicants will need to arrange and pay for any future repairs or maintenance of their adaptation and equipment when

any warranty periods have expired or where warranties paid by the Council as part of the DFG have expired as these future costs cannot be paid by the Council.

14. Unforeseen Works

- 14.1) Additional DFG funding will only be provided above the original grant approval in the event that unforeseen works are required in order to allow the completion of the eligible works, or associated works, and where these works are of a nature to protect the health and safety of the applicant, and where these works could not have reasonably been foreseen at the time of the contractor pricing for the contract.
- 14.2) The following points must be observed in all cases of a request for additional unforeseen works:
- a) Note: A HIA acting on behalf of a customer / the Council may authorise up to £2000 of unforeseen works without needing to gain prior approval from the Council to avoid 'tools down' on-site delays.
 - b) As soon as it becomes apparent that unforeseen works are necessary the applicant or the contractor must notify the Council or its agent;
 - c) The Council or its agent must be able to independently verify any such works as being necessary and this may involve a site inspection;
 - d) The contractor must provide a written quotation to the Council or its agent for the cost of completing the unforeseen works;
 - e) No unforeseen works can commence until written confirmation from the Council or its agent has been received as to whether these works are reasonable in terms of cost, are truly unforeseen and whether the works are necessary.
 - f) In exceptional circumstances, these terms can be waived where the authorised Officer dealing with the DFG agrees either verbally, or in writing, without necessarily carrying out an inspection that the works may commence, due to risks to the health and safety of the grant applicant.
 - g) Where unforeseen works are agreed by the Council or its agent the grant will be re-calculated when all works have been completed and a revised approval notice will be issued when the grant is paid.

15. Abortive Works

- 15.1 This term relates to situations where a DFG application has been aborted before all works have been completed, e.g. where the applicant has died.
- 15.2 In such circumstances, consideration will be given to payment of a proportion of the grant assistance in line with current legislation and guidance and at the discretion of the Environmental Health Operational Manager, Assistant Director (EH and Licensing) or other delegated officer.

16. Completion of Works

- 16.1 The grant applicant and/or the contractor shall notify the Council on the day that the adaptation works are completed. This will enable the authorised officer to schedule an appointment to inspect the works at the earliest opportunity, thus expediting payment to the contractor.
- 16.2 The authorised officer will inspect the works and:
- a) Verify that all works are complete;
 - b) Verify that the works have been completed in accordance with the OT's recommendation, the Councils' schedule of works and the surveyor's plan;
 - c) Note any snagging items and contact the contractor to resolve prior to arranging payment;
 - d) Ensure that the applicant signs a completion form to confirm that they are satisfied with the works and to authorise the Council to release payment to the contractor;
 - e) Ensure that the applicant is in receipt of all relevant guarantees and warranties;
 - f) Collect any invoices which the contractor has left with the applicant;
- 16.3 Where an approved HIA is acting as an agent of a customer completion of works may be certified in accordance with their own processes.

17. Payment of Grant

- 17.1) The Act allows the Council to pay the grant directly to the contractor on satisfactory completion of the works. Most applicants prefer the Council act in this manner. Therefore, the Council will pay the contractor following the final inspection visit so long as the works has been carried out to its satisfaction and in accordance with the Occupational Therapist's recommendation, the Councils schedule of works and the surveyor's plan.
- 17.2) Payment will only be made on production of a final invoice.
- 17.3) Where the applicant chooses to take responsibility for paying the contractor direct, then on production of a receipt confirming that payment has already been made to the contractor, the Council will make the payment to the applicant.
- 17.4) Payment of grant will be subject to the satisfactory receipt of all certificates relevant to the adaptation works carried out e.g. a Gas Safe Certificates, Electrical Installation Certificates and Building Control Completion Certificates etc.
- 17.5) The Council will consider requests for interim payments if they are requested before works commence but usually this will only apply to DFG's approved at the maximum mandatory grant amount of £30,000. The Council will not normally approve an interim payment of more than 90% of the cost of the completed works

and, in aggregate no more than 90% of the total approved cost of the work will be paid before the final completion of the adaptation works.

18. Changes in Circumstances

- 18.1) Applicants (or their representative/parent/guardian) must inform the Council or its agent of all relevant changes in their circumstances from the date of making their enquiry through to approval and payment of their grant assistance.
- 18.2) Applicants are encouraged to contact the Council or its agent in advance if they believe that their circumstances may change in order that they can be given advice on the options available to them.
- 18.3) Certain changes in the applicants' circumstances may affect the payment of the Disabled Facilities Grant. Such changes, prescribed by legislation, are:
 - a) Where the works cease to be necessary or appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person;
 - b) The disabled person ceases to occupy the dwelling; and
 - c) The disabled applicant dies.

In such circumstances the Council can decide:

- d) Not to pay the grant, or pay not to pay any further instalments;
 - e) That some or all of the works should be completed and the grant or a partial grant will be paid; or
 - f) That the grant application should be re-determined.
- 18.4) Under the Act, the Council has the right to demand the repayment of the grant that had already been paid, together with any interest in the circumstances outlined above. However, such cases will be considered on their own merit.
- 18.5) The right to demand repayment also applies where the applicant ceases to be entitled to a grant before completion of the works. An example of where this may apply would be if the applicant ceases to own the dwelling or does not have a tenancy agreement for the dwelling to be adapted.

19. Cases in which a DFG may be re-calculated, withheld or repaid

- 19.1) The Council is entitled to refuse to pay a grant, to refuse to pay further instalments on a grant or may recalculate the grant in circumstances such as:
 - a) The grant was approved on the basis of inaccurate, incomplete or false information;
 - b) The cost of the works is less than/more than the original estimates.

20. Disputes with Workmanship

- 20.1) Where a dispute arises regarding the standard of a contractor's workmanship the Council will withhold payment to the contractor until the works have been completed satisfactorily in the professional opinion of the Council or its agent.
- 20.2) Where works are deemed to meet the Council's or its agent's approval but the grant applicant is not satisfied the Council will not unreasonably withhold payment to the contractor.

21. Maintenance and Warranties (General)

- 21.1) When equipment is installed under a Disabled Facilities Grant, the grant applicant becomes the owner of the equipment and is therefore responsible for maintenance and repairs or for removing equipment once it is no longer required beyond any warranty and maintenance periods already paid for, and included in the grant, by the Council.
- 21.2) Therefore, once the DFG works are completed the Council will not finance or organise servicing, repairs or maintenance after the expiry of any applicable warranty period, which is usually 12 months, with the exception of stairlifts provided through the PFH framework agreement, where the warranty will be 5 years. Applicants are therefore encouraged to consider a longer warranty at the time of the installation as subsequent and future repairs can be expensive.

22. Removal of Adaptations and Reinstatement Works

- 22.1) Generally, the Council do not and will not remove adaptations if and when they are no longer required. Neither are any reinstatement works carried out.
- 22.2) If an applicant changes their mind about an adaptation once the OT assessment has been carried out and the works have been completed, unless there has been a significant change in the applicant's medical condition the Council will not remove or carry out further adaptation works.

23. Replacement of Facilities & Specialist Equipment

- 23.1) The Council will give consideration to the replacement of damaged, broken or worn out facilities and/or equipment under a further DFG providing it:
 - a) Cannot be repaired;
 - b) Has not been wilfully damaged;
 - c) Still meets the needs of the applicant;
 - d) Has been annually serviced and/or maintained, where applicable, and the warranty period has expired.

- 23.2) A further DFG will not be considered where a facility or equipment that was present in the dwelling previously has been removed by, or under the instruction of, the applicant unless there is a proven good reason for the removal.

24. Registered Social Housing Providers

- 24.1) RSHP's have a prescriptive duty of care to their tenants and have to meet certain standards and targets relating to the condition of their dwellings such as The Decent Homes Standard, and they are able to access other sources of funding due to their status.
- 24.2) The Council therefore expects RSHP's to conform to these duties on behalf of their tenants, which in the opinion of the Council, would include the provision of disabled facilities adaptations for their own tenants.
- 24.3) In all cases where the Council receives a DFG recommendation for a tenant of a RSHP, they will be issued with a formal written request for a financial contribution towards the cost of the adaptation works. The DFG may not proceed until a response has been received. In normal circumstances, the general expectation of the Council is that a minimum of 50% contribution is provided by the RSHP.
- 24.4) CPBC tenants in all cases should approach CPBC Housing as the Council has funds set aside for disabled facility adaptation works in their own properties.

25 Grant Repayment Conditions (Mandatory Grants)

- 25.1 In order to make the most of limited funding, the Property Charges introduced under The Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008, provide a method for Castle Point Borough Council to reclaim a proportion of the Disabled Facilities Grants monies it paid in certain circumstances.
- 25.2 In accordance with this General Consent, repayment requirements will apply where the applicant disposes of the premises (whether by sale, assignment, transfer, or otherwise), in respect of which a Disabled Facilities Grant was paid, within 10 years of the certified date of completion. This will apply to grants over £5000 with a maximum repayment condition of £10,000. Grants below £5,000 will be exempt from repayment.
- 25.3 Repayment will also be required if a property is transferred from one person to another, whether or not this involves members of the same family, including cases where no monies are involved in the transaction.
- 25.4 The amount that is required to be repaid (if any,) will be recorded as a charge against the relevant property. Applicants who do not wish a charge to be placed against their property and have the resources to do so, may pay this amount to the Council prior to the charge being placed, or may repay the charge at any stage afterwards, by contacting the Council and asking for a settlement figure.

25.5 Table 1 provides examples of how this will work.

Table 1 – Repayment Calculations

Grant £	Repayment Requirement £
30,000	10,000
25,000	10,000
20,000	10,000
15,000	10,000
10,000	5,000
5,500	500

25.6 Where a premises for which Castle Point Borough Council has approved a Disabled Facilities Grant is disposed of, the Council will normally seek to recover the value of the grant that it is legally entitled to recover. However, before requiring repayment the Council will take into account the following:

- Whether the recipient will suffer financial hardship where he/she be required to repay all or any of the grant;
 - Whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment or to change the location of his/ her employment;
 - Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
 - Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with or near any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity.

26 Performance and Review

26.1 Overall responsibility for the grants process rests with the Assistant Director (EH and Licensing) assisted by Environmental Health Officers.

26.2 Regular meetings and reviews of the activity of the Home Improvement Agencies will take place to ensure that grants and works are carried out in accordance with the policy and to ensure excellent customer satisfaction and value for money.

26.3 Regular meetings are held between the Council and Occupational Therapists to discuss progress with cases and feedback any matters of concern.

26.4 The status of applications will be reviewed on a regular basis and queries will be raised with the appropriate organisation or officer in the case of unexplained delays at any stage of the process.

26.5 Regular information reports are submitted to the Council's Financial Services department which allows for the monitoring of expenditure on grants throughout the year.

27 Appeals, complaints and compliments

- 27.1) In the first instance any issues should be brought to the attention of the authorised officer or agent dealing with the application.
- 27.2) If you remain dissatisfied, to escalate any matter of concern, please contact the Assistant Director (EH and Licensing) on info@castlepoint.gov.uk or 01268 882200.

28 Amendments to Policy

- 28.1) Minor amendments to the DFG policy and guidance may be made by the Assistant Director (EH and Licensing.) Significant changes must be formally approved by the Council Cabinet.